



Sealing Natural Stone

In this training video we will be covering the sealing process using penetrating and enhancing sealers. Sealing a natural stone's surface will preserve its natural beauty, will make it easier to maintain and when using the right product can be used to enhance the colors already naturally present in the stone. Modern Stone Technologies offers a variety of penetrating sealers that can be used to seal all types of surfaces; from travertine and marble to concrete and grout. Choosing the best type of sealer for the customer's demand is what sets the true professional apart from the competition. You can learn more about the different types of sealers and what to expect from each one in the "Types of Sealers" video included in this training series.

In this training video we will be using the penetrating natural look sealer, Clear Guard-solvent. Penetrating and enhancing sealers come in both water and solvent-based formulas. Deciding which formula to use will depend on the type of surface that will be sealed. For more dense surfaces such as travertine and marble, use a solvent-based sealer and for more porous surfaces such as grout or concrete use a water based sealer. Natural look, penetrating sealers are design to penetrate past the surface tension of the stone effectively sealing off the pores at the surface while leaving the stones in their natural state. While enhancing sealers also penetrate past the surface tension of the stone, they will actually darken or enhance the stone's surface.

Here is a list of the equipment needed to seal or enhance a natural stone surface. A floor buffer with a pad driver and white buffing pad, a low pressure pump-up sprayer, a lambs wool applicator or similar applicator pad, terry cloth towels, an optional cotton bonnet buffing pad, and one of Modern Stone Technologies penetrating or enhancing sealers. The penetrating sealers offered by Modern Stone Technologies are Clear Guard water-based and solvent-based, select seal, rapid seal and grout sealer Pro. The enhancing sealer available from Modern Stone Technologies is Reveal & Seal water-based and solvent-based. On this video we will be working on a honed travertine floor. It will also show the results of Reveal & Seal on a natural slate floor. Prior to sealing make sure that the stone has been cleaned and cleared of all debris. To learn more about the cleaning process on the natural stone view the Cleaning Video included in this training series.

Once the surface has dried, use a low pressure pump up sprayer to apply the sealer over the area that is to be sealed. Keep the areas manageable; work in small enough areas that the sealer can successfully be spread across the floor without walking over the areas that have been sprayed. Once the sealer has been sprayed on the floor, use a lamb's wool applicator to spread the sealer evenly over the area. Once the sealer has been spread, move on to the next section. It is important that the lamb's wool applicator has been saturated with the sealer prior to spreading. If the applicator pad has not been saturated it will absorb the sealer instead of spread it over the area. Allow for the sealer to set for 20 to 30 minutes. During this time, a majority of the sealer will penetrate past the surface tension of the stone. Identify these areas by looking for dull patches throughout. Once the floor has a patchy finish, it is time to buff off the excess seal. Understand that after 30 min. any excess sealer left on the tile surface will not penetrate and will not evaporate. If the excess sealer is not removed it will cure on the surface leaving a sticky or in some cases, slippery finish. Depending on the product used, it will also affect the appearance of the stone's surface. The most effective way to buff the excess sealer off of the floor is to use a floor machine with either a cotton bonnet pad or a regular buffing pad with terrycloth tiles underneath it. Using cotton towels is a more cost efficient method of buffing the excess sealer off of the tiles than using a cotton bonnet pad. Here is an example of a technician placing terry cloth towels underneath his floor machine. You want to buff the floors with an absorbent material which is why towels or cotton bonnets work the best. You will buff the floors until all of the excess sealer has been removed. This may take multiple passes and require you to switch out the terrycloth towels or cotton bonnet pad periodically. Once the sealer has been removed, the stones should feel completely natural. If there is any residue still present on the surface, continue to buff the surfaces until there is not.

Apply enhancing sealers in the exact same method used to apply penetrating sealers. The difference between enhancing and penetrating sealers is that the enhancing sealers will darken the stone's surface and brighten the colors already present in the stone. Notice the difference between this slate floor before and using reveal and seal. The stones are still at a matte finish, yet are enhanced. Enhancing sealers work best on more porous surfaces such as slate, brick, concrete, and flag stone. They are less effective on denser surfaces such as marble, granite and polished stones.

Stone surfaces should be re-sealed approximately every 3-4 years depending on the amount of traffic the floors will receive. This concludes the sealing natural stone tutorial video. Thank you for watching and we'll see you in the next video.