



Hard Surface Guide

Dear Homeowner,

We know Cleaning hard surfaces isn't easy.

The biggest problem we all face with today's hard surfaces is 'protection' or 'repellency'. Most surfaces have not been properly sealed if at all. Hard surfaces that are unsealed or are sealed with poor quality sealers are a sponge for oil, food or beverage spills which can result in permanent staining. Proper sealing can and will lead to easier maintenance. This will protect your hard surface investments allowing you to take proper care of them adding beauty and value to your home.

Did you know?

- Vinegar and ammonia can damage most sealers
- Most contractors do not seal the surfaces they install
- Many floor cleaning products leave a residue that can inhibit sealers and attract soil faster.

In this fact-filled report you will learn how to properly maintain your hard surfaces. Included in this report you will find:

- Simple tests for determining your stain protection levels
- Answers to frequently asked questions about cleaning hard surfaces
- Easy care tips to keep those hard surface floors sparkling clean
- Spot removal techniques the pros are using
- Do's and don'ts on indoor hard surface care
- A maintenance plan you wish you had implemented the day of installation.

We truly hope you find this information helpful and use it to extend the life of your flooring. Feel free to contact us for answers to any cleaning questions you may have. Just give us a call!

Sincerely,
Danny & Alena Morris
Prestige Carpet Cleaning & Floor Care

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Hard Surface Protection and Repellency Tests

The following is a simple water based stain protection test you can do at home.

Step 1: Take a spoonful of water; pour it on the surface you wish to test, including the grout .

Step 2: Wait 15 minutes

Step 3: Visual Test: Did the water absorb? Did the color change?

Step 4: Using a clean white absorbent cloth, 'dab' the excess moisture.

Step 5: Touch Test: Does the tile or grout feel wet? Does moisture still feel evident?

If you answered yes to any of the questions above, your hard surfaces are not currently sealed correctly and are vulnerable to staining. Contact Prestige Carpet Cleaning & Floor Care, concerning proper sealing applications.



Photo showing partly
sealed/unsealed Limestone
AND

Photo demonstrating water
beading on sealed grout line.



As you can see from the graphics above, sealed surfaces do not allow penetration of liquids that can become permanent. Protect your hard surfaces today, for a fraction of the cost of replacement, you won't be sorry!

Most contractors do not seal the surfaces they install for various reasons. Primarily it cannot be done until at least 3 days following the installation. Most contractors do not offer a protection service and therefore do not even inform consumers of the importance of this process. As you can see from the illustrations, the benefits of sealing are obvious. There are some sealers available to the general public through hardware stores etc, unfortunately they are inferior to sealers that a hard surface specialist would use. Some need repetitive applications, some are too easily 'washed' off with general maintenance products and some only protect against water based stains, leaving your floor vulnerable to future permanent staining.

Even if you used the best sealers available, without a solid understanding of the product and the specific surface you are sealing you still won't have a properly sealed floor. Only specific study and years of hands-on training can give you the knowledge required to get maximum protection for your hard surfaces.



Frequently Asked Cleaning Questions

Q: I have been told that bleaching the grout lines will make them look whiter? Is this true?

A: Bleach will make them brighter, but you may need to check with the grout manufacturer before starting to be sure the color wasn't dyed, bleach will certainly remove the color.

Q: I have what looks like water stains on my tiles in my kitchen, what could they be? How can I remove them?

A: 'Water' stains could be several different things, depending on the particular tile you have. Most of the time, water or mineral deposits can be removed by either polishing with honing powders and a hog hair pad or by using specific acid cleaners. Please DO NOT attempt either of these without proper training as you may permanently damage the tile. To remove these stains contact **Prestige Carpet Cleaning & Floor Care**.

Q: I bought a 'steamer' to clean my tile floors and it works pretty well, but some of the grout lines are cracking? What should I do?

A: Firstly I would cease all 'steaming' of that floor until you have the grout repaired. Moisture that gets between the tile and sub-floor will be trapped under your tiles and will expand and loosen tile from the concrete or sub-floor.

Rinsing the floor is a good thing BUT, you need the right products to make sure you are not damaging the sealer. There is a product available that will actually seek out any weak areas in the sealer and fill them in while you're cleaning! Ask your hard surface specialist about it!

Q: How long will sealers last?

A: That depends on the sealer, the method of application and the frequency and type of maintenance. Anywhere from six months to ten years or more.

This is just a short cross section of a collection of various questions asked by new clients. For more answers to your questions about hard surfaces, don't hesitate to contact us.



Easy Care Tips **To Keep Those Floors Sparkling Clean**

- At entry points to areas with hard surfaces, place entry mats for soil and moisture removal. The less brought in, the less to clean.
- Regular vacuuming. Some surfaces don't always appear to need cleaning, assume it does. As sure as dust settles on a windowsill, so it does on the floors. Be sure to use a vacuum with a floor height adjustment on the lowest setting.
- Avoid Spills as much as possible. Hot liquid spills are especially hazardous and also a lot harder to clean up because they can penetrate more rapidly. Spot removal procedures should be expedited as soon as accidents occur.
- After performing a wet maintenance, open windows or utilize fans to get air circulating. The faster it dries the better the results and less chance for rapid re-soiling.
- If area rugs or throw rugs are used to decorate or 'soften' interior hard surfaces, be sure to use non-skid pads for your safety. (available at most reputable flooring outlets) The 'backings' used by most manufacturers of area rugs are abrasive. Contrary to popular belief the non-skid pads are excellent. It is recommended that they are taken up and floors cleaned under them every month.
- Chairs and tables on hard surface areas can cause serious damage to floors if legs and corners are not protected. Teflon or felt can be used to prevent abrasive damage caused by the furniture.
- If you live in a part of the country affected by snow and ice, be sure to leave shoes that may have salt or liquid deicer on them at the door. Chemicals used in these products cause rapid and irreversible damage.
- Dry sand on hard surfaces in coastal areas should be removed as soon as noticed. Wear patterns and scratches will dull your floor and reduce enhancement efforts.
- Clean and rinse them often, once per month in low traffic areas and at least weekly in high traffic or kitchen areas. Rinse with plain water unless using the recommended cleaner/protector product mentioned earlier.
- Allow dwell time for stubborn spots and stains, cleaning products are not magic, the longer they sit on that stubborn spot the better they work. Extra rinsing may be needed after stain is removed. If a stain appears permanent, DON'T PANIC, call us!



Spot Removal Techniques The Pros Use

Dry Soil: Natural stone should be cleaned regularly with just warm water and a clean, non-abrasive cloth, sponge or a mop. Neutral cleaners should be used and will help remove soils that normal mopping and dusting leave behind.

Liquid Spills- Lightly blot the excess liquid with a clean, dry, white cloth. As the cloth becomes saturated be sure to turn frequently. If color from the liquid is still evident, lightly mist neutral cleaner to the floor, allow 5 minute dwell time, then wipe in a circular motion with a clean dry cloth. Repeat if necessary. Rinse with water and towel dry.

Food Spills- Scoop up excess foodstuffs from the floor using a plastic spoon. Then blot excess liquid residues left by the food. Using a damp white cloth, dab or lightly wipe the floor in a circular motion. Spray neutral cleaner lightly to avoid over wetting, let dwell 5 minutes, wipe dry using a dry white cloth. Rinse with water and towel dry.

Oily Stains/ Spots- *(Inevitably this type of problem will occur. Oil tracked from driveway, spaghetti sauce accident etc. Improper use of store bought cleaners will inhibit future removal even by a professional. Follow these instructions carefully)*. Blot up excess. Spray with neutral cleaner, cover with dry paper towels (2-4), apply weight (books work well), dwell time 30 minutes. Lift weight, check paper towels, if all towels damp with stain and cleaner, process is working. If no dampness has occurred, apply more neutral cleaner to stain, let sit 15 minutes then check again. Wipe dry with clean white cloth; if not removed consult your Hard Surface cleaning professional.

Mud/ Clay- Let mud/ clay dry completely. Vacuum. Remove dried mud excess using a soft nylon brush, or lightly with an old toothbrush. Spray remainder with neutral solution, and wipe clean with a clean white cloth. If grout lines still affected, apply small amounts of clear, sugar free, club soda and let sit one minute, then wipe dry.

Acidic Spills- Liquids and substances such as soft drinks, coffee, pet urine, vomit, vinegar, orange juice, wine, mustard are highly acidic. If not removed in an urgent manner these could etch some surfaces. In the case of an acidic spill or accident, follow the most suitable spot removal procedure above. Some spills will fall into a few categories such as the case of tomato paste. Tomatoes being acidic, solid as a food, liquid from the juices and oily from the paste will be difficult to remove and you may want to consult your hard surface professional immediately.

As with all spill occurrences, if the floors have been properly sealed and protected the barrier created between spill and surface will dramatically increase the chances of successful removal. See Sealing and Repellency tests.



Do's and Don'ts of Indoor Hard Surface Care

Do use only professional cleaning and sealing products on your floors and countertops. Pro's have used them for years, and after cleaning hundreds of floors you find out quickly what works and what does damage.

Do a regular 'damp mop'. Use a dry non-treated dust mop. It is the unseen dirt and grit that damages hard surfaces, prevention is the best fix.

Do keep off floors until dry, all wet floors may be slippery.

Do everything possible to prevent accidents with perfumes, toothpaste, and makeup. These often contain harmful ingredients that may degrade your sealer.

Do all you can to prevent over spraying of aerosols in areas with protected hard surfaces. Air fresheners, bug sprays and other surface cleaners can settle on your floors and leave a residue making cleaning a bigger chore.

Do consult your cleaning professional about maintenance plans that may be offered.

Don't use bleach or ammonia for cleaning.

Don't use abrasive products such as dry or wet compound cleansers, or tub and tile cleaners.

Don't use store bought citrus based (lemon or orange) solvent cleaners.

Don't drag furniture across hard surfaces. Also try to avoid dropping heavy items onto hard surfaces.

Don't scrub hard surfaces. If properly sealed, light duty cleaning is all that should be necessary.

Don't attempt to re-color grout lines. There are professional applications that can restore your grout to new-looking color.

Don't over wet floors when cleaning, always remove excess moisture. Air circulation is most advantageous for speedy dry times.