



## Cleaning Natural Stone

Welcome to modern stone technologies online training video series. In this training video we're going to cover the cleaning process for natural stone surfaces. Natural stone surfaces are often selected due to their balance of beauty and durability. But they can also be very sensitive to many household cleaners and harsh chemicals. Part of becoming a natural stone professional is to know which types of cleaners can be used effectively and which ones should be avoided at all costs. Make sure that when you arrive at the job you're equip with the right types of cleaners so that you don't cause any damage to the floor essentially creating more work and less profits for you. Not only does this take away from the amount of money that you'll make, but it also could ruin your reputation as the best natural stone restorer in your area.

As a rule of thumb, acid cleaners should never be used on a natural stone surface. The use of acidic cleaners will etch the stone resulting in a dull spotting effect that could require multiple steps to restore. Professional alkaline based cleaners such as Modern Stone Technologies, Modern Clean are specifically formulated to be aggressive yet safe to use on natural stone surfaces. Alkaline cleaners are designed to cut through stubborn grease and organic build-up as well as stripping over-sealed floors. Modern Clean can also be used to remove mild waxes such as Mop & Glow without damaging the underlying surface. It's important to know that not all alkaline cleaners are created equally. Using an alkaline cleaner that is designed for ceramic or porcelain surfaces, such as Modern Stone Technologies, Ultra Clean, may damage natural stone surfaces. Neutral pH cleaners such as Modern Stone's Balance can also be used on sealed natural stone floors without removing the sealer or damaging the surface.

Here is a list of the equipment needed for cleaning natural stone surfaces. A portable extractor or truck mount system or similar extractor such as a Shop-Vac or any dry/wet vacuum. A medium nylon bristle deck brush or similar agitation brush, a low pressure pump-up sprayer, a heavy duty string mop and mop bucket and a high alkaline stone safe cleaner such as Modern Stone Technologies' Modern Clean. And for cleaning sealed natural stone surfaces, Modern Stone Technologies' Balance.

The first step of cleaning a natural stone surface is proper preparation of the area to be cleaned. This includes sweeping or vacuuming the area and protecting the surrounding surfaces with painters tape and plastic. Once the area is cleared of any debris apply the cleaner using a pump-up sprayer or a heavy duty string mop. Make note that the cleaner should be applied heavy enough to allow for up to 10 minutes of dwell time and even longer when trying to remove heavy build-up or stripping waxes or sealers. One of the most important things when cleaning a natural stone surface is to allow the cleaners do what they're designed to do. A minimum of five minutes of dwell time is required to allow the soils to break down prior to agitation and extraction. Once the cleaner has been allowed enough dwell time proper agitation is required. This is going to be the case whether using a truck mount or portable or going with a wet/dry vacuum and a bucket of water. High pressure and heat is not a substitution for agitation. Agitation can be done using a medium bristle deck brush or a stand-up grout brush or a medium bristle brush driver for the floor machine. Tumbled stones or tiles with pits and grooves may require longer dwell time or extra agitation in some of the areas. Once the area has been properly agitated, use a wet/dry vacuum to extract the dirty water and cleaning solution. Once all the dirty water and cleaning solution has been extracted, use a 5 gallon bucket of water to rinse the floors properly. Having a truck mount system or a portable extractor will eliminate this second step because of the ability to rinse and extract in one step. This is a very important step because leaving excess cleaning residue on the floor could result in a cloudy or sticky finish. Dirt and other debris can then build-up in that excess residue. Again, the most effective way to rinse a floor is using a truck mount or a portable unit that allows rinsing and extraction in one step, but using a bucket of water and a wet/dry vacuum is also just as effective. While this method is equally effective it's a little bit more time consuming so slightly less efficient. Finally, drying the floors with cotton towels will ensure that any puddles of water are not left behind and that any excess dirt is removed.

As a contractor, it is very important to set the expectations properly with the customers. Just because the floors have been cleaned properly does not mean that everything is going to be removed. With natural stone surfaces it is very possible for staining and other things that cleaning alone will not take care of.

This concludes the natural stone surface cleaning video. Thank you for watching and we'll see you in the next video.