

TERRACOTTA INSTALLATION GUIDE

Claybrook Handmade Terracotta and Villa Terracotta tiles are made from natural materials and clays so will vary in tone, surface texture, porosity and size. The nature of their handmade production can also mean that pitting, undulations and uneven edges are normal and part of the product's character.

Claybrook Reclaimed Terracotta tiles are reclaimed from old houses and buildings across Europe, which are then cleaned and re-sized for use in future projects. The nature of this process means these tiles will vary quite widely in colour from pale yellows through to dark reds. They will also vary in tone, surface texture, porosity and size and in some cases the tiles will still bare the natural patina accumulated over many decades of use.

Claybrook Ema Mosaic tiles are made using a unique clay from Italy, that is slip-resistant and less porous than most terracotta tiles. Whilst this enables them to be used on the floor in wet rooms, Ema Mosaic is still a natural terracotta product with a very textured finish (R13 slip-rated) so will need correctly sealing and finishing after grouting.

Colour Intensity

The final tonal colour of the floor/wall can be significantly influenced by your choice of sealant. You can choose to either retain the natural tones, or intensify them, or darken the natural colour of the terracotta. All the sealing options detailed below offer protection against everyday spills, though we also recommend the application of a finishing product in order to support that protection and to only clean the floor with our recommended products or a ph-neutral detergent to best maintain the floor. Please note that, regardless of which sealing option you choose, any clay terracotta floor will naturally 'age' over time with marks and stains and require more maintenance than a ceramic/porcelain tile.

Suitability

Our Ema Mosaics are the only terracotta that can be used in wet zones, such as shower walls and wet-room floors. In wet zones we only recommend using the approved sealer and installation process. For details see below.

If laying our Handmade, Villa or Reclaimed Terracotta tiles in bathrooms or areas where water may splash onto the surface, we recommend discussing your project with our sales or technical team before purchasing them, so they can advise you correctly.

The most important factor in achieving a good finish is to use a tiler with proven experience of laying and sealing natural terracotta tiles, as the wrong application of adhesive, sealers, grout and finishing products can ruin these beautiful tiles, costing you time and money.

PRE-INSTALLATION PROCESS

When you receive your order, please check that you have received all of your tiles and that they are in good condition. Damp tiles should be stored on end in a well-ventilated area, so they are thoroughly dry before installation. We recommend that, prior to installation, the tiles/sheets are well shuffled and dry-laid to create an even blend of colour and tone across the floor.

It is also a good idea to seal and finish one or two tiles before installation, so you and your tiler can agree how the tiles will look once sealed. If you want to save your tiler time waiting for sealers to dry and to reduce finger/scuff marks when laying the tiles, then you can opt to seal the tiles prior to work starting by following the guidelines below.

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



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INSTALLATION PROCESS

Your tiler will need to correctly prepare the substrate to ensure it is flat, level, solid and dust-free before they start laying the tiles.

When laying the tiles, they will need to brush any loose grit or dust off the back of the tiles to ensure a good bond with the adhesive. We also recommend they use Ardex Standard/Rapid Set Flexible Tile Adhesive OR Ardex Microtec Adhesive which should be applied to both the substrate and the back of the tiles to create the best bond.

Follow our Tile Installation Guide for advice on preparing the substrate.

CUTTING

To cut the tiles we recommend using a water-cooled flat-bed tile cutter, with a smooth profiled unslotted blade. You will need to regularly change the water to make sure the discoloured water doesn't stain the tiles. We recommend avoiding cuts of less than 15mm. Terracotta tiles are not suitable for external mitres.

SEALING

Depending which method you choose (see options below) your tiler must allow the sealer to fully cure before applying any grout (8-12hrs). You or your tiler can seal the tiles prior to installing to save time and reduce the appearance of finger marks/scuffs when installing.

GROUTING

The suggested grout joint between the Handmade Terracotta tiles can vary from 5-8mm due to size tolerance and edge finish. The Reclaimed Terracotta feature an even greater size variation, so will require a grout joint between 5-10mm to allow for this. The Ema mosaics have a set grout joint of 2-3mm as they are already set-out on a mesh backing. We only recommend the Ardex FL Flexible Grout for all the terracotta's.

FINISHING

Once the excess grout has been cleaned-down and the joints are completely dry, you can apply finishing coats of Ironwax Satin or Gloss (the satin has a soft sheen, the gloss has a high sheen) leaving two hours between coats and applying them at 90 degrees to each other across both the tiles and grout to avoid streaks. This final layer will help protect the floor and assist with ongoing maintenance.

ONGOING MAINTENANCE

For everyday cleaning, use LTP Floorshine or EcoProTec Tile & Stone Aftercare at the appropriate dilution stated on the bottle. For spills, stains and the occasional deep clean you can use EcoProTec Intensive Cleaner, again checking you are using the correct dilution. After using the EcoProTec Intensive Cleaner you will need to re-apply the Ironwax Satin/Gloss.

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SEALING AND FINISHING HANDMADE, VILLA AND RECLAIMED TERRACOTTA TILES

FOR A DARKER, ENHANCED COLOUR

Sealer - LTP Boiled Linseed Oil

Finisher – LTP Ironwax Satin/Gloss

Cleaner – LTP Floorshine

Before the tiles are grouted, the tiles must be sealed. To save time, they can be sealed prior to being laid, which also helps reduce finger marks/scuff during installation.

For a darker, more traditional colour, apply at least 2-3 coats of linseed oil. Apply the first coat of oil generously and evenly to the face and edges of the tile with a short-haired roller and continue to saturate for 3-4 minutes, moving the product continuously with the roller at 90 degree strokes to ensure complete coverage. Allow 8-12 hours between coats and apply a minimum of 2 coats to ensure a good seal before grouting.

The floor has a good seal once the linseed does not soak into the surface after 10 minutes. Be sure to remove any excess with a lint-free cotton or microfibre cloth after 10 minutes, otherwise the excess sealer can tackify on the surface and become very difficult to remove.

Once the grouting has finished, and the grout haze has been removed, you can apply the Ironwax Satin/Gloss across both the tile surface and grout joint.

PLEASE NOTE When using linseed oil please ensure that any rollers and brushes are thoroughly cleaned with white spirit and dried before being put away. All rags and cloths should be soaked in soapy water before being disposed of in a bin. The cloths should never be crumpled up into a ball and left in an area that may constitute a fire risk as they are liable to spontaneous combustion.

FOR A LIGHTLY ENHANCED COLOUR

Sealer – LTP Mattstone H2O

Finisher - LTP Ironwax Satin/Gloss

Cleaner – LTP Floorshine

Before the tiles are grouted, the tiles must be sealed. Apply a generous initial coat of LTP Mattstone to completely saturate the surface, ideally with a brush. Then once the initial coat has dried (approx 2hrs) apply at least one, maybe two slightly thinner coats and allow to dry 24 hrs before grouting. The floor has a good seal once the sealer is still sat on the surface after 5-10mins. If this happens, remove that excess. Once the grout haze has been removed and the floor allowed to dry, you can apply one or two coats of Ironwax Satin/Gloss across the both the tile surface and grout joints as a final finishing coat

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FOR A PALE NATURAL COLOUR

Sealer – EcoProTec Natural Finish Stone Seal

Finisher – LTP Ironwax Satin/Gloss

Cleaner – LTP Floorshine

Either before the tiles are laid, but definitely before grouting, the tiles must be sealed. Apply a generous coating of EcoProTec Natural Finish Stone Sealer to completely saturate the surface. Then once that initial coat has started to dry (approx 2hrs) apply one or two thinner coats and allow 24 hrs to cure before grouting. The floor has a good seal once the sealer is still sat on the surface after 5-10mins. If this happens, remove the excess after 10-15mins. Once the grout haze has been removed, you can apply one or two coats of Ironwax Satin/Gloss across the both the tile surface and grout joints.

GROUTING

Allow 4 hours for the Ironwax finish to cure before starting the grouting process using Ardex FL grout. If the tiler is not using our recommended Ardex FL grout, then please test your chosen grout on the surface of a sample tile prior to installation to ensure the grout can be cleaned away successfully.

FINISHING

Once the excess grout has been cleaned-down and the joints are completely dry, apply two further coats of Ironwax Satin or Gloss (the satin has a soft sheen, the gloss has a high sheen) leaving two hours between coats and applying them at 90 degrees to each other across both the tiles and grout to help protect the floor and assist with ongoing maintenance.

ONGOING MAINTENANCE

For everyday cleaning use LTP Floorshine at the appropriate dilution stated on the bottle. For spills, stains and the occasional deep clean, you can use EcoProTec Intensive Cleaner, again checking you are using the correct dilution. After using the EcoProTec Intensive Cleaner, you will need to re-apply the Ironwax finish.



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SEALING AND FINISHING YOUR EMA MOSAICS/TILES

Remover – Ema EasyCleaner

Sealer – Ema EasyCare

Finisher – Ema EasyWax

Cleaner – Fila Cleaner Pro

Our Ema Mosaics are made from a unique clay that is de-gassed and extruded. This makes it suitable for use in wet-rooms when correctly installed, sealed and finished with the recommended products – Ema EasyCleaner, Ema EasyCare and Ema EasyWax

The sealing process is actually the polar-opposite of sealing the Handmade, Villa and Reclaimed Terracotta's in that it **must not be sealed** before grouting.

Instead the tiles should be grouted and then once the excess grout has been removed, they can be cleaned back with Ema EasyCleaner. This is because the unique clay continues to cure after firing, which can push any salt residues to the surface, appearing as white specks. The Ema EasyCleaner is an acidic remover that will remove these salts, along with any grout haze present on the surface. Please take care when using this product and be sure to follow the Ema EasyCleaner technical guide and the instructions on the bottle.

SEALING

Once the tiles and grout are completely dry, the tile and grout need to be sealed with Ema EasyCare. The first coat should be applied liberally with a brush to ensure saturation and complete coverage. After 40mins, apply a second thinner coat and then if any sealer remains on the surface after a further 30mins, this should be wiped away and the floor buffed clean. The floor can be walked on after 12hours and will be fully cured after 24hours, after which showering can begin.

FINISHING

To increase the resistance of the floor/wall to everyday spills, an additional coat of Ema EasyWax can be applied once the sealer has fully cured. This will also help with ongoing maintenance.

ONGOING MAINTENANCE

For daily cleaning only use a ph-neutral cleaner like Fila Cleaner Pro or EcoPro Tec Aftercare. For the occasional deep clean use Fila PS87 or EcoPro Tec Intensive Cleaner and a white bristle nylon scrubbing brush to clean it back. Once dry, a re-application of the Ema EasyWax will be required.

In terms of re-sealing the floor, this will largely depend on usage, but generally once a year is to be expected. A quick test to show whether the sealer is still protective is to splash water on the surface. If the water sits/beads on the surface without darkening the tile, then the sealer is intact. If the tile starts to darken then the tiles need to be cleaned back with the Ema EasyCleaner, allowed to fully dry and then re-sealed with the Ema EasyCare and Ema EasyWax.

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