



# Tips for Handling, Installing and Cleaning Granite Memorials

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## Handling

Sometimes we forget that while granite has such incredible durability it is still vulnerable to certain types of damage. It is very hard and therefore it is also quite brittle. Anything that bumps against the sharp corners or edges can take out an unsightly chip. Stacking objects on the polished surface can scratch or dull the finish. Even the wood boards that are used as spacers can scratch the surface if they have dirt, sand, staples or bent nails in them.

*Here are some tips to prevent damaging a granite memorial before it is installed.*

- When moving granite memorials, take special care to walk them only on the unexposed edges
- If leaning them vertically against something, they should first be wiped with a soft cloth and then placed on a clean, softwood spacer board under and in between each granite piece
- Special care should be taken to protect the polished faces and the exposed edges and corners
- Always cushion any metal implement such as a hand cart or pry bar from contact with the granite by using heavy cloth padding, a clean softwood board or similar material to prevent chipping or scratching
- And, of course, all persons who handle heavy pieces of granite should be properly trained in lifting, making sure to use their legs and not their back

Before installation, granite should never be stored near any kind of oil or near metal that could rust. Oil and rust stains are the most difficult to remove.

Remember that granite is not resilient and should never be dropped any distance at all. Two pieces for the price of one is not a good deal.

## Installing

If you are installing a flush setting granite memorial, make sure it is installed on a soft bed of fine sand to provide a cushion from the stress of heavy equipment passing over it. A bed of sand approximately 2 inches

thick will also allow water to drain away from under the memorial and minimize the heaving that sometimes occurs after a period of freezing.

If the memorial has vase holes, be sure to pack dirt around and under any vase holes that are cored through the granite marker or bronze base. The cored center hole of a flush granite base is a weakened area and without sufficient dirt backing it can be broken across the hole by heavy equipment and mowers traveling over it.

## Cleaning

A granite memorial, like any material exposed to the elements, will require certain maintenance. **Never use cleaners with abrasives or cleaners with chlorine to clean polished granite.** Do not use waxes or polishes to "brighten" up granite. Any ammonia based cleaner like Glass Plus or Windex will restore the natural luster to the surface of the stone, if used on a regular basis.

Regularly, once a year-- perhaps on Memorial Day, an anniversary or birthday, you can clean a memorial using a mild solution made of three to four tablespoons of an automatic dish washing detergent and one quart of water. Use a stiff bristled nylon brush (no wire brushes) and wet the stone with clear water before applying the detergent solution.

**It is very important that you rinse properly and remove all of the detergent from the memorial** and from the grass around it after you are finished washing. For a more thorough cleaning you can use a pressure washer with up to 500 lbs of water pressure. Take care not to get the solution in your eyes by wearing appropriate eye protection.

Granite monuments make [beautiful memorials](#). Following these tips will ensure that your memorial will retain its beauty and honor your loved one for many years to come.

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Source: <http://www.monuments.com/blog/grave-monument-care/tips-for-handling-installing-and-cleaning-granite-memorials>