

CEMENT TILE SHOP

Traditional Handmade Cement Tile

INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS

IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ!

These installation instructions are offered as guidelines only. Cement Tile Shop will not be held responsible for errors, issues or problems due to installation or job site conditions.

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CEMENT TILE INSTALLATION GUIDELINES

When properly installed, cement tiles will result in a beautiful, durable, easy to maintain surface that can be enjoyed for many years. These instructions are provided as a helpful guide to installing your cement floor tiles. Please consult a professional contractor to advise on installation.

Be sure to have a copy of these recommendations and familiarize yourself and the installer with these recommendations prior to starting installation. You and your installer are responsible for ensuring proper installation and sealing of the tiles.

1. Inspect your order carefully. Cement Tile Shop will not be responsible for material that has been cut or installed. Throughout the installation process and handling of the tile, be careful not to damage the finished surface or corners of the tiles. Use caution and clean hands.
2. Do not allow the boxes to get wet! Store the material in a dry area. Moisture or dampness can cause the tiles to get stained, have faded color, a damaged surface or efflorescence causing a white powdery effect on the surface of the tile from moisture coming through from the bottom of the tile.
3. Allow interior tiles to acclimate in their final environment at least 12 hours prior to installation.
4. Cement tile is a cement-based product and may have residue on the surface. It is recommended to wipe the tiles, front and back, with a clean, damp sponge prior to placing in thin set to remove concrete dust residue and enable proper adhesion. Tiles should also be cleaned and allowed to dry thoroughly prior to sealing and grouting.
5. Install over flat, level and stable cured concrete surface or suitable stable sub-floor (such as Hardibacker, Durock or Ditra) or wall surface. Wall installation on drywall is acceptable when installed with appropriate non-sag setting materials.
6. Cement tile, as a product of natural materials, is subject to color and tonal variations and may require blending of tiles. It is recommended to shuffle tile from different boxes during installation to achieve a uniform effect.
7. Use a high quality, medium-bed thin set adhesive, such as a Laticrete or Mapei product. Contact adhesive manufacturer to recommend the appropriate adhesive. Follow adhesive manufacturer's instructions. Cement tiles are not intended for installation methods employing large quantities of water, (i.e. do not soak the tiles in water.)
8. Make sure that adhesive is applied to the full back of each tile (100% coverage) using a large notched trowel (At least 1/2"). Spread floor and back butter the tiles like a natural stone installation. **Make sure all tiles are level so there is not any lipping.** Do not beat with a mallet or rubber hammer to set tiles, level your tiles using hand pressure. Remove any excess adhesive from the surface with a damp cloth or sponge while it is fresh.

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9. Tiles should be cut using a sharp diamond blade in conjunction with water to avoid chipping of edges. Recommended grout joint width is a tight joint of 1/16" - 1/8". **If using spacers, we recommend a soft, flexible spacer.**
10. Although our cement tiles are pre-sealed at the factory for protection during shipping, sealing them with an impregnating or penetrating sealer for natural stone is still necessary during installation. **Sealer should be applied to clean tiles prior to grouting. Only non-acidic cleaning products should be used.** Look for cleaning products suitable for use on natural stone. Be sure both tiles and setting material are thoroughly dry prior to sealing. Apply sealer in thin layers, until the tiles will not soak up any more. Wipe off any excess sealer before it dries, and allow the sealer to cure according to the manufacturer's instructions. When properly sealed, water should bead on the surface of the tile. We sell a penetrating sealer, Miracle 511 Porous Plus, in gallon (covers approx. 200-250 sq. ft.) and quart sizes (covers approx. 40-60 sq. ft.).
11. Cement Tile Shop recommends Mapei Flexcolor CQ Grout. This product is formulated with the latest innovation in quartz aggregate, which ensures color consistency, and ease of cleanability. This grout is premixed and ready to use. In addition, this grout can be used on sensitive tile surfaces once tested and cures naturally from evaporation of the low level of water in the formulation. With quartz grout, dark colors (even black) can be used when installed correctly. We sell Mapei Flexcolor CQ Grout in 1 Gallon containers (covers 138-278 sq. ft.).

Note: If using a standard unsanded grout (such as Mapei, Custom or Laticrete), follow manufacturer's instructions. Typically cement tile is grouted with white or light-colored grout. **Dark colored grout is not recommended unless it is Mapei Flexcolor CQ. (See previous paragraph). Dark colored, cement-based grout can cause stains on the tile that can be difficult or impossible to remove.**
12. Joints should be full and free of all voids and pits. When grouting, do not spread the entire floor with grout like a porcelain or ceramic tile. Work in small areas, typically 15-30 sq. ft. at a time and clean thoroughly before moving on to a new area. Remove any excess grout immediately. Grout that sits too long can be difficult to remove from the tile. Do not affix duct, painters, gaffer or acid tape directly onto the tile surface. Tape can discolor or stain your cement tiles.
13. After installation, clean floor again. Any extra residue, mortar and/or grout should be removed immediately. Do not allow water or other liquids to spot or pool on the surface (i.e. Do not leave spills, drips or wet buckets, cups, footmarks, etc. on the surface at any time)
14. Seal the clean floor, including grout, a second time with the penetrating sealer. Again, tiles and grout must be thoroughly dry prior to sealing.
15. Cover the tile immediately after completion with a protective covering to prevent staining and damage during the remainder of construction.

If you have any questions, contact us before cutting or installing tiles.

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Cleaning and Maintenance

Cement tiles are not difficult to maintain. Once they have been sealed correctly, the surface can be cleaned with products that are suitable for use on natural stone. Household cleaners such as Simple Green or specialty products like Miracle Tile & Stone Cleaner have shown good results. Always follow the usage and dilution instructions from the manufacturer, and test new products in an inconspicuous area. **Only non-acidic cleaning products should be used.** Acid will etch the tiles, resulting in discoloration and/or pitting on the surface of the tile. Do not use vinegar, or products containing vinegar.

For best results, sweep and mop floors regularly. Use mats at entryways to catch debris. Any spills or moisture should be cleaned up in a timely manner to best prevent staining. Should a stain occur, you can try products such as Miracle Heavy-Duty Cleaner (Acid Substitute), or Miracle Poultice Plus, which is made to remove stains from porous surfaces. For a very stubborn stain, the tiles can be lightly wet sanded with an extra fine sandpaper, 400 grit or finer. It's important to use water when sanding, to avoid scratching the tiles and to prevent residue from settling into the pores. Use caution to not sand too aggressively. The sanded area should be cleaned and allowed to dry thoroughly. Once dry, the area should be resealed.

Depending on the brand of sealer used and the amount of wear experienced, the tiles may need to be resealed periodically. The specific brand of sealer used will have a recommended timeframe for resealing, typically anywhere from 3 to 10 years. Extremely heavy wear may require additional cleaning and sealing.

When resealing the tiles, the surface should be clean and completely dry. Any moisture in the tiles when sealed can later result in a white, chalky look called efflorescence. The tiles should be resealed using the same steps as in the installation process. Apply thin coats, wipe excess sealer before it dries, and allow the sealer to cure per the manufacturer's instructions. We recommend Miracle 511 Porous Plus, or other high quality, penetrating sealers for natural stone such as DryTreat or Stonetech Impregnator Pro.

Faint stains or water spotting will diminish with time and an ongoing maintenance routine. The tiles will develop a natural patina that is part of their timeless beauty. This finish gives the tile its character and uniqueness.