

# TILE



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Great Floors takes great pride in our quality workmanship and materials. With proper maintenance and appropriate cleaners, your ceramic and porcelain tile will remain beautiful for many years to come.

## ABOUT YOUR GLAZED TILE

Ceramic tile is made from natural materials. Special clays, pyrophyllite, rock and flint are mixed together, pressed into shape, glazed and kiln-fired at temperatures as high as 2100 degrees Fahrenheit. Because it's made of natural materials, ceramic tile is non-toxic and environmentally safe. Glaze on a ceramic tile is the result of a high-temperature kiln melting sand and other ingredients onto the tile body. The glaze makes the tile impervious and therefore does not need to be sealed. However, the grout around the tile should be sealed using a grout or all-purpose sealer.

Due to the nature of manufacturing of ceramic tiles and quarry tile, each individual "dye-lot" may vary from existing samples. In compliance with the industry-wide standard set by the Tile Contractors Board of America, no changes will be made unless the discoloration affects more than 10% of the tile.

Because of the different composition, glazes, surface textures and gloss levels, some ceramic tiles are more suitable for specific uses. Your design consultant can provide you with the product that will best suit your needs. Tiles with shiny finishes will show scratches more often than those with matte finishes.

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## TILE MAINTENANCE

### Floors

Floors can be kept clean and bright with popular household cleaners. Simply sweep or vacuum and wash as needed with a diluted solution of a household cleaner. Rinse thoroughly to remove residue and wipe dry. Floors that are in high-traffic areas and require heavy-duty cleaning can be cleaned with a commercial tile cleaner or a more concentrated solution of a household cleaner. Apply vigorously with a scrub brush, rinse and wipe dry with a clean, soft cloth or sponge mop.

## PORCELAIN

Non-polished porcelain pavers are durable and fairly impervious, but can be difficult to keep clean because dirt and liquids can get into the pore structure on the face of the tile. Use of a stone sealer can minimize this by repelling liquids. Polished porcelain, in most cases, does not need to be sealed. However, like all porcelains, it should be cleaned with a marble cleaner.

## GROUT

A slight discoloration in cementitious grout is very common. Shading variations may occur in the grout after it is installed. Around sinks, where water is prevalent and around stove cook tops where cooking oil and grease are present, the grout may appear darker than other areas.

Cement-based grout joints are absorbent to water, oil, and food stains. After a period of time, grout will separate from non-porous surfaces. Latex additives will not prevent staining.

A grout sealer should be used to minimize damage to sanded and new sanded grout joints and leave the surface natural in appearance. Sub-surface sealers penetrate the grout while leaving the surface natural in appearance. Because grout must cure for 30 days before applying sealer, it is the responsibility of the homeowner. Topical sealers form a barrier on the surface and may give a light gloss to the grout.

Some newer grout technologies do not require sealing. These products require unique maintenance and care. Please refer to the manufacturers recommendations on these products.

A stone sealer is recommended in the shower area and all wet areas. It will be the homeowners responsibility to check and properly caulk to prevent water damage.

## SEALER

There are several types of sealers available. To determine the type of product you may need, please see the list below:

**Solvent Based Impregnator Sealer** – Stain protection for all natural interior and exterior natural stones; granite and marble. This is a wipe on, wipe off product that can be used on grout.

**Water Based Porous Stone Protector** – Stain protection for more porous natural stones; limestone, travertine, slate or concrete. This is a wipe on, wipe off product that can be used on grout.

**Grout Sealer** – Stain protection for grout. This product is generally used when a glazed tile is used and only the grout needs to be sealed. It is usually applied with a small brush.

### Countertops

Countertops can be kept clean with a clean damp sponge or cloth. You can also supplement with all-purpose household cleaners previously mentioned. Badly soiled countertops should be covered with a thick solution of scouring powder and hot water. Allow these to set for five to ten minutes, then scrub with a stiff-bristled brush and rinse. Additional treatments may be necessary. If stains remain, apply undiluted household bleach and let it stand for at least five minutes. Follow precautions stated on bleach label. Liquid Comet is also superior for cleaning soiled counters. After a thorough cleaning, rinse well and dry.

### Special Tips for Baths

Baths can endure more use than other areas and are subjected to a wide variety of residues from soap and shampoo. The best tip is not to let these surface oils build up – regular care can go a long way! After each use simply wipe down your shower walls with a soft rubber squeegee or towel. This simple procedure will eliminate the build-up of soap scum or hard water film and mildew is much less likely to develop. Note that liquid body wash does not adhere to shower tile as well as bar soap and is much easier to clean off. Routine wiping with a damp sponge or cloth will generally maintain the brightness of vanity tops, walls and floors.

### Bath Floors, Tub Surround and Shower Walls

If you have soft water, maintain walls using an all-purpose cleaner. Allow to stand for about five minutes before lightly scrubbing with a sponge. Rinse well. For hard water, commercial tile cleaners such as Tile-It are available at most supermarkets and will do the best job. As an alternative, we recommend a solution of white vinegar and water in equal amounts to remove deposits. Test these products in a small area first to be sure they do not etch your tile or erode your grout. Vinegar can damage some crystalline tile glazes.

### Scouring Powders

Soft Scrub Cleaner does not contain abrasives that will affect the gloss of your tile. Comet and Ajax are among the most widely distributed abrasive scouring powders. NOTE: Take care when using cleaners containing abrasives on ceramic tile with shiny or gloss surfaces.

**IMPORTANT: When scouring with any powder, test a small inconspicuous area first to make sure that scouring action does not scratch or dull the glaze.**