

tumbled and unfilled travertine in shower

Authored by: **Maurizio Bertoli** [mailto:mbstone.com]

Saved From: <https://marblecleaning.org/knowledgebase/article.php?id=1181>

I installed 6x6 travertine tile with sanded grout in my shower and used the stonetech bulletproof sealer on the tiles after installation. I am starting to see that the holes in the travertine are showing the orange tint water hardness or mildew. I also get the black mildew on the grout. Do you have any recommendations on how to prevent this or should go back and fill in the holes? Could a soft bristle brush be used to help clean out the holes?

Dear Gayla:

I must conclude that you have tumbled and unfilled travertine in your shower.

Unfortunately you have a problem that's being compounded by the application of an impregnating sealer.

First off, leaving the holes open was a terrible idea especially inside a shower stall, (Only with travertine installed outdoors you can leave the holes open).

What happened is that water found plenty of way through the holes behind and under your tiles and was kinda partially locked-in by the impregnator. (It is never a good idea to seal stone in a wet environment.)

Wat to do now?

Quite frankly it is hard to tell. Of course, the water behind the tiles must dry out completely before you attempt anything. Filling the holes now would be a total disaster. My suggestion is that you stop using that stall and then have all the grout affected by the mildew completely removed. Leave the shower alone and well ventilated for several weeks (it could take up to 2 or 3 months) until the stall is completely dry. After that, you will clean the holes from the mildew stains by using a specific product rated "for natural stone" like MB-9. Once the holes are cleaned and rinsed and dry, provide to fill the holes, hoping that the presence of the impregnating sealer will not create problems with bonding of the filler. Try to fill the holes with latex-based silicone caulking. (Use the clear type if you still want to see the holes.) It's a project indeed, but it is well worth it: Silicone is a type of glue and there are better chances that it is going to bond and stay inside the holes than anything else. Let the caulking cure for a couple of days and then grout. Let another few days go by for proper curing of the grout and start using your shower stall again.

And no more sealing!

Learn instead how to take care of your stone on a routine basis, which "as it should be intuitive" is vastly more important than any sealing (if and when possible and/or advisable). By logging into the Helpful Hints section of our website at: http://www.mbstone.com/HH_promo/helpful_hints.htm, you will be able to get the short version of our maintenance guidelines at no charge. The full version of it "a 7-page document considered by many as an industry benchmark" is available in pay-per-download format in our Educational Literature section at: <http://www.mbstone.com/literature/literature.htm>.

And remember, every single penny of the cost of the literature will be used to support this site and its cause: **your** cause.

While you are in the "Helpful Hints" section, do spend some time reading all of the interesting FREE articles you'll find in there!

Finally, keep in mind that we need your support to help us helping you!

Will you please read and e-sign our Statement of Purpose at: <http://www.marblecleaning.org/purpose.htm?>

By spreading the word about this valuable site among your friend & family and the stone trades' people you've been dealing with, you will be rendering everybody a valuable service!

Thank you

Ciao and good luck,

Maurizio Bertoli

www.marblecleaning.org â€” The **only** Consumers' Portal to the Stone Industry Establishment!