

# LIMESTONE CARE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDE



Polycor natural stone products are virtually maintenance-free and, when properly maintained, will provide long-term performance for generations to come.

## MAINTENANCE

Limestone surfaces should be kept free of debris and soiling by periodically sweeping or by using a mechanical blower on the surface. When maintaining exterior hardscaping, the ideal is to wash it at periodic intervals (annually, depending on atmospheric conditions) by hosing down the areas with clean water. This will prevent the accumulation of dirt and impurities.

## CLEANING

Begin with a simple solution of mild, clear detergent and water. Then, scrub the surface with a soft bristle brush. Rinse with clean water to remove the remaining cleaning solution. If more stubborn soiling exists, use an approved stone cleaner or pH-neutral cleaner approved for limestone. Never use wire brushes, acidic cleaners, bleach, paint remover, or any other type of concrete cleaner. Some stone cleaners also contain small amounts of sealer. These products help to maintain the level of protection. Brushes may be necessary for the removal of certain surface impurities. Soft fiber bristle brushes are recommended.

When dirt has accumulated on older surfaces over an extended period of time, a combination of methods may be necessary to properly clean the limestone. A plain water jet from a power washer will typically remove most accumulation. Adjust the pressure on the machine accordingly and do not exceed 1,200 Psi from a 45-degree fan-shaped nozzle, holding the tip no closer than 12 inches to the face of the stone. No chemicals that could be harmful to the limestone should be used. Note, however, that even high-pressure water can cause damage. Proper pressure, nozzle size, and working distance should be maintained consistently during the process.

One type of accumulation that can occur on limestone, marble, concrete, and other calcareous materials is algae, which appears to be an accumulation of dirt affected by water flowing over the surface.

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Algae can be removed by using diluted hydrogen peroxide (1/2 cup in a gallon of water) or vigorously scrubbed over the wetted limestone, if necessary. After cleaning with a soft bristle brush, loosened algae can be hosed away without harming the stone's surface. Test a small, inconspicuous area first to gauge results.

Avoid direct contact with oil-based materials and metals prone to rusting, such as iron, copper, or bronze. In most outdoor applications, with the sources removed, normal sun and rain action will generally remove most stains.

## PROTECTIVE COATINGS

To maintain the aesthetic beauty of the original installation, applying an impregnating sealer coating to the limestone surface might be required. While it is not a requirement to seal Polycor natural stone, a sealer application may aid in cleaning the surface should it become dirty. Test in an inconspicuous area before applying, and use per the manufacturer's recommendations.

## EFFLORESCENCE

As with many masonry products, efflorescence may occur on the limestone surface. This is typically caused by water carrying soluble salts from below the surface up to the face of the stone. The salts are deposited and recrystallize upon evaporation of the water, leaving a powdery, white salt residue. If the installation is new, brush or blow the powder from the surface with a blower. Repeat as necessary as the stone dries out. Do not use water to remove the powder. Efflorescence will disappear naturally over time, provided that the moisture source is eliminated or controlled. If the residue will not wash off, do not apply chemicals or cleaners to the stone.

For additional information regarding the care and maintenance of limestone, consult the Indiana Limestone Handbook, published by the Indiana Limestone Institute of America, Inc., or visit [iljai.com](http://iljai.com)

This guide offers an organized collection of information or a series of options and is not intended as a specific course of action. This document cannot replace education or experience and should be used in conjunction with professional judgment. Not all aspects of this guide may be applicable in all circumstances.

Contact information for third-party cleaning products:



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