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# STONE INSTALLATION GUIDE

Our stone ranges are sourced from many different countries, but are always produced by ethical and responsible quarries. The natural variance of stone means that every installation is unique, which is worth bearing in mind if you are carrying out your project in stages, as there is often more variance between batches than boxes. This is particularly important with Dijon, as there is an even greater variation both within and between batches. We tend to recommend using standard set white adhesive, with a similar coloured grout from the Ardex FS or Ardex FL range so your stone looks its best, but this is worth discussing with your tiler before work starts.

The great advantage in choosing a natural product like solid stone tiles/mosaics, is that whilst they can be damaged by heavy objects, in most cases those chips will not be obvious, as the stone below will be similar in colour and the chip can even be sanded to match the surrounding surface, so your stone will serve you for many, many years when installed and maintained correctly

## CHECKS PRE-INSTALLATION

The first thing to consider when installing stone, is to ensure the substrate is strong, solid and stable. In most cases, our stone floor and wall tiles are 13mm thick (except the external stone which is 30mm), so any movement in the substrate could transfer through to the tiles. If the substrate is not correctly prepared before the tiles are installed, then your tiles could eventually crack and fail. If installing tiles onto a timber construction floors such as joists and floorboards, then there should be no movement in the floor. De-coupling membranes (such as Flex Bone matting) will help with the natural expansion and contraction of the wood transferring through to the tiles and can be easily installed by your tiler, but cannot compensate for any 'bounce' or trampolining effect in the floor. If there is bounce in the floor, then adding additional joists/noggins, overlaid with 18mm marine grade plywood or the equivalent tile backer board should stop any slight trampolining effect. This can be installed by your builder, or in some cases your tiler, but it will need to be discussed when they come to quote, so there is no unforeseen delay, or additional cost added to your project. When it comes to walls, the best substrates are tile backer boards as these are specially made boards that can be fixed directly to studwork or brick/block walls and provide an excellent and secure grip for the tiles to bond to. The worst surfaces to tile onto are freshly skimmed plaster walls or stud work covered in standard plasterboard. The tiles may initially bond to the nice clean surface, but they could pull the thin plaster skim or the paper-front of the plasterboard off the wall. On that note, tiles should not be relied upon to be the waterproofing layer, especially in showers or wet-rooms as this is now governed by legislation to prevent leaks affecting your and others property. Always use a waterproofing system behind tiles in the shower like the Ardex Waterproofing Protection Kit, as even if there is the smallest crack or pinhole in the grout, these can have a capillary effect which can literally suck water behind the tiles and if left, could start to damage the rest of your house. The system we recommend is the Ardex Waterproof Protection Coat, as it is easily applied by roller/brush and provides a waterproof barrier preventing any water getting past the shower area and into the fabric of your building.

If you require any further assistance, or have any queries regarding the installation of stone tiles, please contact us at enquiries@claybrookstudio.co.uk

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## INSTALLING YOUR STONE TILES

Now you have a good base to work with, you can start to think about installing the tiles. The first thing to check is that you have had the correct product delivered and have opened a few boxes to check you like the naturally occurring variation. This is, especially important with Dijon, as there is a lot of variation both within and between batches. Your tiler needs to lay the tiles out before fixing them in place, so any variation is blended across the floor to ensure that your preferred tiles are positioned to your liking. However, if for any reason you are not happy with your product, please contact our enquiries team before fitting them, so we can discuss your options. For fixing the tiles to walls or floors, we always recommend using the Ardex adhesives we sell (not pre-mixed adhesive) and in particular the Ardex X7W which is great for stone, as it is paler in tone. As with all stone tiles, we recommend you take sheets/tiles from different boxes, as this will help to blend any naturally occurring variation. To cut the tiles, we recommend the use of a flat-bed, water-cooled tile cutter, fitted with a unslotted, smooth profile diamond-edged cutting blade. Cut the tile face-side up and where possible avoid cuts of less than 15mm. If this is unavoidable, cut slightly wider and then remove the excess with a tile file, rubbing block and or wet and dry paper. Once the tiles have been initially fixed, remove any excess adhesive from the grout joint/tile surface, using a weak dilution of EcoProTec Stone & Tile Intensive Cleaner if necessary.

## SEALING AND GROUTING YOUR STONE TILES

### FOR PROTECTION AGAINST WATER INGRESS

Sealer - EcoProTec Natural Finish Stone Sealer (minimum 2 coats)

Grout - Ardex FL/FS Flexible Grout

Cleaner - EcoProTec Stone & Tile Aftercare

### SEALING

All stone tiles must be sealed before the grouting process starts, otherwise they can be prone to ‘picture-framing’ which is when a darker coloured border forms around the edge of the tile. The EcoProTec Natural Finish Stone sealer is the product we recommend for most residential/domestic projects and we suggest that at least 2 coats are applied using a brush or fleece pad, trying to ensure that some sealer contacts the sides of the tile/mosaic as well as the face. The coats can be applied in 2 hour intervals, buffing away any excess left on the surface after 30mins. Once the coats have been applied, leave the sealer to cure overnight, before starting the grouting process.

### GROUTING

We recommend the Ardex range of grouts, particularly in similar shades to our stone ranges. The Ardex FL is great for floor/large format tiles, whereas the FS grout is perfect for mosaics and smaller wall tiles.

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## ONGOING MAINTENANCE

For everyday cleaning, we recommend you use a ph-neutral detergent, such as our EcoProTec Stone & Tile Aftercare, as this cleans both the stone and grout without affecting the finish. For spills, hard-water stains and the occasional deep clean (3-6 months) you can use EcoPro Tec Stone & Tile Intensive Cleaner, but after 2 or 3 deep cleans, we would recommend the re-application of the EcoProTec Natural Finish Stone sealer.

In summary, we are here to help and want both you and your tiler to get it right first time. Taking time to discuss your expectations with your tiler and for them to establish the best way to achieve that expectation will help you both avoid difficult conversations, costly mistakes and unnecessary delays to your project. If you or your tiler have any questions regarding our products and their application/installation, then before they start work, please ask them to contact our team at technical@claybrookstudio.co.uk or enquiries@claybrookstudio.co.uk who will be happy to advise accordingly.

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