

Limestone Tiles

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Dear Maurizio, Prior to the tiler laying our tiles they were sealed on the bottom first. After drying and tiles then being, the tiler put a sealer on the top of the tile being very porous prior to grouting and cleaning. After cleaning another 2-3 coats of Sure Sealer was applied. After drying, we discovered that dirt and grout appear to have been sealed in and the tiles have lost their original shine. Seeking your thoughts as to what would be the best solution to clean and recommendation of any one of your products that may help our situation and long term care and maintenance. Regards Steven

Dear Steven:

Well, unfortunately all that inconsiderate sealing has probably exacted its toll from the integrity of your poor innocent stone.

If Mother Nature intended to make that particular limestone any less absorbent, she would have done that herself without the "help" of your tile setter, thank you very much. And if you wanted something less porous, you should have chosen a different stone.

That said, hoping that the damage is not too bad, only a proficient stone restoration contractor could do something about it.

With porous stone an impregnating sealer should have been applied never **prior** the installation (there are grout-release products specifically formulated to enable the contractor to easily remove grout residue from the surface of the tiles; the bit about applying an impregnator to the bottom of the tiles is a true pearl!), and **at least** a couple of weeks after the installation, to allow for the proper curing of the setting material and the grout. Moreover, if the stone is so absorbent that will require more than one application of a good-quality impregnator, an interval of 24 hours between applications is recommended, no matter what the directions printed on the container of the product say. Those directions are meant to sell products, not to dispense the right kind of advice.

Bottom line, all things considered, nothing in a bottle could ever do the first thing to rectify your current situation. The damage must be fixed first, providing that, hopefully, it can be fixed at all.

Mankind should master nature by understanding, not by force.

Ciao and good luck,

Maurizio Bertoli