



MARBLE
INSTITUTE
of America

Commonly Asked Questions & Answers

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Q: We're remodeling our kitchen and installing new countertops. Synthetic countertops cost slightly less than granite, but how do they compare in the long run?

A: As the saying goes, imitation is the greatest form of flattery. Countertops made from acrylic and other manufactured materials may have the "look" of granite, but the similarities end there. For resistance to bacteria, heat, scratches, stains, and overall performance, granite is unsurpassed. Some marbles with honed or matte finishes also make high-quality kitchen countertops.

Q: We're building a new home and would love to put a marble floor in our foyer, but we're concerned about the heavy foot traffic it will receive. Any suggestions?

A: Marble has been used as a flooring material for more than 6,000 years, and continues to be a popular choice for bringing beauty to entry foyers and other areas of the home. You need only take some simple precautions to protect your investment. Use a non-slip mat outside the entrance to your foyer and a carpet or area rug inside to capture the abrasive grit and dirt tracked in from outdoors. Dust mop your marble floor frequently to remove dirt and dust particles, which also can scratch the surface. Use warm water and a small amount of mild detergent to wash. Then rinse and dry thoroughly.

Q: Is there any truth to the rumor that granite emits dangerous levels of radon gas?

A: No, this is completely unfounded. Not a single instance of radon has been reported to the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta. Nevertheless, the Marble Institute of America (MIA) consulted several of the nation's leading scientists in geology and geochemistry to evaluate the suggestion, and spoke with the major granite quarriers and producers in the U.S. Research has shown that actual levels of radon gas emissions from granites are insignificant and generally represent no threat to the health and well-being of people who live or work in buildings with granite countertops, floor or wall tiles, or any other granite furnishings.

Q: After a recent party, we discovered a dark red stain, possibly red wine, on our sandstone hearth. What can we do to remove the stain?

A: Because all natural stone is porous, it tends to soak up stains. But it is this same porosity that gives homeowners an edge in stain removal – you simply reverse the process by using a chemical poultice, which re-absorbs the spill. The choice of poultice materials will vary depending on the type of stone and the spill. Poultices are usually materials that are used with other substances and applied to the stain. When thoroughly dry, the poultice is removed and the stain should be, too. Consult a stone restoration expert or Mystic Stone Specialist for particulars.