

Travertine Floors – Care and Maintenance

One of the more popular stone types used in the building market is travertine. It shares almost the same mineral composition of marble and limestone, but its unique color swirls makes it a popular choice. The small cavities that characterize travertine are created when natural gases escape through the stone but it does not mean that these holes makes it less durable.

What makes travertine unique is that the stone can be cut perpendicular to the bedding plain that exposes a linear pattern known as the vein cut or it can be cut across the surface also known as the cross cut. These cuts shows off the cloud like patterns in the stone.

Travertine has 2 common finishes of which is either polished or honed. Each of this 2 finishes offers a style of its own. However, the most popular finish is honed for travertine with every known travertine stone type looking their best when it is honed. The holes on the stone are filled during production with either cementitious, epoxy or polyester fillers. It is then honed with suitable diamond abrasives into a non - reflective but smooth surface. This makes travertine a great choice for floors, bathrooms and generally in all locations.



What is Travertine?

Travertine is a kind of limestone. It can be left in its natural state even without polishing. It is a sedimentary rock that is formed from calcareous remains of plants and animals or precipitated from solution. It is basically natural Calcium Carbonate and yields lime when heated. Its hardness vary and it can be etched with acids. It is a porous material with many cavities that can be filled

with cementitious, polyester or epoxy fillers. Using polishing powders on travertine allows the powder to accumulate in the holes making it difficult to clean.

Being one of the many popular natural stone choices, travertine is used for paving patios and garden paths apart from being used as internal flooring. It is characterized by uneven holes and troughs on its surface. It comes in different colors like cream, gold, gray, silver and brown. These colors coordinate easily with almost any design. This natural stone is commonly available in tile sizes for floor installations.

Unfortunately travertine is etched by acidic liquids, foodstuff, alcoholic beverages, soft drinks, fruit juices, etc even after it has been sealed. Acid based cleaning chemicals ruins travertine. Harsh chemicals like bleach and chlorine also has the same damaging effect. It will etch, roughen or erode the surface on contact.

The porous nature of Travertine allows the absorption of oils and other potential staining liquids to absorb and stain its surface and generally stains more easily than marble or limestone. Thus, using travertine in your kitchen or a frequently used bathroom will incur high costs for ongoing maintenance and its needs to be [sealed](#) well periodically to prevent stains caused by absorbing liquids. Using a neutral or mild alkaline based cleaner is essential to keep the surface and grout clean at all times. We strongly recommend the use of [Lithofin MN Easy-Care](#) along with our [Rubbermaid Microfibre Pulse Mop](#) for regular care when mopping travertine floors.

Travertine can be used as a kitchen benchtop, but it has a high maintenance cost factor just like that of marble or limestone. Bench tops created using these stone types are often faced with acid etch marks and this can only be fixed by mechanically grinding off the surface using suitable diamond abrasives. Damaged areas can always be restored as natural stone slabs are homogeneous by nature.

For floors, the most amazing thing about using travertine is that it opens up small areas in any room and makes them look more spacious and airy. Surface finish for travertine varies but not all are capable of having a proper polished finish but just the harder types. Travertine will never have the same polished look like that of marble and granite. As mentioned earlier, the most popular choice is certainly honed finished travertine.

The best way to deal with travertine floor tiles which are highly absorbent and porous is to have it sealed periodically with a [reputable penetrating sealer](#) to prevent potential staining when penetrating oils or water based liquids gets in contact with the surface. We recommend that floors get cleaned and sealed every 2 years in wet areas and 5 years in dry ones.

For ongoing care of travertine floor surfaces

Clean up spills immediately to lessen damages. Blot the spill and not spread it around.

Use entrance and exit floor mats to trap dirt, grit and soil from causing pre-mature wear on the floors.

Use a proper microfibre dust-mop and wet-mop. You should refrain from sweeping the floors. An alternative to dust mopping is to use a dry vacuum with the appropriate pick-up tool. Dust-mopping or vacuuming of the floors should be done as often as possible. Wet-mopping the floors should be done every week or twice a month minimally for non - commercial applications. Our all in one

[Rubbermaid Microfibre Pulse Mop](#) will assist you with this task and will help save you minimally 50% of the time spent on mopping floors.

We recommend that [Lithofin MN Easy-Care](#) be used as the cleaning product of choice when mopping the floors. This German product is formulated to give the surface the ongoing care it needs. It is imperative that no other chemicals be used on travertine surfaces including all acid containing cleaners, chlorine, bleach and all the other nasties. Abrasive cleaners are to be avoided all together.

Keep surface free of acidic substances.

Apply a reputable [penetrating sealer](#) periodically to protect the surface from getting stained.

With over 20 years of collective experience in the natural stone industry, Stone Doctor Australia offers you free consultation. Should you need any assistance in caring and advice on maintaining your natural stone floors or benchtops or if you have any questions with regards to restoring & sealing these surfaces, feel free to call us at 03-9429-1223 or email us at admin@stonedoctor.com.au.