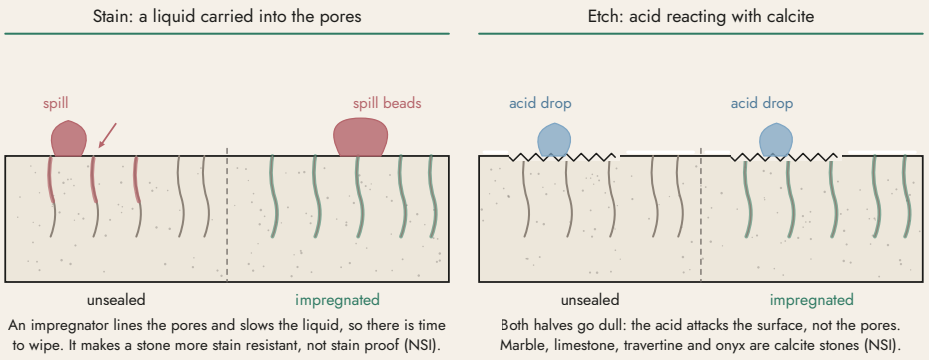
Sealing, staining and *etching* of stone

A stain is a liquid carried into the pores; an etch is an acid reacting with calcite and dulling the surface. An impregnator slows the first and does not stop the second. Choose the stone and finish for the client's tolerance, test a patch, and agree a neutral-cleaner regime in writing.

AT A GLANCE

Stone	Class	Etches with mild acids?	Absorption (NSI)	Notes
Marble	Calcite	Yes: the calcite crystal is vulnerable to mild acids, including those in kitchens and bars.	No figure on the page read	Choose the finish with this in mind: see the finishes sheet.
Limestone, travertine	Calcite	Yes: vulnerable to mild acids.	Under 1% to over 10%	Acid sensitivity plus absorption limits which varieties suit worktops.
Serpentine	Magnesium silicate	More acid resistant than true marble.	No figure on the page read	Often mistaken for marble.
Granite	Siliceous	Resists most kitchen acids.	0.05 to 0.40% by weight	Impregnating repellents are sometimes used.
Quartzite	Siliceous	Resists most kitchen acids; hydrofluoric acid in some rust removers attacks all stone.	No figure on the page read	Slabs vary: ask for the absorption result.

All from the Natural Stone Institute (NSI) consumer pages, undated, read 6 Nov 2026. General statements, not data for a slab: ask the partner for the absorption result (BS EN 13755) for yours.



A stain is carried into the pores; an etch is a reaction at the surface. Schematic. Original drawing by Make Bespoke Studio, not to scale.

A CLEANING REGIME TO AGREE

Space	Daily	Periodic
Lobby, marble	Dust mop; mats; blot spills; neutral cleaner, rinse, buff dry	Re-treat every [ ] months; refinish when dull
Restaurant, limestone or granite	Blot, flush, rinse; neutral cleaner; no acids on limestone	Touch up the treatment; once a year where wear is high (one data sheet)
Bathroom	Squeegee after each use; non-acidic soap-scum remover; dry	Re-treat per regime

SPECIFICATION WORDING

SEALING AT INSTALLATION

Natural stone [type, finish] to be treated with a [water-based / solvent-based] impregnator [product reference] chosen by the stone partner for this stone and finish, applied to the face and exposed edges [and cut edges of cut-outs] on a clean, dry, absorbent surface within the sealer maker's temperature range [underfloor heating off during application and cure]. A test patch on a spare piece of the approved slab to be approved before treatment. No sealer on the back of the stone unless the adhesive maker agrees in writing. Treated sample to be tested wet by the pendulum method [BS EN 16165] with the result issued before work starts.

PROTECTION UNTIL HANDOVER

Completed stonework to be protected from traffic, direct sunlight and rain with [breathable / suitable] protective covering, upturned at the edges, kept in place until [ ] days before handover. Final clean and treatment to be carried out by the stone partner or its approved contractor before handover. Damage or etching found at handover to be made good before acceptance.

CLEANING AND CARE

The partner shall issue a written regime for each space: cleaner type and pH [neutral, pH 7], dilution, mop and machine type, rinse and dry method, spill procedure, and products that must not be used [acidic cleaners, scouring powders, rust removers containing hydrofluoric acid]. Frequencies [ ] agreed with [operator / stone care contractor]; re-treatment every [ ] months or as the sealer maker advises.

TERMS USED

Impregnator

A liquid that soaks into stone pores to reduce staining without forming a surface film, as distinct from a topical coating.

Etching

Dulling of a polished calcium-based stone (such as marble) where acids dissolve the surface, which a sealer does not prevent.

STANDARDS AND SOURCES

- Natural Stone Institute consumer pages (care, stains, sealing position adopted 8 Nov 2006, marble, limestone, granite); Singapore BCA, Natural Stone Finishes (April 2018); HSE, Assessing the slip resistance of flooring (2012); Stone Federation GB, Natural stone in your home; two sealer makers' data sheets; US FDA pH table (April 2007): read 6 Nov 2026. Stone Federation GB Code of Practice for internal flooring: 'currently unavailable, under revision'; not read.
- BS 5385-3:2024 (Current, 31 May 2024; replaced BS 5385-5:2009, withdrawn 30 May 2024); BS EN 13755:2008; BS EN 16165:2021; BS EN 12670:2019: BSI Knowledge listings, 6 Nov 2026. Named, not read.

Full guide: https://makebespoke.com/trade/technical/sealing-staining-and-etching-of-stone. Make Bespoke Studio coordinates manufacture through its partner workshops. Figures are guidance only and your specification governs; some may be superseded, so contact the studio to verify.