

# DIY: Hand Polishing a Petoskey Stone

*May 25, 2018*

On a rainy day earlier this spring, I spotted a familiar pattern in the rocks outside of the 9&10 News Headquarters. It was a Petoskey stone!

I scooped it up and took it home, where it sat ignored for weeks. Petoskey stones are too cool to just leave unpolished and forgotten, so I decided I would try to polish it myself.



I didn't know where to start, so I did what anyone would do: I searched the internet. I found a great guide from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality Geological Survey Division.

I made a list of supplies, picked them up at Home Depot and sat down to begin.

Before you start the process, make sure you have plenty of time to work on it. Depending on the shape the stone is in when you start, this project could take you all day. If it's in pretty good shape, it only take half a day.

### **What you'll need:**

- Silicon carbide wet or dry sandpaper: 220, 400 and 600 grit (I couldn't find 600 grit, so I used 800 grit instead)
- Towel or newspaper
- Piece of velvet, cotton corduroy, or another smooth, hard-surfaced polishing base.
- Polishing powder or compound
- Bucket/bowl of water

### **Directions:**

**Step 1:** If your stone is in rough shape, you'll want to start with a file to smooth the stone or do any other rough shaping.

**Step 2:** When your stone is the shape you want, sand with a 220 grit sandpaper. Hold the damp stone firmly, and use a steady, rotating motion to rub the stone. You'll want to keep the stone damp. If you use a bowl of water, be sure to change it frequently. When you finish rubbing the stone with the 220 grit, rinse it, dry it and check for scratch marks. This step is very important and should be completed with care.

**Step 3:** Repeat the process, this time using the 400 grit sandpaper. The goal is to remove the scratches from the coarser paper and any white spots. Rinse the Petoskey stone, dry it and check.

**Step 4:** Repeat the process using the 600 grit sandpaper. Once you finish, check the stone very carefully for any scratches or imperfections. If you still see a few scratches,

grab your coarser sandpaper and repeat the process. All scratches should be removed before polishing.

**Step 5:** It's time to polish! Use a piece of corduroy, velvet, or any other smooth, hard-surfaced polishing base. Sprinkle a small amount of polishing powder or compound on your polishing base and rub it into the stone with short, rotating rubbing.

*\*If you still see scratches after this point, go back to step 2 and start again.*

The [Michigan Department of Environmental Quality Geological Survey Division](#) says you can also use various clear finishes to help bring out the pattern in the stone.

**Step 6:** Once you finish polishing, wipe the stone off with a clean dry cloth. That's it! Now you have a smooth, polished Petoskey stone.

When I decided to give this project a try, I couldn't find 600 grit sandpaper, so I used 800 grit. It didn't seem have too much of an impact on the finished product, and I couldn't find any information online that specifically says not to use a high grit sandpaper, so improvising is an option if you are unable to find all of the materials needed.

Looking over my Petoskey stone, I can still see a few small scratches, so it looks like I'll have to break out the sandpaper again and spend a little more time on it.

It may take some time and patience, but it certainly is possible to polish a Petoskey stone by hand!

Good luck, fellow Petoskey stone enthusiast!