



02

TILE CARE

GLAZED CERAMIC TILE

General Information

Clay, earth, powder, and water are mixed and processed to make ceramic tiles. After the ingredients are mixed, they are formed into the shape of a tile. The tiles are then placed into a high-temperature oven called a kiln to bake. After the tiles are finished baking in the kiln, they are removed. Most ceramic tiles are then covered with a glass material called a glaze. The tile is placed back into the kiln to finish the baking process. During this last step, the glaze melts to the surface of the tile and will stick to the surface of the tile as it cools. The glaze coating will make the ceramic tile water-resistant, but it will also make the tile very beautiful. Glazes can come in many designs and textures, which makes each one look different and will give each one a different hardness or density. In general, lighter glazes create harder tiles. Darker glazes make tiles less dense so that they will be more fragile.

You will find glazed ceramic tiles in restrooms, bathrooms, and outdoor swimming pools. Glazed ceramic tiles are easy to clean, fire-resistant, scratch-resistant, stain-resistant, and slip-resistant, making them preferred in public spaces. They are also a favorite for indoor decors because of their beauty and variety. Even though they are scratch-resistant, their glaze tends to show more blemishes, so this is one downside to having them in your home.



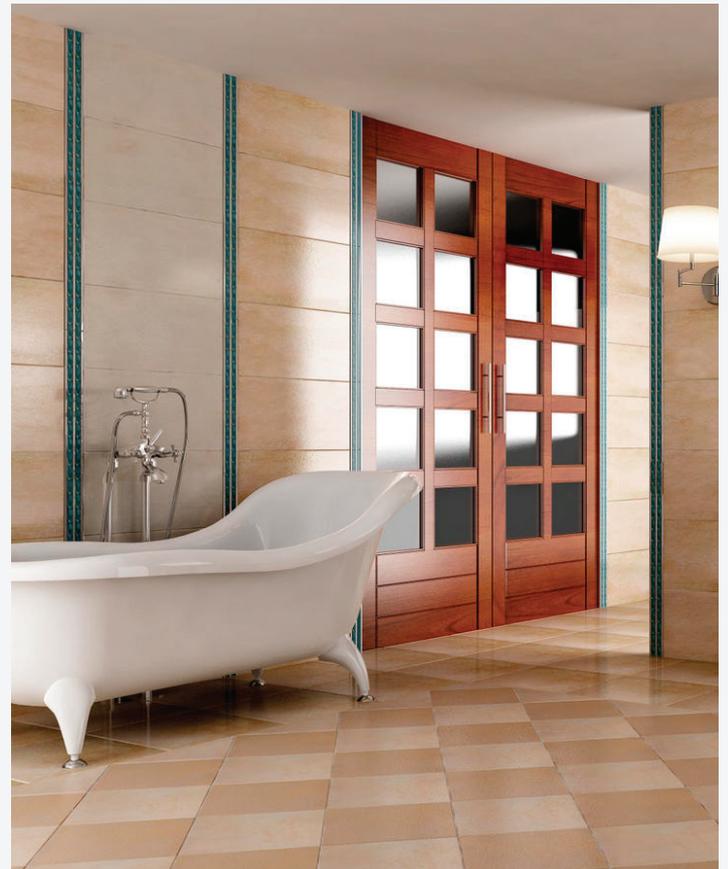
Maintenance

Taking care of your glazed ceramic tiles is surprisingly easy. Although they are easy to care for, there is a proper way to do it to keep their quality and appearance for years to come. As time goes on, the residue will build up on your tiles, and if this is not cleaned, it can ruin your tiles. When cleaning your tiles, use a solution made with a pH neutral liquid and warm water. Gently scrub the area with a sponge without any rough edges. Always watch what you are doing as you are cleaning your tiles, being too rough on your tiles can ruin the glaze, especially if they are a poor-quality tile.



Removal of Floor Finishes, Waxes, and Sealers

Sometimes floor waxes, finishes, and sealers can get on your tiles on accident. These should be cleaned off as soon as possible so that they do not ruin your tile. You should use an Adhesive Remover and a Tile Sealer when cleaning these materials off of your tiles. Always make sure that the sponges that you are using do not have any rough edges. Conducting a small test area on a corner of one of your tiles first is always a good idea to make sure that the product you have is not too harsh for the finish of your tile. Once you are confident that your product will work, apply a good amount of the product over your tiles until the residue loosens up off of the tile and you can wipe it away with your sponge. Always rinse with fresh water.



GLAZED PORCELAIN TILES

General Information

Glazed porcelain tiles are made almost the same way as glazed ceramic tiles. They are made of the same materials, and they are baked in the same way. The only exception is that the glaze is hot when applied to the tile, which makes the tile much stronger and has a shinier look. This difference in the way the glaze is applied makes them look much more beautiful, and they are used for decoration because of this. They should be used in public spaces because the glaze can give them a slippery surface when wet.



Maintenance

Glazed porcelain tiles are very easy to clean because they are not prone to collect bacteria and germs. The easiest way to clean them is by mixing a solution of 2 gallons of water and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of white vinegar. Stronger cleaners are available on the market, and they are labeled that they are safe to clean porcelain tiles.

The best way to clean your tiles is either by steam cleaning them or dry cleaning them. You should always do this without any harsh soaps or detergents so that you will not ruin your tiles and so that you can prevent injury. Drying your tiles after cleaning them will eliminate water spots.

POLISHED PORCELAIN TILES

General Information

Polished porcelain tiles are made in the same way as glazed porcelain tiles except the glaze isn't heated when it is added to the tile, which makes them more fragile. The tile is polished so finely that it gives the tile a shine that can mimic the look of a glaze. Their beauty makes them perfect for many indoor and outdoor spaces, including living rooms, balconies, patios, bedrooms, and bathrooms. They are much cheaper than glazed porcelain tiles, so polished porcelain tiles are much more widespread than their glazed counterparts.



Maintenance

Polished porcelain tiles are a favorite among busy homeowners because they require hardly any cleaning or maintenance. When they get dirty, all you have to do is sweep them clean with a clean and dry dust mop. When they begin to get dull, wiping them clean with warm water can make them look polished again. They stain easily, so you have to wipe up anything that may stain it as quickly as possible, especially dark, acidic liquids like fruit juice and tomato sauce. It is always important to protect your tiles against anything that can wear away the glaze, such as grout removal products, acid-based liquids, and chemicals.

UNGLAZED/MATTE PORCELAIN TILES

General Information

Unglazed or matte porcelain tiles are ceramic tiles that skip the glazing process. They are thicker than the other types of porcelain tiles, which makes them much stronger. Depending on the type of tile, some are polished and unpolished. The unpolished tiles have a rustic look that are used outdoors or in walkways. These tiles are scratch-resistant, so they are useful in outdoor settings. Unglazed/matte porcelain tiles are very versatile, so this makes them useful as decorative pieces in every area of your home.



Maintenance

Tile

Unglazed/matte tiles are harder to clean because of their textured surfaces. Even though they require extra effort to clean, it is well worth it. Using a broom with soft bristles so that you don't scratch the tiles, brush your tiles in all directions to get rid of all of the loose dirt. Soak your tiles with a solution of warm water and a neutral pH level cleanser for between five to ten minutes. Scrub your tiles in different directions with a soft brush and rinse them with warm, clean water. Depending on the traffic of the area, this may need to be done once a day. You can wet mop your tiles with the same cleaning solution in-between scrubbing to keep them clean. When grouting your tiles, make sure to cover your tiles with grout release so that the spots can be easily removed.



Mosaic

Cleaning

Mosaic tiles need a little more maintenance than regular unglazed tiles. They are generally easy to clean, but they need to be cleaned regularly to prevent residue from building up and ruining the look of your mosaic. Always clean your mosaic tiles with a solution of a mild soap and clean water. Gently scrub your tiles with a non-abrasive cloth or sponge. When you are finished, rinse your tiles with clean, warm water and wipe them dry with a fresh cloth.

Pre-Grout Sealing

When installing your mosaic tiles, using a non-sanded grout is best because of the narrowness of the grout joints. After the grout is installed, your next step should always be to clean your new tiles. Not cleaning the sealer off of your new tiles immediately can ruin the look of them. Read the instructions on the grout that you used to find out how to clean it off of your tiles. In most cases, you will apply a grout stripper to your tiles and let it sit before removing it with a wet cloth.



NATURAL STONE

General Information

Natural stone tiles are stones or rocks that are found in nature that are cut into tile shapes. Depending on the type of material, stone tiles have different features. They are the strongest of all the tiles, lasting the longest of all of them. They are usually found in outdoor flooring and décor, creating walkways and flooring in garages, patios, and gardens. Even though they are popular in outdoor settings, their natural beauty makes them attractive for indoor décor as well. They are particularly useful in kitchens since natural stone does not retain heat. The space in which they are used will always be cooler than other spaces, so always keep this in mind when choosing where you will install them.



Maintenance

Natural stone tiles are the most high-maintenance of all tiles. They need specific care and maintenance. You need to be careful when cleaning your natural stone tiles because many cleansers can damage their appearance. Only certain cleansers can be used on them, so make sure that you check the labels before buying a cleanser to make sure you can use that cleanser on natural stone tiles.

Placing a rug over your tiles can prevent them from getting dirty. Make sure that you place slip-resistant mats underneath your rugs to prevent slips and falls. You can maintain your tiles every day by dust mopping them to remove dirt and dust. This will also prevent scratching from the bristles of regular brooms.

Even sealed natural stone tiles can stain, so remove any spills or liquids that have the potential to stain your tiles immediately. Wipe up any kind of acidic food or drink that comes into contact with your stone tiles with a gentle soap and water cleanser and a non-abrasive sponge. You can also protect your stone tiles by using barriers between your food and drink, such as place mats and coasters.

Stone Cleaners

Before cleaning your tiles, wet your tiles with warm water. Only use acid-free cleansers with neutral pH levels on your natural stone tiles. A diluted combination of warm water and dishwashing liquid will also work as a cleanser. Even though both of these types of cleansers will not damage the coating on your tiles, you should always completely wipe up any extra cleanser when you are done the cleaning, or it will leave residue on your tiles. Changing your water often when you are cleaning can help you avoid cleaning your tiles with dirty water. When you are finished scrubbing your tiles, you can buff and polish your tiles with a wax spray buff, as needed.

Heavy-Duty Stone Cleaning

Sometimes you need a stronger cleaning job for more soiled tiles. You should use non-hazardous stone cleansers for heavier cleaning jobs. Read the instructions for proper dilution steps with water. You should change your cleaning solution every 100 feet, so you aren't cleaning your tiles with dirty water. When you are finished scrubbing your tiles, make sure that you mop up the cleanser very well so that you can avoid injury.



Stone Mosaic



Routine Care

Stone mosaics require a little more care than regular natural stone tiles. Natural stone is a porous material, so many cleaners will damage your mosaic. Make sure that the cleanser you select is made specifically for natural stone tiles and mosaics.

Stone Cleaners

Be careful when cleaning your natural stone mosaic. Always wet the surface of your mosaic before applying the cleanser to protect the surface. Always use natural stone cleansers when cleaning your natural stone mosaic.

Removing Stains/Restoration

If you have stains on your natural stone mosaic, this requires some elbow grease to remove. Using a stone poultice, gently scrub the stain out of your natural stone mosaic. If your scrubbing dulls your mosaic or you need to restore the shine of your mosaic, apply a marble polisher.

If you notice that the shine of your natural stone mosaic has decreased over time, apply a marble polisher to restore your mosaic's natural shine.

Sealing/Finishing

When sealing your natural stone, pay attention to the type of sealer you are using. There are water-based sealers and solvent-based sealers. Both sealers can be used indoors or outdoors. Always test your sealer on a small piece of stone first to make sure it will work properly.

When applying finishing products to your natural stone, always make sure that your stone is polished first.

UNGLAZED TILES

General Information

There are many styles of unglazed tiles. Your budget and preference will determine the type of tile that you need. Unglazed ceramic tiles are the cheapest that you can find, and they are rougher and thicker than their glazed counterparts. Since they do not go under the glazing process, they are useful for high-traffic areas, but they can be used in a variety of areas where you need a slip-resistant surface, such as kitchens and walkways. Many restaurants will use them because they are scratch-resistant and easy to maintain. One drawback is that without the glaze, they are a little harder to keep clean. Generally, unglazed tiles are used for flooring in many residential and commercial establishments alike.



Maintenance

Since these tiles don't go through the glazing process, they have a rougher surface. This means that dirt get trapped on the surface easier, and they require more cleaning. Finding a good cleanser is crucial because you will be cleaning your tiles more often. If you are worried about your tiles getting stained, use a wax sealer on your tiles after installation. When you are cleaning your tiles, be careful when cleaning the grout. Ruining your grout will ruin the look of your flooring, and you will have to re-grout your floors.

Grout Maintenance

Impregnating Sealer

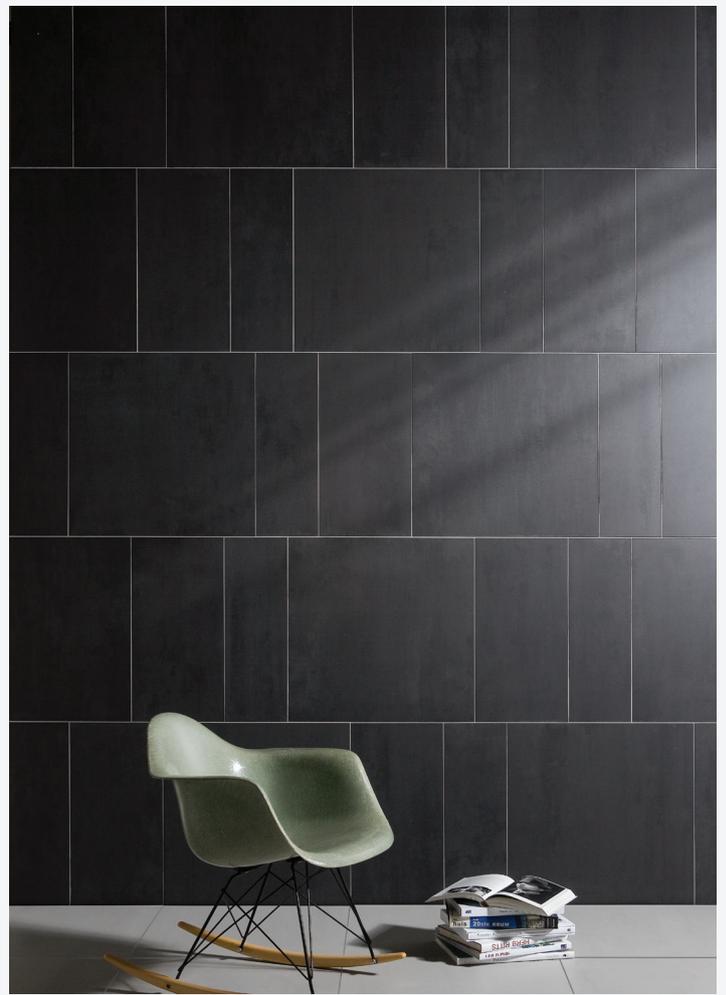
If you use cementation grout during your installation, the grout needs to be sealed with a silicone-free impregnating sealer within 72 hours. Be careful when you are sealing; make sure you only seal the grout and not your tiles.

Maintenance

While sealing and grouting are great preventative measures, you will still get build-up and residue from time to time. You will occasionally have to remove and replace your grout. Remember to thoroughly clean the space before replacing your grout.

Grout Color restoration

Sometimes you will notice that the color of your grout will turn an off-white color, which can affect the look of your flooring or your space. You can apply a grout stain to restore the color of your grout. A grout stain is an epoxy-based product that restores the color and seals the grout.



Clean up after the grout

When you finish your grouting, you will notice a thin film appear over your tiles called “grout haze” that needs to be removed immediately. If you leave grout haze on your tiles for a long period of time, it can permanently affect the look of your tiles. Sulfamic acid can remove grout haze from your tiles. It is available in powder form, which you then mix with water according to the concentration that you need.

