

The Ultimate Homeowner's Guide To Marble Maintenance



Improve The Look & Extend
The Life Of Your Marble

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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Kevin Ressler is the Founder of MK Products®, specializing in daily and intense cleaning, protecting and enhancing of all types of natural stone for more than 17 years.

With over 25 years of industry experience in natural stone maintenance and installations through MarbleKare USA®, Kevin offers a wealth of knowledge and expertise in caring for natural stone and has become a trusted leader in the industry.

With a passion to help customers maintain the look and life of their marble, Kevin hired a reputable chemist to help create MK Products®. Together they continue to innovate natural stone cleaning solutions as the industry evolves.

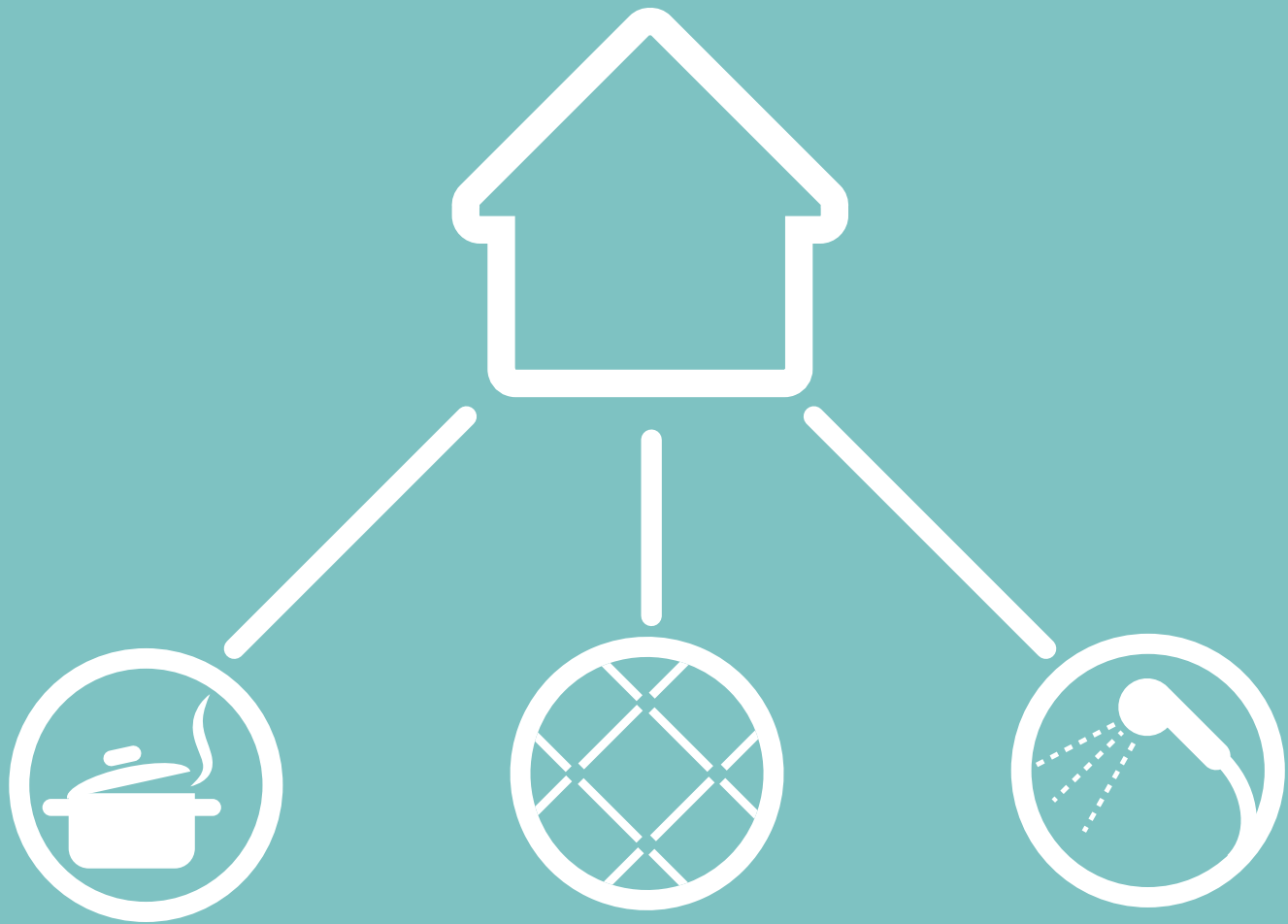
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For the latest in natural stone maintenance tips, follow Kevin's Blog at:
<http://blog.marblekareproducts.com>



MARBLE SURFACE TYPES

3 Common Marble Surfaces in your home:



In The Kitchen:
countertops,
backsplash,
floors

Living Area Floors:
family rooms,
dining rooms,
bedrooms,
foyers, stairs, hallways

Bathrooms:
countertops,
shower & tub walls,
floors

MARBLE FINISHES

Honed marble

Honed marble has a low luster finish, which gives the surface a smooth, satin-like appearance. A matte marble finish is non-reflective and lighter in appearance than a honed finished. Scratches on these two finish are less obvious than on highly polished marble, but both surfaces will be more susceptible to stains if left unprotected.



Highly polished marble

Polished marble is highly reflective and mirror-like, and when properly sealed will withstand stains as well as a honed or matte finish. But, because of the glossy surface, polished marble will more easily



a tip to know: Just because you now have a highly polished or honed finished floor, you're not stuck with it -- you can change the appearance of your marble the next time you refinish the floor.

DAILY MARBLE CLEANING

Daily Cleaning For Showers, Countertops and Floors

Cleaning Keywords To Know:



Etching: Etch marks are caused by acidic liquids that remove the finish on the surface of the stone. Some liquids will etch the finish but not leave a stain. Others will both etch and stain.



Neutral Cleaner: A cleaner that is highly recommended for natural stone surfaces such as marble with a pH level of around 7.



Spot Removal Kit: A kit with all the essential cleaning products and instructions to care for minor etching that has occurred on your marble surfaces.

DAILY MARBLE CLEANING



DAILY CLEANING FOR SHOWERS

What You'll Need:

- Squeegee
- Daily Marble Shower Cleaner



One very simple preventive care tip: use a squeegee. Everyday. We've seen the showers of homeowners who have followed this rule for many years and their marble still looks brand new!

Assuming your marble shower is already properly sealed, simply using a squeegee and cleaning regularly with a **proper marble shower cleaner** will preserve the look and state of your beautiful marble shower for years and years.

DAILY MARBLE CLEANING



DAILY CLEANING FOR COUNTERTOPS

What You'll Need:

- Clean Terry Cloth or Paper Towels
- Daily Marble Counter Cleaner (safe for use on all finishes)
- Daily Marble and Granite Top Cleaner (especially formulated for polished surfaces)

Simply spray and wipe counter with either product and voila! - clean marble countertops.

Beware of homemade and DIY remedies that you find online or hear about from others. Following the advice of someone who is not an experienced professional can end up damaging your luxurious marble countertop and costing you more money in the long run.



a tip to know: Make a habit of cleaning spills immediately, never leave spilled liquid and organic substances on your counters as this may etch the surface and is not easily removed.

DAILY MARBLE CLEANING



DAILY CLEANING FOR MARBLE FLOORS

What You'll Need:

- Dust Mop or Vacuum with Soft Bristle Attachment
- Wet Mop
- Neutral Marble Floor Cleaner (ideally one with a conditioning agent)

Clean marble floors weekly by following these steps:

Step 1: Remove the "invisible" grit that gets tracked onto your marble floor everyday (it acts like sandpaper on the floor's finish) by using a dust mop or vacuum with soft bristle attachment.

Step 2: Damp mop marble surface with a "neutral" cleaner containing a ph of 7-8.5.

Note: Some neutral cleaners contain an extra conditioning agent that will leave your marble floor with a gleaming streak-free finish. A safe, **effective and efficient product** for both polished and unpolished marble makes daily cleaning very easy.

DAILY MARBLE CLEANING



DAILY CLEANING FOR MARBLE FLOORS

Beware of these products that will etch marble tiles:

- Products Containing Wax (mop and shine products will cause wax build up that traps dirt and must be stripped off to restore)
- Vinegar (highly acidic and will etch marble surfaces)
- Scented Products (leaves streaks)
- Bleach (too harsh)

Never forget that marble floors are natural, from the earth, and contain calcium carbonate and can easily be damaged with the wrong cleaning product.



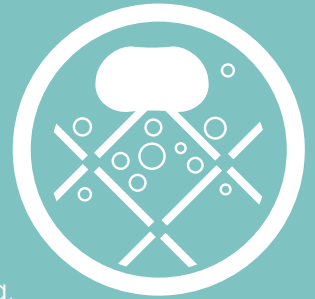
a tip to know: Keep a spot removal kit handy for minor etching caused from spills, pet stains, etc. on marble floors.

A marble cleaning spot removal kit should contain:

1. A safe marble polish and spot remover product.
2. A neutral cleaning product.
3. A penetrating sealing product.
4. Measuring spoon.
5. Hand buffing pads.
6. Sponge.
7. Terry cloth towel.
8. Rubber gloves.

INTENSE MARBLE CLEANING

Aggressive Yet Gentle Cleaning Solutions For Marble Showers



Diagnosing The Problem

If marble tile appears to be stained to the point of damage, it's important to have it evaluated by an industry expert. With the variety of stains such as etching, mold and mildew on the tile, or mold and mildew on the grout, the severity of damage and cleaning needed can be hard to diagnose without a professional.

Marble Tile Streaks & Spots

If there are some stubborn streaks and spots on the marble tile, but the condition of the marble is not so bad, further investigation can be done before having an evaluation done. Try cleaning it with a **safe, streak-free, daily marble shower cleaner** and if that does not remove the stains there is probably some etching going on.

Etching is essentially a "burn" in natural stone from a chemical reaction between the calcium in the marble and whatever was left on the surface.

Cleaning products that are not made for marble tiles can leave long white drip marks in the stone and can't be removed except from a professional refinishing and polishing job. This is why it is critical to make sure anyone caring for the marble shower in your home is using the best products.

Mold & Mildew On Marble Shower Walls

If there is mold and mildew on your marble tiles, a deeper clean might be needed with a **mold and mildew marble shower cleaner** that does not contain harsh chemicals. But, if this still does not rid your surfaces of mold you will need to call a professional for further evaluation.

Mold that has seeped through your grout can be very damaging and require re-grouting of your entire marble shower, which is very expensive. Again, another reason why preventive care is critical!

PROTECT & ENHANCE

Polish, Repair, Seal

Liquid Polishing For Marble Countertops



PROTECT & ENHANCE Polish

LIQUID POLISHING FOR MARBLE COUNTERTOPS

What You'll Need:

- Soft, Clean Terry Cloth
- Liquid Marble Polishing Product



Liquid polish for marble countertops is meant for periodic polishing to keep polished marble countertops impressively shiny.

Marble polishing brings out the shine, enhances the natural stone color and helps protect marble countertops and wall surfaces from watermarks. Also, regular polishing can help hide etches and abrasions in marble surface.

Step 1: Prepare the Surface

Before applying liquid polish, it's best to clean the surface with a daily counter cleaner safe for marble countertops so that food or grease is not present.

Step 2: Apply Polish

After preparing the surface, apply liquid marble polish and buff with a clean terry cloth or paper towel in a circular motion until polish is no longer visible.



a tip to know: For best results, apply polish in small amounts; use a fresh terry cloth for final polishing.

PROTECT & ENHANCE

Repair

SPOT REMOVAL AND HOLE REPAIR

ENHANCE MARBLE SURFACES WITH SPOT REMOVAL AND HOLE REPAIR

Small spots caused by acidic liquids that have etched a marble require the right tools and products to remove them. Minor pits and cracks can be discouraging to see on marble countertop or floors as well, but with the right tools these, too, can be repaired.

TWO KITS TO GO BEYOND DAILY MARBLE CLEANING

1. A Spot Removal Kit

Etches on polished marble surfaces are created when acidic liquids such as chemicals, juices, coffee, tea, wine, vinegar, etc. are left on the surface long enough to "burn" or etch the stone. Removal is simple and easy with a marble spot removal kit complete with step-by-step instructions.

A **marble cleaning spot removal kit** contains:

1. A safe marble polish and spot remover product.
2. A neutral cleaning product.
3. A penetrating sealing product.
4. Measuring spoon.
5. Hand buffing pads.
6. Sponge.
7. Terry cloth towel.
8. Rubber gloves.



PROTECT & ENHANCE

Repair

2. A Hole Repair Kit

Some accidents on marble floors or countertop will create a small hole, crack, or chip. A **marble hole repair kit** with step-by-step instructions is probably the quickest and safest way to repair these minor holes without hiring a professional. Be sure the filler in the kit matches the color of the marble and blends well.

A good marble hole repair kit should contain:

1. One can of filler. (white)
2. Hardener material.
3. Coloring tint. (typical color is brown, but other colors are available)
4. Stirring sticks. (large, medium, small)
5. Mixing cups (about 3 oz. in size)
6. Straight edge razors.
7. Fine steel wool.
8. Rubber gloves.



The benefit of purchasing a kit for marble etchings is eliminating the need to call in a service professional. Additionally, you don't have to buy full-sized amounts of each product and get step-by-step instructions to follow created by a professional.

PROTECT & ENHANCE Seal

HOW TO USE A PENETRATING SEALER



Why Use A Sealer?

Sealer provides protection against etching created by spills by allowing more time to remove them from the surface. Without sealer, spills can seep immediately into the stone causing unwanted damage. Your investment in gorgeous marble stone deserves every bit of return possible.

The types of stains marble sealer will protect against are ones from acidic liquids and organic substances that can soil marble by penetrating into the pores and staining the surface. Even water with minerals in it can stain a marble surface, especially without a sealer.

When To Seal and How Often

When natural wear as spills start penetrating the surface quickly and the stone becomes less resilient to etching it is an appropriate time to apply sealer.

Sealing can be done as often as desired or felt necessary, but on average we recommend the minimum of once a year. Though, some customers may prefer every 6 months or less.

Sealers won't completely eliminate stains on marble surfaces, but will certainly give an added measure of protection and make future spills easier to clean.

PROTECT & ENHANCE Seal

THE MARBLE SEALING PROCESS

Marble sealer can be applied to countertops, floors, tile and grout.

What You'll Need:

- For Countertops: Clean Terry Cloth
- For Floors: Lamb's Wool Applicator, Paint Pad or Roller

The Basics of Before and After Sealing:

Depending on the condition of the marble, it may need refinishing, spot remove, repair, intensive cleaning, or use of a daily cleaner before the sealing process. When in doubt about the condition of the marble, feel free to contact us with your questions! The minimum maintenance required after the sealing process is complete is just a simple and easy daily cleaning routine. Additionally, it helps to have a **marble spot removal** or **hole repair kit** handy for those accidents and spills that daily cleaning won't take care of.

How A Good Marble Sealer Works:

A **penetrating marble sealer** will absorb into the pores of a marble surface and provide a seal that protects against stains and dirt. The sealer then needs time to cure and be left untouched for about 3-5 hours. Make sure to not get any liquids or substances on the marble for about 48 hours after application. If sealing marble outdoors, take into account the natural elements outside like tree sap, pollen, etc. We recommend more cleaning and pressure washing to marble surfaces outdoors if you wish to seal less often. Either way, sealer works best when the marble surface is thoroughly cleaned before sealing.

PROTECT & ENHANCE

Seal

What To Look For In A Good Marble Sealer:

Because of the porous nature of marble, it needs to be able to breath. A marble sealer that allows for efficient vapor transmission is very important. Another thing to look for is a marble sealer that does not change the color or appearance of the surface. Because of other sealers out there that do this, many people have opted to stay away from sealing their marble. A marble sealer should penetrate deep into the pores, into those places that stains like to seep into, and remain invisible. Into the pores are where protection is key, but this fact is often overlooked.

Sealer can be found as solvent-based or water-based. Many people prefer water-based sealers since they do not emit fumes and are more environmentally friendly. While both water and solvent-based sealers are highly effective, a **solvent-based marble sealer** penetrates more efficiently into highly polished surfaces. This is because polished surfaces have tighter pores than honed or matte surfaces.

How Sealer Fits Into The Overall Maintenance of Marble

For brand new marble, sealer is the first step in protecting natural stone and investing in its longevity. Additionally, daily care with a neutral cleaning product, spot removal as necessary, regular liquid polishing, and professional refinishing all play a pivotal role in the overall maintenance of marble surfaces.

MARBLE INSTALLATION

How to Choose The Right Vendor

After going through marble selections and picturing what you want in your home you're likely ready to contact an installer, but you need to make a sound choice. Knowing how to hire the right vendor is critical to the look and performance of your marble investment. Read on to learn the qualities to look for in a vendor, what to ask, and what the steps to installation are.

Four Qualities of A Reliable Marble Installation Technician



Questions to Ask



The Installation Process



After Installation



MARBLE INSTALLATION

How to Choose The Right Vendor

Four Qualities of A Reliable Marble Installation Technician



1. Detail-Oriented

There are many important details involved in the installation of marble in your home. Marble tiles are soft, fragile and come on large shipments from countries as far away as Italy and India. Not being prepared for all the details and being inexperienced with marble installation can lead to a series of costly mistakes that no homeowner should have to pay for.

2. Honest

When you're looking for a vendor always consider quality versus price. A company offering to do a marble installation for a very low price is either inexperienced or willing to cut corners to get the job done. MarbleKare has seen a variety of scenarios over the years with customers having us come and fix what an inexperienced installer has done.

Recently, we've seen a failed installation causing up to \$30,000.00 in corrections needed for a floor. Oftentimes, customers are simply trying to save money with the less expensive installer, but cheaper service probably means a less experienced vendor and the increased risk of headaches in the future.

As a side note on the price of different natural stones, I've found that living near a port that receives shipments can decrease your cost compared to purchasing natural stone further inland where it can cost almost 4 times more.

MARBLE INSTALLATION

How to Choose The Right Vendor

Four Qualities of A Reliable Marble Installation Technician



3. Credentialed

An installer should be licensed, have certifications, a substantial amount of experience and going through continuing education to keep up to date with the latest information and best practices of installing marble in your home.

A good installer will get the job done efficiently, but will not spend more or less time on an installation than needed. What you certainly do not want is someone who is going to rush through the project. A marble installation technician does everything to ensure the job is being done right.

4. Specialized

A natural stone installer who specializes mainly or solely in natural stone is going to understand the product and installation process a lot better than someone who's main focus is something else.

MARBLE INSTALLATION

How to Choose The Right Vendor

Questions To Ask Your Marble Floor Installer



1. How many years of experience do you have?
2. What tools do you use? Do you use lasers for leveling slabs?
3. Do you have experience mud setting? (Mud setting is a process done to the floor to prepare it to accept the marble tile, providing a flat and level surface and lasting performance.)
4. How do you ensure you start in the right spot on a floor? (Not starting in the right area can affect leveling and consistency in the shade variations of the tile layout)

The Installation Process For Marble Floors



- Step 1:** A minimal grout joint is created.
- Step 2:** Marble tile is mud set using the right color setting material.
- Step 3:** A skim coat of thin set is applied to the floor surface and to the back of each marble tile (this ensures proper adhering for installation)
- Step 4:** Marble tile is removed from crate and inspected for color consistency then distributed carefully. Marble tile is also inspected for pieces with soft spots, and are placed in lower traffic areas of the home such as closets and corners and sides of a room.
- Step 5:** Installer educates homeowner on the proper care and maintenance of the marble floor and may provide a complimentary care kit.



a tip to know: A flat and level installation done by industry standards is extremely important.

MARBLE INSTALLATION

How to Choose The Right Vendor

Fabrication and Installation of Marble Countertops

- Step 1:** Choose your edging profile (such as eased, rounded, bull nosed, etc.)
- Step 2:** Choose your slab
- Step 3:** Installer professionally cleans and seals the surface
- Step 4:** Vendor educates you on the proper care and maintenance of your beautiful, new marble countertop, backsplash, etc.

After Installation



Here at MarbleKare we always educate our clients after an installation on the care of their new marble. We really believe setting them off on the right foot so we provide them with a complimentary “care kit” which may include a penetrating sealer, liquid polish and countertop cleaner. You can call us anytime to learn more about the proper care and maintenance of your marble installation.

Contact Us About Choosing The Best Marble For Your Lifestyle

If you're wondering if the kind of marble you're considering is the best choice for your lifestyle, we can help you make a wise decision. We'd love to answer any questions you have about the different types of marble available on the market and the level of care required for them.



Give us a call at 561.997.2636.

MARBLE RESTORATION

Diagnoses and Solutions



Diagnosing The Problem and When To Call A Professional



Diagnosis: Holes, Chips and Cracks



Solution: Hole Repair with Epoxy Filling

Difficulty Level: Beginner to Expert

- ooo **Beginner:** It's normal for marble to get chips and cracks after a while. For minor repairs you can purchase a hole repair kit from a natural stone cleaning supplier and do it on your own.
- **Expert:** If there are too many repairs to do or the damaged area is too large, it's best to have a professional come in and do an epoxy filling.

MARBLE RESTORATION

Diagnoses and Solutions



Diagnosis: Dirty Grout



Prescription: Grout Cleaning or Replacement



Difficulty: Intermediate to Expert

Cleaning grout without a professional can be done by using an intensive natural stone and grout cleaner.

If this does not provide desirable results, professional grout cleaning and even re-grouting might be necessary if grout has been severely neglected or improperly sealed / not sealed at all.

What To Expect:

Once grout is really dirty, it's difficult to ever get it back to looking like the day it was installed, unless re-grouted. Calling a professional will help you take the next best step:

1. A technician will come in and first clean the floor surface with an intensive, heavy-duty detergent that is still safe for marble. This intensive cleaner penetrates deep into grease, dirt, oil and stubborn grime.
2. After grout is cleaned and fully dry, you can choose if re-grouting is something you want to do based on the results.



Tip: Don't Re-Grout and Regret it: Seal Your Marble!

MARBLE RESTORATION

Diagnoses and Solutions

 **Diagnosis:** Heavily Soiled and High Traffic Area

 **Prescription:** Maintenance Cleaning and Sealing

●●● **Difficulty Level:** Expert

Depending on how often a surface is used, a service technician will suggest maintenance cleaning for the high traffic areas that are heavily soiled and dirty. Normally, a technician will recommend routine maintenance cleaning every 12-18 months for matte finished, honed or low luster marble surfaces.

What to Expect:

1. First the technician scrubs the floor with an intensive, heavy-duty cleaner that is still safe for marble surfaces (for showers they may use a mold mildew cleaner, if necessary).
2. Next, they will clean the floor with a neutral cleaner.
3. Finally, once completely dried the technician seals the surface with a penetrating sealer product followed by a final buffing with a white polishing pad.

MARBLE RESTORATION

Diagnoses and Solutions

 **Diagnosis:** Slightly Worn, Light Scratches

 **Prescription:** Compound Polishing and Sealing

●●● **Difficulty Level:** Expert

This procedure is less expensive than diamond refinishing, but if the marble floors are extremely worn a compound polish will only be a waste of time and money. Therefore, it's important to consult with your restoration professional if this is the case.

Compound polishing should only be done when the floor is not badly worn but still is slightly dull with light scratches.

What To Expect:

1. A technician will come into your home with special tools and products to do the compound polishing procedure.
2. After the technician is finished polishing, the marble floor should be cleaned thoroughly with a neutral cleaner, left to completely dry.
3. Once cleaned and completely dry, floors are sealed with a penetrating sealer for protection.

MARBLE RESTORATION

Diagnoses and Solutions

 **Diagnosis:** Regular Everyday Wear

 **Solution:** Maintenance Polishing

●●● **Difficulty Level:** Expert

Hire a cleaning technician to slow down everyday wear and tear from foot traffic on polished marble surfaces. This service is recommended for keeping your polished marble looking it's very best.

If the traffic on your marble is very low to minimal, we recommend this be done every other year.

What To Expect:

Maintenance polishing is simple and not messy at all.

1. A maintenance technician will come to your home with a floor polishing machine.
2. Open areas may be polished while moving small furniture and throw rugs.
3. As always, the homeowner should use a neutral cleaner for daily maintenance.

MARBLE RESTORATION

Diagnoses and Solutions

 **Diagnosis:** Scratched, Dull & Badly Worn

 **Solution:** Diamond Polishing

●●● **Difficulty Level:** Expert

Diamond polishing is an intense form of refinishing using diamond pads with a floor polishing machine and requires a service professional.

Diamond polishing establishes a new stone surface. Once the new stone surface is established, the desired finish can be created anywhere from honed to a high polish.

What to Expect:

1. The process may require several diamond pads depending on the type of and wear to the marble.
2. When a technician does diamond polishing, the pads are lubricated with water during the entire process to eliminate dust.
3. The polishing process will vary depending on what kind of finish is chosen. Once the finishing is complete, the floor is rinsed and dried.
4. After drying is done, a penetrating sealer is applied. This is an important step in protecting newly refinished marble floors from oils and stains.



a tip to know: If truly high shine: look in floor under ceiling light, you should be able to read the black lettering in the light bulb in the reflection.



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