

*How to Keep
Natural Stone, Tile, & Concrete
Beautiful for Years to Come*

**Owner's
Maintenance
Guide**

For:
Marble, Limestone, Concrete,
Ceramic & Porcelain Tile,
Granite, Travertine,
Terrazzo, Slate,
Pavers

Contrary to popular belief, natural stone, concrete, ceramic, and porcelain tile DO REQUIRE ROUTINE MAINTENANCE. Although these hard surfaces seem strong and durable, in most cases they're more delicate and vulnerable than property owners realize. Unfortunately, improper care will quickly damage costly investments.

The following information provides basic concepts and simple tips in understanding the proper care of natural hard surfaces, thus helping to ensure their long-lasting radiant beauty.

Major Enemies of Hard Surfaces

Elimination of these enemies will help prolong the life and luster of hard surface.

Scratches & etching caused by foot traffic, abrasive grit, moving furniture, vacuum cleaner wheels, even pet's toenails can slowly "sand down" surfaces: reducing their original radiance.

Acidic cleaning products are deadly to many hard surfaces. Various liquids such as common bathroom cleaners, alcoholic and carbonated beverages, fruit juices and vinegars will etch surfaces; dulling their appearance.

Alkaline cleaning products are opposite of acids, but no less destructive. Many household cleaners are alkaline based and may be too harsh for natural surfaces. These agents commonly cause etching, dulling, and breakdown of sealants or coatings.

Common household products such as bar soaps (& some shampoos) are made from fats/oils which react with lye. Solids fats like coconut oil, palm oil, tallow (beef fat), or lard (pork fat), are used to form firm soap bars that resist dissolving in water left in soap dishes. Minerals in water; such a calcium,

magnesium, and silica, lock in the insoluble soap scum causing major cleaning issues on porous surfaces; especially grout where the dreaded orange-black mold grows easily.

Stains caused by various foods, drinks, oils, water deposits, hairsprays, pets, etc. may cause extensive damage. These materials can penetrate deep into porous surfaces; often creating stains which are impossible for property owners to remove without the aid of professionals and may even cause permanent discoloration.

How to Combat Major Hard-Surface Enemies

The following are simple, maintenance tips for property owner. Please be aware that conditions vary depending on the types of natural stone, concrete, ceramic, or porcelain tile. Usage consideration and environmental particulars is beneficial in developing your ideal maintenance programs, so please don't hesitate to contact a local tile store or North Bay Restoration if you have questions.

Initial Protection

All natural stone, concrete, ceramic and porcelain tile should be properly cleaned, then sealed with a premium penetrative sealant. Ceramic and many porcelain tiles do not actually need sealant, but it's absolutely essential for most grouts. CAUTION must be used to remove all existing grout haze, dirt, or stains prior to the application of sealants, as these contaminants may become locked into porous surfaces by sealants. Also be aware that color-enhancer sealants will permanently change the appearance of natural stone, grout, and concrete. If in doubt, call a local tile store or North Bay Restoration with any concerns prior to sealing.

Application of a high-quality sealant is a must for all kitchens and bathrooms where water or other liquids are commonly present. Proper sealants will provide barriers until spills or standing puddle can be wiped or squeegeed away. Premium, water-based, solvent-based, or silicon-based, impregnator sealants will repel most spills short term. These tend to be a bit costlier, but are well worth the investment!

Do not assume builders, installer, or fabricators have already sealed hard surfaces. In most cases, sealants are not applied without owner's initiative. A quick test, by dripping a few drops of water onto the surface, will usually provide answers. If water drops bead up, as typically seen on a newly-waxed car, then it's probably safe to assume the surface has been sealed. If in doubt, please contact North Bay Restoration.

General Precautionary Measures

Include the consistent use of coasters, trivets, or mats under glasses, dishes, pans, or any objects which may potentially scratch surfaces. Always blot up spills with clean towels ASAP; trying not to smear to reduce the possibility of staining. Take care to thoroughly dry surfaces to prevent small water puddle which could leave mineral deposits.

Everyday foot traffic will drag in sand and dirt which is normally harder than elegant natural surfaces and grout. This "grit" is the main cause of scratching and dulling. It is imperative that grit be kept off all surfaces, although ceramic and porcelain tile proves more durable than most natural stones. Entryway floors should provide walk-off mats which cover, at least, three adult steps. Remember to shake out or wash mats frequently. Be aware that some rubber-backed rugs can leave unwanted marks on natural surfaces, which unfortunately, may require professional stripping to remove. So be sure to choose high-quality mats.

Cleaning & Maintenance

It's a good habit to frequently dust surfaces with safe, untreated, natural-fibers such as microfiber cloths, cotton towels, or mops. Routine damp mopping or light scrubbing with thin "white scuff pads" and a neutral conditioning cleaner will prove very beneficial. (NOTE: The color of scuff pads determines the intensity of abrasion, so be sure to only use white pads.) Always take care to dry surfaces thoroughly. With ceramic and porcelain tile these precautions aren't as crucial.

In most cases, it's not advisable to apply acrylic coatings or waxes, as they tend to cause hazing effects and moisture-related problems like mildew. When added protection is necessary (where water is common), surfaces may be polished with spray silicon-polymer waxes.

Caution: Wax is notorious for attracting dirt and grim, hence should rarely be applied to floor. A few exceptions do apply with regard to European finishes on pavers and some masonry surfaces. Also, wax on polished floors can cause slippage issues and quickly show wear pattern from foot traffic; turning the surface into a maintenance nightmare! If in doubt, please don't hesitate to call NBR.

To prevent substantial slippage hazards around exterior pool decks and patio, scrub surfaces with plain water and a mild bleach solution to remove algae and moss, or an algae de-blooming chemical, which may be purchased at most hardware stores or from NBR website. We also provide an excellent non-slip system explained in detail on our website: www.northbayrestoration.com

Remember: Do not clean natural stone, grout, or concrete with vinegar, lemon, or other acidic agents. Do not use abrasive materials, such as dry powders or soft scrubs. Most cleaning products purchased from general retail stores are damaging to natural stone, grout, and concrete. Many do more harm than good, as is the case with common soap-scum-mildew removers, Lime Away, and CLR-type products; which seriously deteriorate natural stone and grout. NEVER USE acidic tub-tile cleaners, toilet-bowl cleaners, powdered alkaline cleaners, window cleaners, ammonia, alcohol, steel wool, or other highly-abrasive pads.

Try to avoid cheap, commercial bar soaps, body washes, and shampoos. Choose glycerin-based, natural products instead. Even the use of water alone can have long-term detrimental effects on some softer surfaces such as marbles and grouts, leaving mineral deposits, dulling, and etch marks.

Again, it is essential to have all natural hard surfaces protected with a high-quality penetrating sealant.

It's always better to be safe than sorry! Use only products which are specifically formulated for natural hard surfaces such as: neutral cleaner with conditional agents, special grout cleaner, and penetrating sealants. If questions arise as to which products are best for specific applications, consult a local tile store or call North Bay Restoration.

The Good News: Once a regular maintenance program has been developed, the cleaning/maintenance process will become second nature. You'll find the benefits of owning natural surfaces (with its unique beauty and radiance) will far outweigh their need for a little extra care, but if desired, we're just a phone call away.

We offer low-cost, routine, professional maintenance.

Choose a Professional to Protect Your Investment!

North Bay Restoration provides consultation, maintenance, and repair services for all natural stone, tile, and concrete. We're also happy to answer questions concerning installations, maintenance, or restoration.

Talking time to educate our clients and help them protect their investments is regular business for North Bay Restoration. Our long list of satisfied customers includes property owners, builders, designers, realtors, and insurance companies. Give us a call at North Bay Restoration for creative innovative solutions for all natural hard surfaces.

Compliments of North Bay Restoration

Tim Lee * 707.328.1223
www.northbayrestoration.com

License 752255 * Bonded * Insured

Natural Hard-Surface Restoration Specialists:

- Residential & Commercial
- Creative Concrete Finishes
- Estate Maintenance Management
- Deep Cleaning,
Pressure Washing,
Grout Haze Removal
- Applications of Sealants, Specialty Coats, & Color Stains
- Tile Replacement,
Natural-Stone Crack Repairs
- Grout Repairs,
Epoxy & Color Staining
- Polishing, Honing, Grinding, Lippage Removal
- Transparent Slip Protection
- Consultation,
Product Recommendations