

# How do I apply a poultice to remove a stain?

**Q.** How do I apply a poultice to remove a stain?

**A.** How to Make and Apply a Poultice:

Before you attempt to remove a stain, it is extremely important to know what has caused it. For reference see our [Stone and Tile Care Guide](#). If you have questions, you may want to consult your stone and tile restoration contractor. If you do not yet have a PRO, [contact us](#).

There are five major classifications of stains:

1. Organic stains (i.e. coffee, tea, coloring agents of dark sodas and other drinks, gravy, mustard, etc.)
2. Inorganic stains (i.e. ink, color dies, dirt – water spilling over from flower and plant pot, etc.)
3. Oily stains (i.e. any type of vegetable oil, certain mineral oils – motor oil, butter, margarine, melted animal fat, etc.)
4. Biological stains (i.e. mildew, mold, etc.)
5. Metal stains (i.e. rust, copper, etc.)

## Organic and Inorganic Stains

The chemical of choice for both organic and inorganic stains is hydrogen peroxide (30/40 volumes, the clear type – available at your local beauty salon. The one from the drugstore is too weak, at 3.5 volumes). Sometime, in the case of ink, denatured alcohol (or rubbing alcohol) may turn out to be more effective. For biological stains use regular household bleach.

## Oily Stains

For oily stains our favorite is acetone, which is available at any hardware or paint store. (Forget your nail polish remover. Some of them contain other chemicals, and some other ones contain no acetone whatever.)

## Metal Stains

For metal stains, our favorite is a white powder (to be melted in water), which is available at fine hardware stores all over the country under the trade name of "Iron-out."

To apply a poultice, take the following steps:

1. Clean the stained area with water and a stone safe cleaner. Remember to blot rather than wipe.
2. Pre-wet the stained area with a little water. Distilled water is recommended.
3. Refer to the chart in our [Stone and Tile Care Guide](#) and determine

which chemical to use for the stain.

4. Mix the poultice material with the selected chemical. Mix until a thick peanut-butter paste consistency is obtained.
5. Apply the paste to the stained area, overlapping the stain by at least ¼". (Don't make the application too thick, or it will take a long time to dry.)
6. Cover the paste with a plastic wrap. Tape the plastic using a low-contact tape.
7. Allow the paste to sit for 12–24 hours.
8. Remove the plastic cover and check to see if the paste has dried. If it has not, allow it to sit uncovered until thoroughly dry.
9. Once it is dry, remove the paste by scraping and rinse the area.
10. Examine the stain. If it still remains, but is somewhat lighter, re-poultice until it is gone. If the stain refuses to disappear completely, it is time to give up, replace the tile or call a stone specialist. Stain removal can be very difficult, and care must be taken when using a poultice.

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