

GUIDE TO PORCELAIN TILES

What is a Porcelain Tile?

Porcelain tiles are merely a form of ceramic tiles.

Whilst the preparation of ceramic and porcelain tiles are similar, it is the pressing and firing process which results in the porcelain tile having the superior characteristics of being much stronger and less porous, generally with a water absorption rate of 0.5% or less.

What are the types of Porcelain Tile?

- a. Polished or Semi Polished: as the name suggests, an elaborate technique is used to finish the tile after the firing process. High quality porcelain does not require any further treatment after polishing.
- b. Glazed Porcelain: various techniques are employed by different manufacturers to glaze a tile. Once a porcelain tile has been glazed, no further treatment is required, in the sense that these tiles are considered non porous.
- c. Matt or Natural Porcelain: generally speaking, this type of product comes out of the kiln in this form and undergoes no further processing. A quality product requires no further treatment, ie. normally sealing is not required.
- d. Rock Finish or Structured Porcelain: this type of porcelain is extremely textured and often used for external purposes.

Cleaning Wax Residue from your Tiles

Sometimes, in the production process, wax is added to the surface of the tile to protect it, to keep it clean and to keep it safe from scratching when in transit. There are various effective products on the market to clean this residue from the surface of the tiles and you should ask us which product is best suited to your porcelain. Prior to tiling, you should confirm with your tiler if they will remove the wax once the job is complete.

Laying Porcelain Tiles

In all cases the appropriate type of adhesive must be used. The substrate must also be adequate for the material to be used, that is, the flatness of the surface is paramount. If not tile lipping may occur.

In the case of floors, uneven surfaces may be levelled out with the use of a floor leveller or floor screed. Your tile fixer should be able to guide you through any questions you may have, so don't be afraid to ask.

Rectification

This is a process whereby tiles are cut during manufacturing, generally with a watered diamond blade, to ensure all tiles are consistent in size.

Costs of Laying

In many cases, the end result of laid porcelain requires a very straight level surface. Therefore in some cases tilers will charge a higher rate for laying and levelling porcelain tiles.

It is recommended that a qualified licensed tiler be used in all cases.

Please also see our article 'Optical Hazing & Polished Porcelain Tiles'