Care & Maintenance

Cleaning Glazed Porcelain & Ceramic

Glazed porcelain and ceramic tiles are among the easiest flooring materials to clean. Due to their impenetrable glazes, their surfaces are resistant to water, dirt, chemicals, oil, debris, and even germs and bacteria.

Always remember:

- Do not clean porcelain tile flooring with ammonia or with cleaners that contain bleach and/or acid. Acid and ammonia-based cleaners may modify grout color and product stability.
- Use a cleaner that is pH neutral. This ensures cleaning will not harm your grout or surrounding surfaces.
- Do not use wax or oil-based cleaners.
- Use rugs at entrances to prevent dirt and grit from being tracked onto the tile flooring from outdoors. Tiles are scratch resistant but not scratch proof.
- Do not use steel wool or other abrasive pads to remove tough debris or stains. Steel wool scratch your tiles and loose steel particles may eventually create rust stains in the grout over time.
- Although glazed surfaces are impervious, the use of a grout release will aid in post installation clean up, especially if the glazed surface has a texture to it where mortar, grout and other construction debris can get trapped inside grooves during and after installation.

Standard cleaning guidelines of glazed products:

- Sweep or vacuum loose dirt and dust from the floor prior to washing with water to prevent the tile from becoming muddy or leaving a residue after cleaning. On textured surfaces sweep in multiple directions to ensure the removal of all foreign material that might be residing in the textured surface. For wall surfaces tile can be gently wiped down with a clean, dry cloth or rag.
- Mop the floor with a mild detergent, degreaser, or tile cleaning solution. For textured floors, the use of a medium bristle brush is recommended. A sponge or clean cloth can be used to apply the cleaning agent to wall surfaces.
- Rinse the tile thoroughly with clean water to remove any left-over detergents.
- Drying with a clean cloth or rag is recommended to increase the shine and to prevent water spots or streaks.

Cleaning Unglazed Porcelain & Ceramic

Unglazed products are highly desirable due to their double loaded and through-body characteristics. Polished finishes are typically protected by nano and/or wax coatings and are resistant to water, chemicals, and scratching. Matte and textured finishes are generally unprotected and although the surface is impervious, it may be more difficult to clean post install than a polished surface due to the inherent surface characteristics of these finishes on a micro pore level.

Always remember:

- Do not clean porcelain tile flooring with ammonia or with cleaners that contain bleach and/or acid. Acid and ammonia-based cleaners may modify grout color and product stability.
- Use a cleaner that is pH neutral. This ensures cleaning will not harm your grout or surrounding surfaces.
- Do not use wax or oil-based cleaners.
- Use rugs at entrances to prevent dirt and grit from being tracked onto the tile flooring from outdoors. Tiles are scratch resistant but not scratch proof.
- Do not use steel wool or other abrasive pads to remove tough debris or stains. Steel wool may scratch your tiles and loose steel particles may eventually create rust stains in the grout over time.
- Nano coatings should remain intact post install for added protection. However, if electing to remove nano coatings, a nano scrub or poultice type product may be used. Ask a sales associate for details.
- Although unglazed surfaces are impervious, the use of a grout release will aid in post install clean up, especially if the unglazed surface has a matte or textured finish to it where construction debris can get trapped during grouting. Sealing may also be recommended post install to aid in day to day maintenance of these surfaces.

  It is suggested that a breathable penetrating sealer be applied to matte unglazed surfaces after grouting. This treatment provides an excellent defense against staining and may be desirable in high traffic areas. Follow the sealing manufacturer's guidelines for recommendations on how often a sealer should be reapplied.

Standard cleaning guidelines of unglazed products:

- Sweep or vacuum loose dirt and dust from the floor prior to washing with water to prevent the tile from becoming muddy or leaving a residue after cleaning. On textured surfaces sweep in multiple directions to ensure the removal of all foreign material that might be residing in the textured surface. For wall surfaces tile can be gently wiped down with a clean, dry cloth or rag.
- Mop the floor with a mild detergent, degreaser or tile cleaning solution. For textured floors, the use of a medium bristle brush is recommended. A sponge or clean cloth can be used to apply the cleaning agent to wall surfaces.
- Rinse the tile thoroughly with clean water to remove any left-over detergents.
- Drying with a clean cloth or rag is recommended to increase the shine and to prevent water spots or streaks.

Cleaning Glass, Metal & Decorative Mosaics

Many of the metal tiles you see on the market today are made from solid metal, coated in metal glazes, or cast from polymers that are fused with real metal particles. Due to the presence of actual metal in most cases, careful attention must be paid when cleaning these unique surfaces. Glass is one of the easiest surfaces to clean. Due to its impervious nature, all stains will remain on the surface and can be wiped away with no effort. When cleaning glass and/or resin based blends the least abrasive method should always be used first as not to damage, discolor, or scratch the surface.

Always remember:

- Stainless steel cleaners for appliances tend to work well on stainless steel tiles as they are typically made from similar grades of steel. However, it is important to note that not all metal tiles are made from stainless steel and as such a pH neutral cleaner or water with a mild soap solution can be used.
- It is not recommended that any abrasive cleaners or scouring pads be used to clean metal as it may scratch the surface and cause the tiles to oxidize.
- It is also important to keep the tiles dry and away from heat as much as possible.
- Be sure to follow grout manufacturer's instructions on cleaning and sealing grout properly.
- Grout cleaners containing bleach or ammonia may be harmful to the metal if not applied properly.
- Do not use any abrasive cleaners or scouring pads to clean glass as they may scratch the surface.
- There are many cleaning solutions on the market today suitable for cleaning glass tile. In most cases a standard glass or multi-surface cleaner applied with a cloth or paper towels will work well.

Standard cleaning guidelines of glass, metal and decorative products:

- Wipe loose dirt or grease from the surface. An untreated paper towel or cloth is recommended.
- Wash the surface with a mild detergent, degreaser, or glass cleaning solution (do not use abrasive cleaners or abrasive applicators).
- Rinse the tile thoroughly with clean water if a detergent is used.
- Drying with a clean cloth or paper towel is recommended to increase the shine and to prevent water spots or streaks.

Cleaning Natural & Engineered Stone

Natural stone is a very durable surface when protected and maintained properly and is widely used in residential and commercial applications.

Always remember:

- Sweep or vacuum your floors regularly.
- Protect your stone from sand and grit as floors may scratch from dirt and debris.
- Be careful with acidic foods and drinks (lemonade, orange juice, etc.) as they may etch certain stones.
- Never use any cleaners that contain ammonia, acids, or bleach.
- Never apply wax or acrylics to the surface as they may damage the stone.
- Tend to spills quickly. Sealers do not prevent 100% of damages caused by spills.
- Sealing all natural stone is highly recommended.

  It is suggested that a breathable penetrating sealer be applied before and after grouting. This treatment provides an excellent defense against staining and may be desirable in high traffic areas. Follow the sealing manufacturer's guidelines for recommendations on how often a sealer should be reapplied.

Standard cleaning guidelines for natural stone:

- Sweep or vacuum loose dirt and dust from the floor. For wall surfaces, tile can be gently wiped down with a clean, dry cloth or rag.
- Mop the floor with a mild detergent, degreaser, or tile cleaning solution. A sponge or clean cloth can be used to apply the cleaning agent to wall surfaces.
- Rinse the tile thoroughly with clean water to remove any left-over detergents.
- Drying with a clean cloth or rag is recommended to increase the shine and to prevent water spots or streaks.

Commercial Deep Cleaning

Commercial cleaning can present its own challenges due to the high traffic nature of most applications and exposure to foreign debris that a standard residential application may not be subject to. Commercial floors must be maintained properly to ensure the longevity of an application.

Always remember:

In addition to following standard cleaning protocol for your product type, also consider the following:

- Floors need to be kept as dry as possible after cleaning to prevent slip accidents
- When mopping, the water should be changed frequently so you are not pushing around muddy water
- Scrubbing the floors too often with a buffer may cause irregular wear patterns
- Always be sure to protect furniture legs and stanchions with felt pads to protect the floors from scratching
- Chewing gum, grease and other debris difficult to remove may require use of a plastic putty knife
- Prior to removing graffiti and other difficult stains, test a small area to make sure the chemical agents will not damage the surface.
- For embedded stains, the use of a poultice mix may be required
- When electing to remove nano coatings, a nano scrub or poultice type product may be used

Standard deep cleaning guidelines:

- Sweep or vacuum loose dirt and dust from the floor. For wall surfaces, tile can be gently wiped down with a clean, dry cloth or rag.
- Mix a high concentration cleaner, degreaser, or stripper as needed based on manufacturer's guidelines for periodic deep cleaning.
- Agitate with scrub brush or floor scrub machine.
- Mop up dirty solution. A wet/dry vac may be used in large areas.
- Rinse thoroughly with clean water, changing water every 500 sq. ft. or as needed.
- Drying with a clean cloth or rag as well as a final dry vac extraction is recommended to increase the shine, prevent water spots and streaks, and to prevent slip accidents in a commercial setting.

Cleaning Grout

There are many grouts on the market today that are stain resistant and do not require a sealer. However, not all grouts will have these characteristics and special care must be taken to ensure product performance is not compromised due to exposer to harsh cleaners.

Always remember:

- Clean tile and stone regularly according to standard cleaning guidelines. Anything safe for the tile will typically be safe for your grout. PH neutral cleaners are highly recommended. Mopping dirty tiles will cause muddy water to get stuck in the grout joints, so keeping tiles cleaned regularly will improve the look of the grout.
- Be careful with acidic foods, drinks and dyes as they may stain certain types of grout.
- Never use cleaners that contain ammonia, acids, or bleach. Some stains may be set so deep in the grout that bleach may be the only thing to get your grout clean. Bleaching causes the pores of the grout to open and hold dirt even more. As such, sealing after bleaching is highly recommended.
- Prolonged use of bleach and ammonia based products may cause the grout to become brittle over time and in wet applications may result in water damage due to cracking and deterioration.
- Sealing grout prevents staining. Sealers are not chemical proof and may break down from continued exposure to harsh household chemical cleaners.
- It is suggested that a breathable penetrating sealer be applied before and after grouting. This treatment provides an excellent defense against staining, mold and mildew. Follow the sealing manufacturer's guidelines for recommendations on how often a sealer should be reapplied.
- Tend to spills quickly. Sealers do not prevent 100% of damages caused by spills.
- A medium bristle brush can be used to scrub the grout joints

Standard cleaning guidelines for grout:

- Sweep, brush, or vacuum loose dirt and dust from the surface. For wall surfaces, grout can be gently wiped down with a clean, dry cloth or rag.
- Mop, brush, or sponge the surface with a mild detergent, degreaser, or tile cleaning solution.
- Rinse the grout thoroughly with clean water to remove any left-over detergents.
- Drying with a clean cloth or rag is recommended to prevent water spots or streaks on the tile.
- Reseal grout periodically as needed.

Pre and post grout install tips:

Using a grout release or sealer prior to installation is recommended especially for product that is porous or has a textured surface. Often times grout particles may become trapped and difficult to clean during the standard grouting process and the use of a rag or sponge may not pull up all the grout haze. Using a grout release and/or sealer will help prevent this from happening. Also important to note is that grout haze left on the surface of a tile will become difficult to remove and the chemicals needed to remove it at a later time may damage the tile or alter its looks. Heavy duty grout haze removers should be used according to the grout manufacturer's recommendations before trying more concentrated acid solutions.