

Maintaining Squak Mountain Stone

Cleaning

Although the factory-applied sealing system can withstand deterioration from ultraviolet rays and household acids, it is still a good idea to not use harsh cleaners on Squak Mountain Stone. Many typical household cleaners contain ammonia, acid or bleach. These products can dull and actually etch Squak Mountain Stone if they were able to get through the factory sealer.

To ensure that the sealer will last as long as possible, always be sure to use pH-neutral products to clean. *Many stains or blemishes can be wiped up with a simple damp sponge and liquid dish soap.*

All oils and acids should be wiped up immediately and not allowed to sit for too long on the surface as they may eventually degrade the sealer and leave a stain or etch. Oils can penetrate through pin holes in the surface leaving a difficult to remove dark spot.

Stain Resistance

The factory sealer is stain resistant for up to 24 hours. However, Squak Mountain Stone is not "stain-proof". If liquids, such as coffee, wine, or oils are left on Squak Mountain Stone for a long period of time, a stain can develop. This is due to the sealer's ability to let the stone "breathe". Therefore, as good maintenance would dictate, all spills and dirt should be wiped up promptly.

If a stain does occur and it is not removed from repeated cleanings with a mild soap and soft sponge, try using a pH-neutral cleaner and a scotchbrite pad. This will damage the acrylic sealer some it can be quickly and easily restored (see instructions at the end of this bulletin.)

For stubborn stains, try a stone poultice cleaning product (not available from TMI).

Etching

The factory applied sealer provides limited protection against etching from common household acids, such as lemon juice and vinegars. However, even if an acid hasn't etched the stone, it may have degraded the sealer a bit. Acids may not only etch the surface, leaving it rough to the

touch, but can also bleach out the color if left for a long period of time. The color can't be restored but the etching can be reduced by lightly sanding the area with a fine grit sandpaper and recoating the area with **Super Shield Top Coat**.

Heat

Hot objects should never be placed directly on Squak Mountain Stone. Trivets or cutting boards should always be used.

Hot objects can leave a shadow or darkening in the shape of the object on the surface. If done repeated, micro-cracking may occur. Hot objects will also melt and damage the sealer.

Cutting or Abrasions

Directly cutting on Squak Mountain Stone can leave marks on the surface, as well as wear the sealer down. It is recommended that cutting not be done directly on the surface but that cutting boards be used.

Glues & Adhesives

Dried glues or sticky materials can damage the acrylic surface if improperly removed. First, never pull off something that is stuck to the surface. Always try to soften it with warm, soapy water. Once softened, use a soft sponge to wipe clean. If it does not soften or clean up with warm, soapy water, then use a razor blade/handy blade to gently scrape the glue from the surface. This will remove some of the sealer but will reduce damaging the surface. Then follow the steps for repairing the finish.

Chipping

Edges can chip. So be careful with pots and pans. Consider "easing" any edges in high traffic areas by rounding them over with sandpaper. This will help deflect any direct shots. If you do chip an edge you can do one of two things: If you have the chipped piece, it can be glued back to the surface with any multipurpose glue. Squak Mountain Stone™'s Grout Caulk can also be used to glue it in place. You can remove the chip and sand it with a 100 grit sandpaper, to smooth it out and blend it in as much as you desire with the rest of the surface. Then reseal the exposed area with Top Coat.

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Re-Sealing

The sealing system on Squak Mountain Stone products will eventually wear away over time. The expected lifetime of the sealer can be anywhere from 1 year or less (if abrasives are regularly used for cleaning) to up to 2-5 years (using mild soaps and soft sponges, and not cutting directly on the surface.) And you will notice varying degrees of wear, depending on how much certain areas of the slabs are used.

To check to see if an area needs to be re-sealed, perform a "water penetration test": Sprinkle a small amount of water on the sealed surface. If water penetration occurs (indicated by the stone turning dark) or if water does not bead up on the surface, apply additional **Super Shield Top Coat**.

Repairing the Acrylic Sealer

Use a fine grit (300-400 grit) sanding pad to buff out the marks on the sealed surface. This will remove any loose sealer and help distort or removed the damaged area, helping it blend in.

Apply (2) light coats of Top Coat sealer. Mist on first coat, allowing it to soak in. DO NOT LET IT PUDDLE. Work in any excess with a fine synthetic steel wool or fine grit foam pad (such as Norton's 3X 320 grit). Stop when sealer gets "tacky." Once first coat is dry to touch (about 10-15 minutes, depending on temperature and humidity), mist on a lighter second coat. Work in the excess again with a fine synthetic steel wool pad or fine grit sanding pad. Let dry for at least 1 hour. Sealer is cured in 24 hours.

Additional Sealer Finish

Once installed, applying additional coats of **Top Coat** over the sealed surface will provide a glossier, smoother finish and provide additional protection.

(3) additional light coats of **Top Coat** over the sealed finish will make Squak Mountain Stone™ easier clean, more resistant to oil penetration in pin holes, and more durable against acids or other household/kitchen chemicals.