

TIPS FOR CLEANING AND PROTECTING YOUR NEW STONE OR TILE

During and following the completion of a stone or tile floor, countertop or wall, dirt and other debris can accumulate, especially if there is other building construction going on. Cleaning and protecting the newly installed stone or tile is important and will prevent scratching as well as the grinding in of dirt.

1. Remove all equipment and tools from the surface (scaffolding, tool boxes, saw horses, ladders, etc). Nothing should be placed on the new surface until it is covered.

2. Remove any large chunks of concrete, grout, caulking, et., by scraping with a sharp razor blade. Be very careful not to scratch the surface.

3. Sweep or dust mop all saw dust, grit and other debris. Sweep the surface several times making sure to remove all loose particles.

4. Rinse the surface with cold water and a small amount of neutral cleaner. Rinse several times to make sure that the surfaces are clean.

5. If minor streaking remains after rinsing, buff dry with a clean white terrycloth towel.

6. Once thoroughly cleaned and all surfaces are dry - especially flooring - the surfaces should be covered. Cover floors and countertops with craft paper or carpet padding. **DO NOT USE PLASTIC!** Plastic will create slippery conditions and with some marble, may also cause moisture related problems with the stone. If necessary, tape the edges of the craft paper with a low contact masking tape. **DO NOT USE** duct tape on marble as it will damage the stone surface.

7. If heavy objects are to continue to be used, such as ladders, scaffolding or if excessive foot traffic is anticipated, following the covering of the stone or tile, then place masonite boards or plywood on top of the craft paper.

8. Once all construction is concluded, remove craft paper from the surface. Slowly remove any tape that was used. If the tape is stubborn, wet the tape with a small amount of distilled water several minutes before removing the tape. If tape residue remains, remove it by rubbing with a white cloth and a small amount of acetone.

9. Thoroughly dust mop or sweep the surface to remove all dust and debris.

10. Clean surfaces by rinsing with water and a neutral cleaner.

11. If the surface has any scratching or damage, now is the time to have it repaired. Stone can be repaired by a qualified stone restoration contractor such as the professionals at our sister company, Natural Stone Refinishing Corporation. However, if your stone or tile surfaces are damaged, insist that the installer replace or repair the damage.

12. It is highly recommended that a penetrating sealer be applied to all stone surfaces at this time. Sealing the stone and tile is the final step in the installation process. If you have installed ceramic tile, all cement grout needs to be sealed with grout sealer. Mexican tiles should be sealed with a Mexican tile sealer. Make sure that your contractor seals all stone or tile AND grout surfaces.

A SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT FLAMED STONE:

Since flamed granite is very porous, it will be difficult to rinse. Flood the surface with clean water and immediately pick up the excess water using a wet and dry vacuum. **DO NOT** cover or seal flamed granite until it is completely dry. The drying process for flamed granite can take several days to several weeks.



Let Us Introduce Ourselves!

We have over 30 years experience in the stone and tile industry. With expertise that is second-to-none, we can help you select the right stone or tile for any project and install it to the highest standards possible.

Installation of fine natural stone and tile, including:

**Ceramic Tile
Glass Tile
Granite
Limestone
Marble
Mosaics**

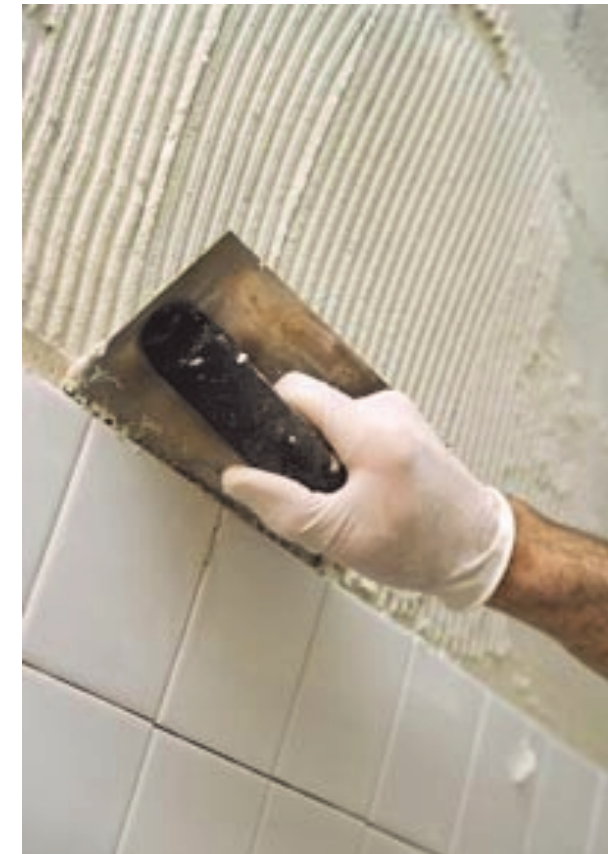
Fabrication for any type of stone installation, including:

**Counter Tops
Fireplaces
Jamb
Saddles
Table Tops**



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*How to Select
and Hire a Stone
& Tile Installation
Contractor*



IMPORTANT THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN HIRING A CONTRACTOR

Hiring a stone and tile installation contractor can be difficult and confusing. This brochure will provide you with some tips to consider when hiring a contractor. Because installing stone and tile is a major investment, we have also included some tips for cleaning and protecting your new stone and tile surfaces.

1. Before calling any contractor, ask around. Did your neighbors have new tile or stone installed recently? Who did the work and are they happy with the outcome? Call your local stone and tile supplier and ask who they recommend for installation work.

2. Once you have located several companies, schedule an appointment to get some estimates. All reputable contractors should provide estimates free of charge. Be sure that you are available to meet the contractor at the time of each appointment. It can be very frustrating for a contractor to provide you with an estimate only to find that no one is home. On the other hand, if the contractor fails to arrive for your appointment without at least calling you, he is not very interested in your project.

3. Once the contractor arrives, tell him what your concerns are and what you are looking for. After all, you will be living with your stone and tile every day. The contractor is seeing things for the first time, so try to give the contractor as much information as possible.

4. Once the contractor has decided what is needed, ask him to explain the procedure that he intends to use. Ask him if there are other options available. A competent contractor should be more than happy to answer any questions that you may have.

5. Negotiating price: As with any occupation, there are many different personalities. Some contractors will negotiate and others are not at all flexible. However, if you mention that you are getting at least two additional estimates, even the most inflexible of contractors will realize that he is

competing with other and will be more willing to compromise on a price. One word of caution, when comparing estimates and negotiating pricing, be sure that you are comparing apples to apples.

6. Ask your contractor to provide you with references and then call at least three and ask if the contractor did a good job. You'll be surprised how rarely such references are actually checked. Were there any problems during the project and did he correct them? Were his employees professional?

7. Does the contractor carry insurance? Ask him for proof. Have him show you a Certificate of Insurance, or if the job is large enough, have his insurance company send you one. Be sure that he carries both liability AND workman's compensation insurance. Any reputable contractor will carry both of these. You should avoid working with any contractor who is not properly insured.

8. Once you choose a contractor, schedule the job. Don't be surprised if the contractor is booked up for several weeks. Be patient. A good contractor will be busy and you just have to wait your turn. If you absolutely must have the work done quickly, ask if he can book you should another client cancel.

9. Ask the contractor how long it will take to complete your project. This is important since many contractors may have several projects underway at one time. Make sure that a time schedule is included in his contract for your project. Keep your expectations realistic as there are many variables to any construction job that can cause delays.

10. Go with your gut feeling. Ask yourself if you're comfortable with the contractor. It is important that you feel good about the contractor that you've selected to work with. Even the best contractors make mistakes. The difference between a good contractor and a poor one, is his willingness to correct those mistakes.

TIPS REGARDING THE INSTALLATION OF NEW STONE OR TILE

The initial cleaning of a new stone or tile floor or wall should be performed by the installation contractor. If the contractor has not performed a final clean-up or if you're installing the stone or tile yourself, your new stone or tile surfaces may have a slight film due to dust settling from construction or an inadequate clean-up of the grout residue. It is VERY important that excess grout be removed before it has a chance to dry. This usually within 24-hours for cement grout and one hour for epoxy grouts. If excess cement grout is left on the surface for more than 24-hours, then follow this procedure:

EXCESS GROUT CLEAN-UP

1. Remove any large chunks of grout with a scraper or razor blade. On polished stone take care not to scratch the surface.

2. Sweep or dust mop floor surfaces to remove all loose debris.

3. Rinse the surface several times with plain water. If the surface is a floor, apply water with a string mop, wrung tightly. Avoid flooding the tile or stone as excessive water can cause discoloration of the grout. If too much water is applied, use a tightly wrung string mop or wet vacuum to pick up the excess.

4. If grout residue still remains after several rinses, it will be necessary to use a grout removing chemical. If this becomes necessary, follow this procedure:

For marble and stone, add 3 to 4 ounces of household ammonia to water and rinse the surface several times. There are also several non-acidic grout removers available at better retailers.

For glazed ceramic or porcelain, mix a mild solution of 2 to 4 ounces of sulfamic acid and water. Rinse the surface several times. Repeat rinsing with ammonia and water solution (see above) to remove acid residue. DO NOT use any other acids than sulfamic acid! There are several grout cleaners available that contain sulfamic acid. Check with your local stone or tile supplier.

**NEVER USE ANY ACIDS ON
POLISHED MARBLE!**

EPOXY GROUT CLEAN-UP

Epoxy grouts are made from 100% epoxy resins. They have excellent chemical resistance properties and are highly recommended for tile in kitchens and baths as well as countertops and shower walls. If you choose to have epoxy grout installed, make sure that your tile installer has experience working with these grouts.

One of the biggest problems with epoxy grout is the failure to adequately clean-up the grout residue. Unlike cement-based grouts that can sit for 24-hours, epoxy grout needs to be thoroughly cleaned within one hour or clean-up may prove difficult. Depending on the surface type of the stone or tile, clean-up may become impossible. If epoxy residue remains, we recommend the following procedure:

1. Scrape any large pieces of epoxy from the surface using a sharp razor blade. Wetting the area first will help prevent scratching.

2. Mix a solution of hot water (the hotter, the better) and several drops of dishwashing detergent (Ivory, Dove, etc.). Apply the solution to the epoxy and scrub with a green scrub pad.

3. If the soap solution does not remove the epoxy, try wiping the surface with a clean white rag and acetone.

4. If acetone fails the epoxy will have to be removed with a stronger solvent. A solvent such as methylene chloride will have to be used. Apply the solvent and let stand for several minutes. Pick up the solution with clean rags and be sure to rinse the area with plenty of water.

CAUTION: Solvents like methylene chloride are very dangerous to work with. It is recommended to you call a professional if your project requires use of such chemicals. If you must use these chemicals make certain that you have adequate ventilation, wear solvent resistant gloves and safety glasses. Please read all cautions on product labels.