

# INTERIOR INSTALLATION

## Please note these are very general guidelines and not definitive instructions.

The issuer of these guidelines cannot be held responsible for installation. It is always recommended that a qualified and professional tiler should take responsibility for the installation of all stone and tile products. We recommend that your installer has adequate understanding of how to install our artisanal materials to ensure the best results.

We always recommend ordering 10-15% extra material for wastage when installing, if your order has suffered any minor damage in transit, we suggest you keep these tiles aside for cutting.

### On receipt of your order

When you receive your order, please check that you have all your tiles and that they are in good condition as any discrepancies cannot be resolved after installation.

## Some general points

- Prior to installation you should store your tiles in a dry place.
- Do not install tiles during very hot weather.
- Avoid direct sunlight on to natural stone during installation (prior to sealing the tiles).
- Never use acids or undiluted alkaline solutions to clean natural stone, unless for troubleshooting.
- Always ensure that surfaces are properly sealed on natural stone and crackle glazed tiles before grouting.
- Do not cover newly installed surfaces with non-breathable membranes such as self-adhesive plastic sheeting or plywood sheets. If surfaces need to be covered after installation, use a good-quality decorator's sheet or a thin specialist protective card instead.
- Always refer to the manufacturer's guidelines on the packaging of installation materials or data sheets, available on request.
- It is important to shuffle your tiles from pack to pack before you install them, to ensure an even blend of tones, this is particularly important for natural stone and more artisanal products.
- It is known in this industry that that large format porcelain tiles are subject to a bow along the length of the tile. This bowing occurs as a natural result of the drying process – it's a characteristic of the product and not classed as a fault. When tiling with a brick bond pattern with large format porcelain tiles, offset each row from the previous row by no more than one third of the tile's length. This will ensure that the bowing does not adversely affect the look of your tiled area, however we suggest you check your particular tile before you install and decide what is best for you. We also recommend using levelling clips, as this will ensure a good, finished result is achieved.

### Prior to installation

Both sides of the tile should be wiped clean of any dust before installation and the top surface should be wiped again after installation and before grouting takes place.

The subfloor or wall should be a flat, level, and stable surface to tile on to.

If tiling over a timber surface, the floor will need overlaying with a specialist tile backerboard. You can also use this product to tile on to timber-framed walls, we do not recommend tiling onto plaster board, especially in wet areas.

We recommend to pre-tile prime all surfaces that are going to be tiled using our Pre-Tile Primer, diluted as per the instructions on the packaging.

If you are tiling on to walls and floors in wet areas, we recommend you fully tank (waterproof) prior to tiling with a specific paint on tanking system.

If you are tiling on to an underfloor, heated screed, or a newly poured screed (once it's fully dried and cured, please refer to the manufacturers' instructions regarding this) the floor will need pre-tile priming and overlaying with a movement decoupling membrane such as our Structured Decoupling Matting. This will help prevent any shrinkage or cracking that may occur in the screed being transferred through to the tiles.

### Cutting stone & tiles

Natural stone and tiles can be cut using a diamond blade – ideally a water-cooled machine to keep dust to a minimum.

Some porcelain, glass and ceramic tiles can be cut with a scribe and break type cutter.

### Grout joints, spacers & levelling clips

Grout joint width is a personal choice however when using spacers extra care must apply when tiling natural stone, non-rectified porcelain and smaller format

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tiles because these products have higher tolerances in size variation that can cause some challenges when using set size spacers.

When installing natural stone in one of our random repeating patterns (French, Dutch or Spanish for example), we advise dry laying a pattern set to establish the required grout width to make the pattern flow, with such patterns it is normal that these joints will vary so it is best to avoid using set size spacers and use wedges/packers. Once grouted this variation will be hardly noticeable and part of the feature of a random looking floor.

Commonly known as LASH clips, this stands for Level, Align, Space & Hold. Levelling clips are a two-part system consisting of a clip and a wedge, ensuring your tiles are absolutely level without any lipping or exposed edges that can be caused by slightly bowed tiles. They can align tiles from 9-15mm thick ensuring even grout joints and can be used for both wall and floor tiling. The holes in the base of the clip allow for the adhesive to pass through, ensuring no voids are left under the tile.

## Installation

Use a good-quality, flexible, white, tile-adhesive, such as our Premium White Semi Rapid Set (carefully follow any instructions on the packaging) and apply with a notched trowel.

Ensure 100% adhesive coverage of each tile and the subbase, never dot and dab. Remove excess adhesive with a damp cloth quickly before it hardens or stains the tile.

Level the tiles using hand pressure only, where possible. Using a mallet or rubber hammer could cause cracking.

## Preparing before sealing and grouting – natural stone and terracotta

Clean and condition the surface using a diluted solution of alkaline cleaner such

as our Deep Clean (diluted 1:10 with water). This will help ensure that any dust, dirt, and grime that may have accumulated during the installation process is removed. A properly cleaned and prepared surface will improve the efficiency of the sealer.

## Sealing your tiles – natural stone, crackle glaze and terracotta

Once your tiles are installed you will need to use an impregnating sealant for protection prior to grouting such as our Stain Block (or for crackle glaze tiles a crackle glaze sealant).

## Preparing before grouting – porcelain and ceramic tiles

Clean the surface using fresh clean water. This will help ensure that any dust or grit that may have accumulated during the installation process is removed, preventing the risk of scratching the tiles when being grouted.

## Grouting

We recommend using lighter coloured grouts for most products, in particular natural stone and matt/textured glazed tiles, rather than black or bright coloured as these can cause staining on light materials, this staining is particularly hard to remove.

- Ensure you have selected a grout product that is suitable for use with the chosen tile material and desired joint width.
- Ensure that you wipe away any excess grout with a sponge and regularly change the water before the grout dries. Avoid raking out the grout in the joints and do not allow water to puddle.
- Before the grout has fully set wash again with a damp sponge to ensure as much residue is removed with a solution of alkaline cleaner such as our Deep Clean (diluted with 1:20 with water).

## Finishing after grouting – natural stone and terracotta

### Natural finish:

#### (Typically smooth finish materials)

Apply a final coat of impregnating sealer making sure to cover grout joints as well, you will then need to remove any excess unabsorbed sealer after approx. 30 mins depending on atmospheric conditions.

OR

### Satin finish:

#### (Typically for more rustic and porous materials, especially terracotta)

Further to the above and only if the stone is not used in a wet area, you can apply a surface coating such as our Stone Shield or Bees Wax Polish. This will offer further protection; it will help fill the natural pores and gives the product an attractive patina.

## Finishing after grouting – porcelain and ceramic tiles

For crackle glaze apply a second coat of crackle glaze sealant.

Dry buff the tiles with a clean cloth to remove any final grout residue.

There is the option to further seal the grout joints if desired using our Stain Block Eco. When using this remove any excess liquid immediately.

On very matt porcelain floors you can apply our Stone Shield in non-wet areas to help ease the cleaning required and enhance the appearance of the tile.

## General care – stone & tiles

As long as you are confident you have selected the right type of product for the space and your lifestyle, caring for your floors and walls doesn't have to be a chore. Here are a few essential steps.

Firstly, keep floors as free as possible of loose dust and grit with regular vacuuming or sweeping. This will greatly reduce

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the 'sandpaper' effect that can occur on the surface and will reduce dirt getting compacted into the surface and joints. We recommend washing the floor with a damp mop – firstly, to remove the dirt that a vacuum won't pick up, and secondly for hygiene. Avoid using too much water as this tends to spread the dirt from one area to another, whereas a well rung or fibre mop will lift it up.

We strongly recommend that you use specialist cleaning products. The harsh, acidic household products can 'bruise' your stone and break down protective sealants or attack some coloured glazes on tiles.

Ideally, use a product that is PH neutral, bio-degradable, and environmentally friendly. We recommend our All-Clean product. This can be diluted in water for a traditional mopping method or in a ready to use solution for use with microfibre mopping systems for floors and the same product with a mist spray and microfibre cloth for walls.

Avoid using steam cleaners on natural stone – they may clean some surfaces, but the hot steam can remove the sealer and damage the surface over time.

## **Maintenance – natural stone**

Using the correct specialist cleaning product will greatly reduce the frequency of more intensive cleans and reseals.

General wear of the surface from foot traffic over time exposes capillaries, or tiny cracks and these can accumulate dirt and grime. Therefore, we recommend a more intensive clean every 3–4 years, with a heavy-duty product that will dissolve ingrained dirt and grease, such as our Deep Clean.

A common misconception is that every natural stone surface needs resealing every few years, but this will depend on the particular stone and its use. You can normally tell if a stone needs resealing by wetting the stone and leaving for around five minutes before wiping off. If the water leaves a mark by darkening the stone this will mean the stone is becoming more porous and would benefit from a top-up.

You should first give it an intensive clean with a product such as Deep Clean, this will help to allow the sealer to penetrate.

If the stone has had a surface coating applied, it is most likely that this is all that will need to be reapplied, not the original impregnating sealer, unless the stone has become extremely porous.

For stones with a natural finish, apply a coat of impregnating sealer such as our Stain Block and wipe off the excess after around 20 minutes and repeat if required. Do not allow any of the product to dry on the surface.

Please note that it is perfectly normal for natural stone to mature with use and time and for its appearance to evolve as part of its intrinsic beauty.