



clé

CEMENT TILES

hand made encaustic cement tiles

sealing & maintenance guide

v4

NOW YOU HAVE AN AMAZING TILE INSTALLATION. HERE ARE SOME GREAT TIPS ON HOW TO KEEP IT THAT WAY!

like many unglazed tile products such as natural stone tiles, quarry tiles and porcelain tiles, cement tiles are porous in nature and should be sealed in order to maintain their natural good looks and to help avoid staining.

wall or floor- your moroccan handmade encaustic tile surfaces can be cared for to last many, many generations.

PART I
general sealing tips

if you've read our encaustic cement installation tips and shared them with your installer, you will know that your tiles have arrived to you pre-polished and pre-sealed.

but what does that mean?

after the curing process, the top pigment layer of all cement tiles are left with a "tooth" to the surface that feels slightly rough to the touch. but unlike most cement tiles offered, clé hand rubs each of our cement tiles with a penetrating sealant that polishes and seals the tiles so that this rough surface is removed.

this hand-rubbed finish is typically an expensive add-on for most other cement tiles as it takes time and care to remove this rough surface and start your tiles toward their lifelong natural and smooth patina. you will be able to see the difference just in comparing clé cement tiles against other cement tiles.

in most countries, this finish would be enough for any project, residential or commercial. however, in north america, clients are not familiar with the natural qualities of cement tiles as they are not accustomed to this newly popular surface. and for these clients the pre-polish and pre-seal that clé provides will only be suitable to assist the tiles to endure the travel to the job site and through the first stages of installation.

this means that prior to grouting your installation, a grout release is required to insure that heavily tinted or bleached grouts will not affect your tiles. additionally, your tiles must be sealed again after the installation has been completed and cleaned. by doing this next stage of sealing, your tiles now are further protected against a moderate traffic area for at least a year or even many years depending on usage. (be sure to always follow the instructions of the sealer's manufacturer for reapplying).

clé recommends the Miracle Sealant product- Miracle 511 Porous Plus for this final seal, and it can also be used for the grout release. however, there are other sealants that might be preferred, depending on your contractors preference. if your contractor opts to use a different sealer, we will not be able to give advice on its application or support after use.

here is a review of our top tips for sealing after installation

1. after your tiles have been installed, allow all the moisture in the tiles to evaporate, or it will be trapped under the sealant resulting in dark moisture patches, or hairline cracks will develop.
2. prior to sealing, your cement tile surfaces must be cleaned, free of grease, oil, dirt, wax or any other foreign matter.

top tips for sealing after installation. (cont.)

3. after cleaning process has been completed and accepted, it is recommended to re-seal the tiles and grout lines for extra protection, especially in water areas to avoid excess moisture.
4. select the correct sealant for the look you would like to have for your particular project. (*see below)
5. be sure to always test your sealer in a small area to ensure it gives you the finish you prefer.
6. do not put anything on the sealer until it has completely dried as per manufacturer's instructions.
7. **(critical)** For installations outdoors it is highly important to protect your tiles with a penetrating sealer containing UV protection in order to avoid direct sunlight. This will help the tile to preserve its color and natural patina. check with your sealant manufacturers for more specific information.
8. **(critical)** For installations in pools or water spaces, use a penetrating sealer to make your tile waterproof and additionally apply an acrylic concrete surface sealer on top. check with your sealant manufacturers for more specific information.

***what is the right sealant for you?**

penetrating sealers (impregnating)

penetrating sealers coat the cement particles inside of the tiles, making it less likely to retain stains. this sealant is a natural and invisible finish. most cement tile clients prefer this sealant because it makes the tiles waterproof (when using Miracle 511 Porous Plus) and allows the tiles to look uncoated.

enhancing sealers

want to intensify your colors- both in depth and boldness- then choose an enhancing sealer. probably the most expensive of all sealers, enhancing sealers will leave your tiles the same colors as if they were wet.

matte sealers

topical sealers create a barrier on the surface of the tile so that stains have a longer reaction time before they reach the actual surface. available in shiny and matte, topical sealers are not generally recommended for exterior applications as the sun may deteriorate them quickly. matte topical sealers are produced by adding a chemical that cuts the shine, but also weakens the seal.

gloss sealers

please refer to the information about regarding topical sealers. additionally, using a gloss topical sealer will leave your tiles shiny and opposite to their typical cement matte finish.

topical sealants (matte or gloss) are often used in commercial applications.

it is important to remember that topical sealants are like a varnish and will leave a noticeable surface on the tiles. additionally, they will require stripping and reapplication as they will have wear and tear with traffic.

general maintenance tips

general maintenance tips

1. cement tiles should be regularly mopped with clear water and when necessary, a neutral cleaner.
2. tiles can be buffed with a soft white pad
3. a capful of liquid wax may be added to the water to improve the tiles' natural sheen.
4. extremely heavy foot traffic or outdoor installations may require additional maintenance. in this case, cement tiles may be refinished, much the same as hardwood floors. this occasional refinishing will restore the tiles to their like-new finish.
5. never use acids to clean the tiles as they will damage them.
- 9 use walk-off mats near entries to avoid entry abrasion.
7. sweep regularly.
8. periodic buffing of tiles with a white pad may be necessary.
9. do not allow water to accumulate in areas. excess moisture left on the tile surface can stain, pit and crack.
10. over time, a natural patina will occur as the floor is maintained and naturally wears.
11. if using topical sealants, your tiles will require periodic stripping and resealing. please refer to a profession for this maintenance schedule.

stain removal

1. most stains can be removed using all-purpose cleaners.
2. difficult stains will need to be removed using oxalic acid.
3. wet stained area and rub in circular motions using a white pad and oxalic acid crystals until stain disappears.
4. rinse and remove any acid or residue.