



TILE CITY TIPS AND HANDY HINTS

SOME HELPFUL ADVISE THAT YOU MAY FIND USEFUL

CLEANING CERAMIC TILES

Daily Cleaning - where possible try and avoid using cleaning agents that contain oils or perfumes, as the oily residues from such products build up with repeated use and actually trap dirt on your tiles. Similarly, avoid the daily use of acid based cleaners, as these can actually eat away the protective glaze of a tile over time. For general cleaning use alcohol based products like metholated spirits and boiling water, or for areas that are particularly stubborn or are prone to show streaking or marks, Sure Seal's excellent Natural Clean.

Cleaning Newly Tiled Areas - frequently a newly tiled area will possess a hazy, streaked finish that is referred to as "grout haze". This haze is often a consequence of polymers in grout that are added at the time of manufacture to increase stain resistance and introduce a small degree of flexibility to grouts. If normal cleaning does not remove grout haze over time there are several excellent products on the market to aid in its removal, such as Davco' Tile & Grout Cleaner, Rubinet's Cement Remover, and Aquamix's Heavy Duty Tile and Grout Cleaner. Of course, all these products should be used as directed.

CARE OF UNGLAZED PORCELAIN TILES

Sealing & Stain Avoidance - Unglazed porcelain tiles are an especially hard, advanced tiling product and, particularly in their polished form, can achieve unique aesthetic finishes. While unglazed porcelains that are sealed by the manufacturer or by the tile fixer are resistant to staining, no unglazed porcelain – regardless of manufacturer or country of origin – will be stain proof. The sealing process fills up micro-pores in the porcelain's surface and provides a limited reaction time to clean up any spills – the better the sealer the longer the potential reaction time. Clearly then the best way to keep unglazed porcelains looking their best is to clean up spills as they occur and where possible avoid contact with strong staining agents, such as tea, red wine, oxides, certain oils and xylene-free permanent markers.

Newly Laid Porcelains - Recently laid unglazed porcelain tiles can frequently have grout or wax residues on their surface that can leave the surface looking streaky or make it difficult to keep clean. Apply the cleaning techniques suggested above for "Newly Tiled Areas".

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NATURAL MATERIALS

Natural materials such as marble, slate and stone are wonderfully individual products with a character and warmth that is difficult to reproduce artificially in glazed and unglazed fired products. As such they can vary in colour, patination, texture, thickness and size from batch to batch and within batches, and it is this uniqueness that is part of their attraction. Accordingly, natural materials should not be expected to exhibit the same performance characteristics or consistency as their fired counterparts. Clearly it is imperative that you obtain from your supplier a current sample to ascertain the product's suitability for your needs.

CERAMIC TILES & YOUR TILER

Tile Spacing - Standard ceramic floor tiles inherently possess a degree of size variation and as such need to have grout spacing of at least 3mm, preferably 5 or 6mm. Requesting your tiler to provide narrower spacing will usually create many laying problems and an unsatisfactory, jagged and uneven finish. If you desire narrow grout joints you must invest both in rectified porcelain tiles and in the extra laying costs. It should also be noted that plastic tile spacers should be used as a general guide to spacing and normal tile size variation will prohibit their use between all tiles. Moreover, tile spacers should be removed from floor tiles joints soon after laying, as leaving them in can result in poor lines and inability of grout joints to accommodate substrate movement.

Pre Installation Inspection and Clarification – it is strongly advised that all tiles are inspected before the tiler begins laying to ensure that they are the desired colour, shape and size. Additionally, any layout requirements should be confirmed with the tiler prior to the commencement of installation.

Rectified Tiles - can include glazed ceramic walls and floors and both glazed and unglazed porcelain tiles. Such tiles can be identified by their sharper, right-angled edges as compared to the more rounded (or "pressed") edge of standard tiles and by their incredible size uniformity. When laid properly on an appropriately flat surface rectified tiles can be laid with narrower grout joints than standard pressed edge tiles to achieve a beautiful, slab-like finish. It must be appreciated that laying and cutting such tiles requires more time, material and a different skills set to the laying of standard pressed edge tiles and as such there will be a premium to lay such tiles. Any installation issues associated with rectified tiles should be discussed with your tiler prior to the commencement of tile laying.

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