

Marble Etching: Everything you Need to Know

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When it comes to kitchen countertop surfaces there are many popular options to choose from. Marble has become a popular countertop surface in the last few years due to its elegant veining and simple beauty. The most popular types of marble are [Calcatta](#) and [Carrara Marble](#) originating from Italy. Marble comes in numerous [vibrant colors and unique patterns](#) making it a top choice for homeowners.

Marble countertops are a sturdy and heat resistant surface but unfortunately not indestructible. Properly installed and sealed Marble can look good as new for years under normal use and proper care. Like many other natural stone surfaces Marble is prone to etching if it comes in contact with acidic or abrasive substances. If your Marble has been “etched” or damaged do not worry here is everything you need to know.

What is Marble Etching?

Marble etching is surface damage due to a chemical reaction in the form of a dull mark on the natural stone that contains calcium carbonate. The etching is caused when an acidic substance comes in contact with a Marble surface. If acid is exposed to Marble for too long it will begin to dissolve and break down the stone’s sealant and minerals. This can leave permanent damage to the surface causing discoloration, uneven texture, and loss of its polished finish. Etching does not only happen to Marble countertop surfaces but also other natural stones such as travertine, limestone, and onyx.

Is Marble a Hard Stone?

Hardness is measured by the Mohs scale, which ranks minerals from 1 to 10 based on their hardness, 1 being extremely soft and 10 being the hardest you can get. Marble is ranked at a 4 on the scale, meaning that it is relatively soft, albeit not the softest material you can find.

Marble Maintenance

Marble is a mid-high maintenance stone if you want to keep it looking as good as new. Marble is more porous than its biggest competitor granite, which is why marble countertops will require re-sealing

more often.

Preventing Damage

To prevent damage do not use cleaners containing acidic substances, such as vinegar or lemon juice. Stick to cleansers formulated specifically for stone or use mild dish soap. A good rule of thumb is to use a cleaner that has a neutral pH.

Be sure to use a cutting board while preparing food so you do not leave marks or scratches on your surface allowing for it to be more easily penetrated by stains. Keep your countertops clean by wiping up any spills or splatters especially from acidic fruit and juice, tomato-based foods, soda, coffee, and wine.

If you are worried about Marble etching for whatever reason you may want to consider specific marble color and finishes. Etching is most prevalent on polished marble surface finishes and darker colors.

Household Items to help preserve Marble Surfaces:

Cutting Boards

Using a cutting board is highly recommended on marble surfaces. This will prevent any markings on the countertop itself as well as ensure spills and stains do not penetrate the seal and seep into the natural stone.

Coasters

Using a coaster in your home can prevent drinks placed on your countertop surfaces from leaving water marks or water stains.

Hot Pads

If you have ever had non-heat-resistant countertops you definitely own a hot pad and there is no reason for it to fall to the wayside once you get natural stone granite. Is a great precaution to take no matter what type of countertop you have.

Household Items that may cause Etching on Kitchen Countertops:

Acidic Foods

Acidic Liquids Household Cleaners

Tomato Sauce/ Juice Vinegar

Lysol

Lemon

Salad Dressing Windex

Lime

Ammonia

Clorox

Acidic Fruits

Coffee

Bleach

Wine

Will spills from acidic food and liquids cause damage to my granite?

No, as long as Marble is properly sealed your countertop will be fine from minor spills. Just be sure not to leave acidic or harsh substances on the surface of your Marble countertops for long periods of time. In addition, if someone is to accidentally use harsh cleaning products on Marble countertops there will not be immediate damage. The damage will happen over time by deteriorating the sealer and in some instances the stone itself. If your marble does get stained there are many [tips and tricks](#) in order to make it look good as new.

Can damaged Marble be repaired?

The simple answer is yes, damaged Marble can be repaired. However, depending on how damaged or etched the surface is will determine the method of repair you should take. It is important to note that removing etching from Marble and [removing scratches](#) are two separate processes.

How to Repair Etching

Mild damage or dull spots from etching can be repaired by etch remover polishing products. These products are easy to use and typically see positive results. Serious damage from etching can be repaired by sanding the area, applying an epoxy material designed for repairing Marble and sealing. It is not recommended to try and DIY with the process since it may result in more harm and damage than restoration. Contact a stone restoration professional to ensure an easy and swift recovery.

How to Repair Mild Etching: 4 Easy Steps

It is highly recommended to get any restoration of Marble countertops done by a professional however if you are a handy homeowner who loves to DIY here is how.

Materials you will need:

Electric Drill Polishing Powder

Buffing Pad Towel

Step 1: Clean the damaged surface before the restoration process using mild dish soap. Wipe away soap and ensure the surface is both clean and dry.

Step 2: Put about an ounce of Marble polishing powder onto the etched surface then pour an ounce of water onto the surface.

Step 3: Take an electric drill and make sure the setting is on the lowest speed. Attach a buffing pad and begin moving the drill in a circular motion over the polishing power. Do this until the etch marks are no longer visible.

Step 4: Wipe off left over polishing powder residue.

Is Etched Marble and Engraved Marble the same?

No, although typically the term “etch” means to engrave; in respect to natural stone the word takes on a new meaning. This is a common misconception of the phrase etched granite. If you are looking for information on how to engrave natural stone surfaces such as Marble that can be achieved with a dremel by a professional.