

Brief guidelines for installing and maintaining natural stone and encaustic tiles

We recommend that you employ a proven professional for installation, but here are some guidelines that you can consider. Once installed correctly, our tiles are as long-lasting as they are beautiful and should be very easy to maintain.

On receipt of your order

When you receive your order, check that you have all of 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 makes 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.

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 sealing and 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 backer-board 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 Mira or similar.

If you are tiling on to an underfloor, heated screed the floor will need priming and overlaying with a movement uncoupling membrane such as our Stone Essentials Decomat or Isomat. 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. Constantly spraying with water while cutting will help to prevent chipped edges.

Installation

Use a good-quality, flexible, semi-rapid, 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.

Sealing your tiles

Once your tiles are installed you will need to use an impregnating sealant for protection against fading and staining. This should be applied after they have been installed (and cleaned) but prior to grouting. You should apply a second coat after grouting.

You could also choose to apply a surface wax as this will offer further protection and give an attractive patina (encaustic tiles and rustic tumbled stones in non-wet areas only). This would be applied after grouting.

Grouting

You will probably need to allow 1-2 days after the tiles have been laid before you can apply the grout.

- We recommend using lighter coloured grouts, not black or bright coloured as these can cause staining in the natural pores of the tiles
- Follow the grout manufacturer's instructions carefully
- Ensure you have selected a grout product that is suitable for use with natural stone and encaustic tiles
- 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
- Do not leave water to sit on the surface

You will now need to apply a second coat of sealant. This should be applied to the grout as well as the tiles and, if desired/required, a surface coating. See 'Ongoing maintenance' below.

Further recommendations

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 alkalines to clean tiles
- Use a pH neutral cleaner such as our Stone Essentials All Clean
- Use mats at entrance/exit areas where grit may enter the house

Ongoing maintenance

Clean your tile regularly by sweeping away any dust or grit and then mopping with clean water and neutral detergent (such as our Stone Essentials All Clean).

You can also lightly polish tiles with a soft pad. If the tiles become heavily soiled we recommend scrubbing them with a stronger, specialist detergent such as Stone Essentials Deep Clean.

If the tiles are very heavily used, you may find that you will need to re-seal your tiles more regularly. You could also choose to apply a surface wax as this will offer further protection and give an attractive patina. We would also recommend this process if the tiles are being used for a cooker splash back.

IMPORTANT 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.