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From stone to ceramic

Surfaces could apply to almost everything, but we use the term to refer to the top layer of material on our designs, be it the natural stone of our kitchen work surfaces or the tiles that cover walls and floors.

Some of our surfaces are composites (a blend of a few materials or more), others are entirely natural, some are glazed or polished, others are honed and matte, and so the care details vary from piece to piece. We've included advice for each one in this guide.

And if you're wondering about timber, we cover how to care for that in its very own volume, because so much of what we make uses natural wood. Request a copy of volume one for all the details, or find it online at neptune.com/takingcare.

Caring for marble

We use Carrara marble on kitchen and bathroom work surfaces as well as on our tiles. It's a beautiful, natural material, but it's one that's delicate and requires more hand-on care than many other stones. And remember, the veining patterns occur naturally so variation in size and tone is not just to be expected, but enjoyed.

WORK SURFACES

Whether you choose a honed or polished finish, our marble worktops all come pre-sealed, but that doesn't mean they won't stain easily – it just protects them for a little longer. Any spills need to be wiped up as quickly as possible to stop them from setting in, and then dried with a clean cloth straight after. Strong colours (like red wine) and things with high acid content (such as lemon juice or vinegar) can quickly cause pits in the surface.

It's all too easy when doing a spot of housework to use the same cloth to wipe marble. But if you use abrasive-, bleach- or acid-based cleaning products, they can cause marble to perish. Instead, wipe your surface with a damp e-cloth as regularly as you need. Remember to not leave

wet cloths on your work surface though.

For more 'intense' cleaning, the only thing we recommend using is our Lithofin Stone Care kit, which is available in store. Inside it you'll find:

Easy Clean – for daily cleaning and removal of fresh marks.

Power Clean – for more stubborn marks and stains.

Stain Stop – for resealing your marble every one–two years to keep it at it's best.

Wash & Clean – for marble floor tiling in particular. It's a more powerful solution whose effects last for longer, ideal for maintaining a spotless floor.

This isn't part of our kit, but is available to buy separately at lithofin.co.uk.

We've included instructions on how to use each one inside the packaging and on each bottle.

TILES

Natural marble is very porous so needs to be sealed correctly to reduce its absorption. Even sealed, it'll still absorb moisture and stain easily. So, try not to leave water

sitting on the surface for long periods. If you're using marble tiles in a bathroom, after a shower, try to use a squeegee to wipe water droplets from the walls; after a bath, use a hand towel to dry any splashes.

Our marble tiles don't come sealed, so they'll need to be, properly, by a professional once they've been glued into place but before being grouted, as any coloured grout (even white) will irrevocably stain the porous marble. It's all very straightforward but needs to be done in this order:

1. Fix the tiles into position on your chosen surface with adhesive. Leave until both adhesive and wall (or floor) are completely dry. This could take seven days or even longer.
2. The tiles need to then be sealed with Lithofin Stain Stop. They may look darker to start with, but will return to their pre-sealed colour once completely dry (which will take about 12 hours).
3. Once the sealed tiles are completely dry, they can then be grouted.

When it comes to cleaning, just follow the same advice given earlier for marble work surfaces.

Caring for granite

Granite is another natural stone, but is far more durable than marble. Depending on the finish you've chosen, it generally doesn't stain as easily as marble, but we always recommend cleaning up spills as quickly as possible.

For day-to-day cleaning, a damp e-cloth followed by a dry one is all that's needed, and for more thorough cleaning, use our Lithofin Stone Care kit.

If you're using granite in an outdoor area, try not to assume sunlight will help any water to evaporate. Eventually it would dry out, but granite is slightly porous so it will also absorb some of the liquid. Clean it in the same way that you would indoors, following the advice above, and covering it when it's not in use.

Caring for composite stone

QUARTZ

We use quartz as an alternative to natural stones for our work surfaces. It's lower maintenance and practical. Much like granite, all that's needed to clean it is a damp e-cloth, and we suggest rubbing the surface afterwards with a dry one to prevent any streaky water marks. For a deeper clean, we advise that you use our Lithofin Stone Care kit.

CERAMIC AND DEKTON

These two materials are our most robust of all. They're scratch-resistant, heat-resistant and waterproof.

It's so tempting to use a work surface cleaner, but it's really not needed and it won't make them any cleaner than hot soapy water.

CONCRETE

Instead of using solid concrete, we prefer a blend that melds it with fibreglass – it makes it more lightweight than the full concrete version.

We seal the tabletop with three protective coats of resin so it has incredible resilience to scratches and staining.

Even so, it's still a good idea to use coasters and table mats and be mindful that knocks and scrapes (from cutlery or dragging crockery across the surface) can cause it to chip quite easily – but it's something that only adds to its rugged character.

When it comes to cleaning, like with everything, try to mop up spills as quickly as possible while the area is still wet to avoid a stain setting in; just use a damp e-cloth. For stubborn marks, avoid scouring pads; instead add a dash of non-acidic detergent to your e-cloth and that should do the job.

Stone in the garden

Like with all of our garden furniture, while they've been designed to stand up to the elements, they'll always fare far better when covered and protected during downpours and wintery months.

We've written a garden-specific care guide which has all the advice you need for looking after garden furniture – from stone and beyond.

Caring for tiles and ceramics

Our ceramic wall tiles and basins ask very little from you. Regular cleaning will reduce the build-up of watermarks and slow down any grout or sealant discolouration, and takes less time than doing a deeper clean every now and then. An e-cloth and a mild detergent mixed with a small amount of water is all that's needed. Abrasive cleaners can damage the glaze, so tread carefully and definitely avoid any with an acid base.

While our floor tiles come pre-sealed, you might want to add another layer of surface protection with a liquid wax or polish. Our Tamworth tiles aren't pre-sealed however, so you must use a terracotta sealant on these before any grouting.

Like with all of our designs, we recommend that you don't use any abrasive cleaning products to care for your tiles. Instead, choose one that's milder, or better still, Lithofin Wash & Clean – our go-to option.

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neptune.com/takingcare

Other care guides available

Volume one: timber

Volume two: metal & glass

Volume three: fabric

Volume four: surfaces

Volume five: garden

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