

# GROW HOUSE GROW

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## Tile Installation Guidelines

### Care and Inspection

- 1) Please inspect your order carefully. Grow House Grow will not be responsible for any material that has already been installed.
- 2) Once tiles arrive, store in a dry area. Do not let boxes or exposed tiles get wet prior to installing. Moisture or dampness before sealing may cause stains, color fading, cracking, pitting, or efflorescence.
- 3) When working with our tiles, take care not to damage the finished surface, edges, or corners. Carry tiles face-to-face to avoid scratches.
- 4) Because Grow House Grow's tiles are cement-based, some may have a light dusting or residue on their surface. Before installation, we recommended wiping the pattern side with a clean cloth.

### Installation

- 5) Your handmade tiles may show variation in color and design, and will not be identical piece to piece. We suggest mixing pieces from different boxes during setting to produce the rich and naturally varied appearance these tiles are known for.
- 6) Tiles should be installed over a level, stable, and completely cured subfloor.
  - An isolation/uncoupling membrane (such as Schluter Ditra) can be used to prevent cracking or fracturing caused by movement of the subfloor. Never install tiles over uncured subfloors.
  - A waterproof membrane is recommended for installation in all wet areas to prevent water from leaking into the subfloor or space below.
  - Radiant heating systems can be used with cement tiles. We recommend using a membrane as well as ensuring the subfloor, mortar bed, and tiles are completely dry during installation to avoid efflorescence.
- 7) Pattern placement: begin with placing the room's center tiles first, then move to border tiles (if any). Next, install the remaining space with tile from the center area outward.
- 8) Use a high quality thin-set adhesive, such as Laticrete or Mapei. When in doubt, contact your adhesive manufacturer for the appropriate product for your space. 3/8" mortar bed is recommended.
- 9) Make sure that adhesive is applied to the full back of each tile (100% coverage). We recommend using the back buttering method in order to get better adherence.
- 10) When setting the tile, level each piece using hand pressure only. Using a mallet or rubber hammer can cause thin cracks to form which will show up when applying grout or sealer. Cement tiles should not be ground down after installation. Remove excess adhesive from the surface with a damp cloth or sponge while it's still fresh to avoid any stains.

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11) Cement tiles can be cut using a wet saw with a sharp diamond blade.

### OUTDOOR APPLICATIONS:

12) When using cement tile outdoors, installing under a roof will help avoid color fading caused by direct sunlight over time. In areas where a roof isn't present, tiles can be polished with wax for extra protection.

- To minimize moisture seeping behind vertical tile installations, weather flashing is recommended.
- Exterior tile floors should be installed above grade.
- Please note that your outdoor cement tile will gently wear and patina over time, and may require more frequent resealing to prevent efflorescence.
- In regions with regular seasonal freeze-thaw cycles, cement tiles that are exposed to the weather may have a shorter lifespan. Outdoor cement tiles are happiest in temperate climates.

### Sealing, Grouting, + Waxing

13) After installation, wash the surface with a pH neutral detergent. For floor installations, a single disc floor machine with a white pad can be used to remove any excess residue, and to polish out excess dirt or water. Do not use acidic or alkaline products to clean tiles.

14) Use a pH-neutral cleaner and fine sandpaper to remove any remaining stains or residue. Do not allow water or other liquids to pool on the tile surface.

15) Allow tiles and mortar bed to dry out completely before beginning the sealing and/or polishing process. We highly recommend testing your preferred sealer on an individual tile to ensure it creates the desired finish.

16) Cement tiles are porous and will arrive unsealed. Therefore, sealing with a penetrating sealer is necessary before grouting; we recommend Drytreat (Stain-Proof), Miracle Sealants (511 Porous Plus), and Fila (FOB Xtreme Sealer).

- Apply two coats of penetrating sealer prior to grouting. Remove excess sealant from the tile surface using a dry white cloth, clean mop, or a solvent resistant sprayer. Allow two to three days for sealer to cure before grouting of joints. Take care to follow all steps according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Wet areas require more frequent resealing to prevent efflorescence; please speak with your installer or contact your preferred sealant manufacturer for the ideal schedule based on your space.
- Should you wish to deepen the color of your cement tile, a color enhancing sealant may be used instead of the above recommendations:

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We recommend Dry-Treat Color Enhancing Sealer or Miracle Sealants 511 Seal & Enhance. It's important to test your color enhancer on a spare piece of tile to ensure you like the look and finish.

17) Do not use dark or dyed grouts unless they match the color of your tile, as they can stain lighter pigments. We recommend testing with a single piece of tile before applying it to the entire area.

18) Cement tiles are installed edge-to-edge with minimal grout line using un-sanded grout to allow for expansion. For larger grout lines, sanded grout can be used. The recommended grout joint width is 1/16"-1/8". Joints should be full and free of all voids and pits.

19) Grout should be applied in small areas and immediately cleaned. Do not spread the entire floor with grout like with porcelain or ceramic tile.

20) Do not affix duct, gaffers, or acidic tapes directly onto cement tiles as they can cause discoloration or staining. Never grind or buff tiles with an abrasive pad or disc—this can damage the tile's surface.

21) Once grouted and cleaned, we recommend re-sealing the tile and grout lines for extra protection, especially in spaces that are particularly moist or damp. For extra protection, polishing the tiles with wax will help to avoid penetrating stains. We recommend Bioshield Floor Milk and Fila Matt. Waxing will often add a satin sheen to the face of your tile. As always, test your products in an inconspicuous area to ensure you like the color and finish of the treated area.

### **Maintenance + Care**

#### DAILY CARE:

22) For ongoing maintenance, wash regularly with clean water and a pH-neutral detergent. Using harsh cleaners can strip the sealant from the face of your tile, and make them more susceptible to staining. Recommended daily cleaners are Bona Hard Surface Cleaner, Stain-Proof Daily Floor Cleaner, Stain-Proof Daily Countertop Cleaner, and Miracle Tile & Stone Cleaner.

23) Regular waxing every few months can keep tiles fresh and offers an extra layer of protection. Tiles may also be buffed with a soft white pad. For recommended wax products, see "Sealing, Grouting, and Waxing" above.

24) It is recommended to address spills and stains soon after they occur. Allowing them to sit for long periods of time will make them more difficult to remove. For tough stains, Miracle Sealants Poultice Plus can be used to deep clean your tiles (resealing of any deep cleaned areas will be necessary).

25) The use of properly sized walk-off mats at entrances with heavy traffic, as well as regular sweeping or dust mopping are the easiest steps in everyday maintenance. A natural patina will occur as the floor is maintained and wears.

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## Tile Installation Guidelines

### LONG TERM CARE

26) Depending on your sealant, resealing floors every 3-5 years is recommended. For wet and/or high-traffic areas, floors should be resealed more frequently. Speak with your installer regarding the best maintenance schedule.

27) For a deep clean prior to resealing, we recommend Miracle Sealants Liquid Poultice. Additionally, floors can be lightly sanded to remove a micro top layer. This will reveal fresh pigments below the surface.

- To refinish by sanding, an orbital sander with fine grit (e.g. 400+) wet-dry sandpaper should be used.
- When sanding, work in small sections at a time.
- Using clean water and a towel, wet the desired area and sand.
- Using a second clean towel, immediately wipe the tile clean to prevent pigment, grout, or dirt from seeping into and staining your refinished surface.
- Reseal the tiles using your preferred product.

You can find these installation guidelines online at:

<https://growhousegrow.com/cement-tile-installation-guidelines/>

We hope you love your tiles for decades to come!  
[www.growhousegrow.com](http://www.growhousegrow.com)