

Caring for your Tile Floor

Tile floors are naturally durable. Here's how to keep them looking great.

Routine Maintenance

- Do not perform any maintenance until at least 72 hours after installation.
- Sweep your floor to remove dirt. Dirt is abrasive and will dull the finish. When you see dirt or debris, you should sweep your floor. You can also use your vacuum, but do not use the beater bar attachment.
- Clean your floor with a damp mop weekly. Clean more often if you experience heavy traffic. Water can be used. If using a cleaner, use a neutral pH cleaner such as Shaw's R2X Hard Surface Cleaner. A cleaner without a neutral pH can damage your grout. When using a cleaner, a final pass with a mop dampened with water only can help rinse the floor of any residue.
- Do not use detergent or soap. Soap can make your tile extremely slippery when wet, sticky or tacky when dry, and can cause hazing or dulling of the surface.
- The mop should be a cloth or sponge mop. Avoid mops that have metal or other hard fittings that can drag or scrape the surface.
- Do not use acids (including vinegar), chlorine, or ammonia (or cleaners that contain them) as these materials can damage your floor. Grout and some stones are particularly susceptible to these materials.
- Do not use steel wool or abrasive cleaners.
- Do not combine ammonia and household bleaches.

Heavy Duty Cleaning

- You may use a synthetic (nylon) scouring pad for tough to clean areas, but be sure to test a small area first to be sure the pad does not damage the tile. Do not use steel wool or abrasive cleaners.
- For heavy duty cleaning, use a scouring powder (paste) such as Comet, Bon Ami, or Ajax. Test a small area first to be sure the scouring powder does not damage the tile. Rinse and wipe dry.
- Less is more. Use only enough effort to clean the tile. Heavy duty cleaning is not routine maintenance, and repeated applications can dull the finish on your tile.

Protect your Floor

- Entry mats help collect dirt, sand, grit, and other materials that might be tracked onto your floor from outside.
- Use a non-slip underlayment to prevent area rugs from slipping.
- Use floor protectors to minimize the chance of scratches from heavy objects.
- Keep your pet's nails trimmed to prevent them from scratching the floor. High gloss finishes are more susceptible to scratching.
- Do not walk on your floor with spiked shoes, or other sports cleats.
- Never slide heavy objects across the floor. Lift.
- A protective mat should be used for furniture or chairs with casters.

Grout Care

- Use a grout sealer if staining is a problem.
- Grout is not stain-proof. Sealed grout is not stain proof. Epoxy grout is not stain proof.
- Clean grout periodically to remove residue build up.
- Only when needed, you can use a professional strength tile and grout cleaner for extra heavy duty cleaning.

Grout may present a special cleaning problem because it is susceptible to many staining agents. Apply a silicone sealer to grout joints yearly for maximum protection.

In addition to keeping the grout clean, be sure to keep grout joints in good repair. Scrape out loose, cracked or powdery joints and refill with a good grout. One common grouting trouble spot is the joint between the tub and the wall in your bathroom. As the house or tub settles, the grout may crack and crumble. It's relatively simple to remedy. Remove the old grout with a sharp pointed tool, watching out that you don't scratch tile or tub. Then dry the joint thoroughly and fill with a flexible caulking compound, such as silicone rubber caulking.

A sealer does not make tile or grout stain-proof. It does make removing stains easier, and lengthens the time you have before a stain sets in. You should address stains immediately for best results.

Stain Removal Guide

Stain	Removal Agent
Grease and fats	Soda and water or commercial spot lifter
Inks and colored dyes	Household bleach
Blood	Cold water. Hydrogen Peroxide or household bleach
Food stains. Lipstick.	Neutral cleaner in hot water followed by hydrogen peroxide or household bleach