



Cement Tile Fitting, Sealing and Maintenance Advice

Cement, Terrazzo and Zellige tiles are individually hand made and slight variations are normal, such as shade, slight imperfections, crazing and irregular/chipped edges. Small chips are rare these can easily be sanded out with fine paper. These characteristics are part of the appeal of these tiles and do not compromise the durability and look of the tile but add to it.

Cement and Terrazzo Tile Laying. Cement and Terrazzo tiles are fitted in a very similar manner to any ceramic type tile. They can be fitted on concrete, timber floors and in conjunction with underfloor heating. There a few points to note:

- Keep the tiles very clean when fitting, use water and a sponge.
- Cutting is with a [Bellota Diamond Disc](#), usually on a mini grinder or a wet saw.
- The concrete must be dry/cured.
- On timber floors and for floors with underfloor heating there are systems that ensure little movement and a good bond, you tiling contractor should have this knowledge.
- Always use a Flexible tile adhesive such as [C2](#) slow set or [Benferflex Rapid Set](#).
- It is important to get a good contact when using adhesive, it is recommended to trowel the floor or wall and the back of the tile. Hollow points can cause tiles to crack. This is especially important outdoors as cavities can fill with water then expand when frozen and crack the tile.
- Use a small grout joint, large joints will disrupt a pattern.
- Do not use a rubber mallet when fitting this can cause crack that might only appear after time.

Cement and Terrazzo Tile Sealing and Grouting:

- Clean the tile thoroughly using water and a non metal scouring pad such as [Sigma Cellulose Sponge](#), any heavy scratches can be sanded using a fine sandpaper, it is good practice to use our [Monestir Residue Cleaner](#) prior to sealing as it takes any salts and cement elements from the tile, make sure this is rinsed off well and the tile must be allowed to dry properly before sealing.
- [Laticrete Stonetech heavy duty sealer](#) which leaves a natural finish and is water based with very little odour.
- [Monestir Wet Effect Protector](#) is as it says a wet/glossy effect that will enhance the tile, this leaves a finish that makes cleaning easier.
- [Monestir Ecologic Liquid Wax](#) is a traditional method of sealing that gives a soft finish that is very durable and for those with allergies is very good. When deciding on this sealer the tiles will need a seal first with the [Laticrete Stonetech heavy duty sealer](#), the Liquid wax is a finish coat. The liquid wax when mixed with water is a great product to use periodically when cleaning to keep the natural sheen
- Before grouting seal the tile, use enough sealer to waterproof the tile, 2 to 4 coats normally. When applying a coat of sealer please be liberal with the coat do not just skim over the tile make sure the tile has absorbed plenty sealer. We know when the tiles are sealed correctly when applying the final coat the tiles do not get darker in color. Ensure the tiles are completely dry and spotlessly clean before this sealing, as sealing tiles that are damp or dirty will leave staining or streaking on the surface. Any cement residue left on at this stage is very difficult to remove after sealing.
- We recommend using a grey or light grey grout such as [Deko Grey](#) or [Manhattan](#). Darker grouts stain a light tile easily and usually contain dyes that can stain the tile when grouting. Lighter grouts can stain darker tiles also so it is very important to seal the tile properly.
- Use a [Sprayer](#), lint free cloth, or a varnish roller to apply sealer. Apply light coats of sealer ensuring each coat had dried fully before applying the next coat. Usually the tile requires 2 to 3 coats in total. N.B. When putting on final coat clean off any excess sealer with lint free cloth, this will leave an even finish of sealer. A circular rubbing motion with the cloth helps distribute the sealer better. When applying the sealer pour on cloth first then apply, pouring the sealer directly onto the tile can cause uneven distribution. Please note that too much sealant can cause staining. This is due to excess sealant sitting on top of the tile and absorbing dirt and stains. It is important that the sealant is applied thinly and evenly and allowed to absorb into the tile. When the tile stops changing colour and the colour stays enhanced this is usually a good sign that they are sealed well. If they look dry and change colour when wet this means they need more sealer. When testing we found the [Sprayer](#) best for applying all types of sealer.

– Sometimes there can be some small marks on these tiles as they are handmade. These may appear after sealing the tiles. It is advisable to use a very light sandpaper to help remove these marks. The area can then be resealed.

– If the tile becomes stained with grout and other building materials our [Monestir Residue Cleaner](#) is especially designed for cement tiles and is very effective at cleaning these stains. Do not use any other grout cleaners as they contain acids that will destroy the cement tile. Remove sealer first if the grout stains have been sealed over.

– For removing oily stains and old sealer our Monestir Degreaser stain remover is especially designed for cement tiles and is very effective at cleaning these stains.

Troubleshooting:

– 99% of problems we find are because the tile is not sealed properly.

– If the tile has a cloudy appearance after grouting this is usually caused by grout getting into the pores of the cement tile because they are not perfectly sealed, this is a particular problem when a client uses a black or anthracite grout on a light colored tile. If this problem occurs our [Monestir Residue Cleaner](#) is very effective at removing these stains. NB: any other tile grout remover will destroy the tile as they are not designed for cement tiles. When cleaned, rinsed and perfectly dry reseat.

Maintenance:

– Clean with neutral soap such as our [Monestir Liquid Wax](#) / [Waxwash](#) this helps preserve the sealers enhancing properties.

– Do not use any Acid or aggressive cleaners.

– Stains can be cleaned with a scouring pad or solvent.

– Outdoor areas will require sealing with a product that contains a UV protection such as our Monestir range, a freshen up with sealer every 1 to 2 years will keep the tiles looking their best. N.B. failure to maintain the products outdoors can cause colour fading and frost damage. When sealing outdoors make sure it occurs in dry conditions as if the sealer is rained on this can cause the sealer to bloom leaving cloudy patches.

Zellige Tiles are fitted in a similar manner to ceramic tiles, we recommend a minimal to no joint for grout, [Sigma Tile Wedge](#). As these are hand made and fired in artisan kilns we recommend grading the tiles before fitting and any warped or imperfect tiles can be used as cuts. For external angles we like to see a mitred edge but this depends on the fitters skill level. For finishing on a flat wall a grout joint then paint is a nice finish. They can be cut on a normal tile cutter but for a clean cut a [Bellota Diamond Disc](#) on a grinder or a wet saw works well.