

Interior Stone & Tile installation guide

We recommend that you employ a proven professional for installation, but here are some brief guidelines that you can consider for internal installation.

ON RECEIPT OF YOUR ORDER

When you receive your order, check that you have all your tiles and that they are in good condition. These are 100% natural or hand-crafted products and so there will, of course, be some variations in colour tone and natural character that make them unique and beautiful. We recommend that you 'shuffle' tiles from different boxes/crates so that you have a uniform effect across the entirety of the new surface.

A FEW RECOMMENDATIONS

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.

- 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 the tiles during installation (prior to sealing the tiles).
- Never use acids or undiluted alkaline solutions to clean tiles.
- If cleaning between each process is required use a pH neutral cleaner such as our STONE ESSENTIALS All Clean.
- Always ensure that surfaces are properly sealed before grouting.
- Use mats at entrance/exit areas where grit may enter the house.
- Do not cover newly installed surfaces

with non-breathable membranes such as self-adhesive plastic sheeting, Correx 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.

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. You must create a flat, level and stable surface – preferably of concrete – on to which the tiles can be laid. If you do this on a timber surface, the floor will need overlaying with a suitable tile backerboard such as NoMorePly (www.nomoreply.net). You can also use this product to tile on to timber-framed walls. If you are tiling on to walls in wet areas, we recommend you fully tank (waterproof) the walls with a specific tanking system such as Schülter tanking system or similar.

If you are tiling on to an underfloor, heated screed the floor will need priming and overlaying with a movement decoupling membrane such as our Stone Essentials Isomat or Schluter – Ditra. This will help prevent any shrinkage or cracking that may occur in the screed being transferred through to the tiles. The tiles can be cut using a diamond blade – ideally a water-cooled machine. Some glass and ceramic tiles can be cut with a scribe and break type cutter. If you are using an angle grinder, constantly spraying with water while cutting will help to prevent chipped edges.

INSTALLATION

Use a good-quality, flexible, white, tile-adhesive and carefully follow any

instructions on the manufacturer's label. Ensure 100% coverage of each tile with adhesive, and remove excess adhesive with a damp cloth before it hardens. Level the tiles using hand pressure only. Using a mallet or rubber hammer could cause cracking.

PREPARING YOUR TILE SURFACE BEFORE SEALING AND GROUTING (natural stone, encaustic, terrazzo and terracotta)

Clean and condition the surface using a diluted solution of alkaline cleaner such as STONE ESSENTIALS 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, IF REQUIRED (natural stone, encaustic, terrazzo, crackle glaze and terracotta)

Once your tiles are installed you will need to use an impregnating sealant for protection against fading and staining, such as Stone Essentials Stain Block (or for crackle glaze tiles a crackle glaze sealant). This should be applied after they have been installed (and cleaned using Stone Essentials Deep Clean or similar) but prior to grouting, in accordance with the product label. You should apply a second coat after grouting. You could also choose to apply a surface finish (normally to more rustic products) such as Stone Essentials Stone Shield or Wax polish as this will offer further protection and give an attractive patina, although in non-wet areas only. This would be applied after grouting

once fully dry (around seven days depending on humidity).

Please refer to our guide throughout this directory for recommendations on sealing products.

GROUTING

- We recommend using lighter coloured grouts for most products in particular natural stone, encaustic and terrazzo tiles, rather than black or bright coloured as these can cause staining in the natural pores of the tiles.
- Ensure you have selected a grout product that is suitable for use with the chosen tile material and desired joint width.
- Don't use masking tape on the tiles as this can cause marking.
- Ensure that you wipe away any excess grout from the tiles before the grout dries.
- Once grout is installed and fully dried, wash your new tile floor with a neutral detergent such as STONE ESSENTIALS All Clean.
- Do not leave water to sit on the surface.
- Follow the grout manufacturer's installations carefully.

FINISHING AFTER GROUTING, IF REQUIRED (natural stone, encaustic, terrazzo and terracotta)

Natural finish: Apply a final coat of impregnating sealer making sure to cover the grout joints as well.

OR

Satin finish: Further to the above you can also choose to apply a surface wax such as STONE ESSENTIALS Stone Shield or STONE ESSENTIALS Wax Polish. This will offer further protection and give an attractive patina (cement tiles, rustic tumbled stones and some matt porcelains in non-wet areas only). For crackle glaze apply a second coat of crackle glaze sealant.

MAINTENANCE

As long as you select the right type of tile for the job 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 the 'sandpaper' effect of dirt getting compacted into the surface and joints. Then, we recommend washing the floor – firstly, to remove the dirt that a vacuum won't pick up, and secondly for hygiene.

We strongly recommend that you use specialist cleaning products. The harsh, acidic supermarket products will 'bruise' your tiles and erode protective sealants. Ideally, use a product that is PH neutral, bio-degradable and environmentally friendly. We recommend our Stone Essentials All Clean product.

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 the years exposes capillaries, or tiny cracks. Over time 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.

A common misconception is that every natural stone floor needs resealing every few years, but it is true for the more porous stones. You can normally tell if a stone does need 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. If you do decide to reseal your stone, you should first give it an intensive clean with a product that penetrates the surface. You may, however, decide your floor doesn't need resealing but could do with being refreshed. Applying a surface refreshing product every 4–6 weeks will help with this.

We strongly recommend you do not use bleach-based cleaners, washing-up liquids, strong degreasing detergents, or anything that contains natural acids or alkaline. Avoid non-specialised supermarket cleaning products. Avoid using steam cleaners – they may clean some surfaces, but the hot steam can remove the sealer and repeated use will 'spall' and damage the surface.

A RECOMMENDED REGIME WITH STONE ESSENTIALS ANCILLARIES

Our Stone Essentials range covers all the bases for a cleaning and maintenance regime that will maintain your tile floor in excellent condition.

ROUTINE CLEANING

All Clean is the Stone Essentials product for your routine cleaning. It's suitable to use as an antibacterial detergent and can be used weekly or even daily as long as you dilute it as per the instructions on the bottle.

INTENSIVE AND SPOT CLEANING

For a really deep clean, we recommend Stone Essentials Deep Clean, heavy-duty cleaner which uses a combination of effective solvents and cleaning agents to dissolve ingrained dirt, grease, heavy soiling and many other problematic stains. The less you dilute it, the stronger the solution – but you must carefully follow the instructions on the bottle.