



Installation & Care Guide: Natural Stone

By Opia Design

Prepare your Layout:

- Ensure that the substrate or foundation is adequate - indoor/outdoor, slope, vehicle entry, wet areas).
- Always verify the conformity of the tiles before laying; verify the beginning of the work and its evolution.
- Before installing the tiles, batch mix them from multiple boxes to achieve a layout with pleasing colour variation.

Preliminary Cleaning & Sealing:

The tiles have been pre-washed and pre-sealed - Sealant for Natural Stone- with an initial coat of penetrating sealant to help protect them during installation. Sealing is essential in protecting the longevity of any of our stone collection.

Once fixed, but before sealing, newly laid tiles should be cleaned with LTP Grimex or a similar product to remove surface residues and impurities. This stage of preparation is often overlooked and tilers will simply wipe the surface with water. This is inadequate, as small dust and dirt particles not visible to the naked eye, will end up embedded in the micro-pores of the tile during the installation process and will be locked in when the sealer is applied, making the final surface appear smeared and will be difficult to buff to the required finish.

As most successful sealing systems will incorporate a pre-sealing treatment on all six sides, it is critical to plan your sealing before the first tile is laid.

Laying the Tiles:

- Prepare a subfloor (screed) that is perfectly flat to make it easy to keep the stone elements level with each other.
- Apply a thin layer (5- 10mm) of adhesive. Note that this offers minimal laying tolerance and emphasises the importance of a levelled subfloor.
- Clean the laying surface and make sure it's dry before laying the tiles.
- Prepare a uniform layer of adhesive using a notch trowel 8-10mm thick, and back butter the base of the tile (double adhesive method)
- Lay stone elements and compact them evenly

on the adhesive with a rubber mallet to ensure consistent contact with the glue. Consistent open joints should be allowed for at 3-5mm spacing.

- Cutting should be done using a bench saw with a wet diamond blade. The stone should be washed immediately after it is cut.

Laying the Natural Stone in Wet Areas:

- Make sure the area is entirely waterproof by covering it with a permanent coating.
- The mortar used is highly water-resistant.
- The gradient to the drain hole must be sufficient in shower floors, and the walls of the shower tray are also made waterproof.
- A dip seal (on all six sides of the stone tile) is essential in wet environments. This would be highly recommended for pool coping and for other wet areas such as kitchens and bathrooms (essential for all travertine ranges).

Grouting the Tiles:

Reminder: All natural stone tiles, polished (shiny), honed (matte), or tumbled (antiqued), are porous; therefore, sealing before grouting is essential to fill these pores with a protective sealer to avoid hazy surface appearance.

- Grouting Compound Grout composed of sand and cement can contain elements that will react adversely with natural stone tiles. Therefore, it is recommended to use a high-grade proprietary grouting compound suitable for the application.
- Dampen grout joints and stone with a sponge.
- Place grout into joints, ensuring no voids, to the full depth of the paving stones.
- Immediately remove any excess grout with a trowel.
- Sponge-clean the paving surface with water, ensuring all excess grout has been removed.
- We recommend one coat before and one after grouting. Apply with a purposeful pad or cloth, allowing to absorb into the tile for 20 minutes, buff away any excess before it dries. From here, it can be walked on after a minimum of three hours but ensure to protect the surface from water for 24 hours and don't clean for three days.

Secondary Cleaning and Sealing:

- Before proceeding to the second sealant layer:
- Make sure the tiles are thoroughly cleaned
- Check the tile's residual moisture. Water from the adhesive, cutting and grouting the tiles can leave moisture which needs to evaporate before the second layer of sealer is applied.
- Apply with a clean pad or cloth and remove any excess before it dries.
- NEVER USE BLEACH OR ACIDIC PRODUCTS TO CLEAN THE TILES.

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