

NEW WEST DESIGNS

CERAMIC TILE CARE AND CLEANING

Ceramic tile is fire clay or porcelain with a colored glaze face, double or single fired. Ceramic tile will vary from shade lot to shade lot due to the inconsistency in which individual pieces of clay or porcelain accept the glazing process. Both can chip from dropped heavy objects. High heels, furniture legs, toys and even pet claws can scratch and/or chip tile. You may experience walking on a hollow sounding tile. Typically, however, the tile is securely bonded and does not warrant replacement.

CLEANING

Dirt and debris can be abrasive on the tile surface and the grout. Keep floors as clean as possible in order to prevent abrasion damage. Door mats at all doors, both exterior and interior, can minimize the dirt and debris brought into your home.

When cleaning, avoid abrasive and/or acid based detergents. Clear, clean water is recommended for cleaning. Should a cleanser be needed, be sure the product selected is specifically for tile cleaning and follow directions as indicated on the label. Avoid products that may contain coloring agents in order to keep the porous grout from discoloration.

GROUT

Grout is basically cement with color and additives. Grout colors can change with time due to the environment, airborne particles, such as oil and grease and will stain even when sealed. Grout cracking around baseboards and door thresholds is common and not necessarily an installation problem. Due to the expansion and contraction of other materials, such as wood, cracking is typical. You will want to maintain these areas by re-caulking as necessary. Do it yourself products can typically be purchased at most home improvement centers. It is particularly important that areas such as bathtub surrounds and floors be maintained to prevent any water from penetrating and causing damage.

The color of the grout will also vary due to the absorption of moisture and/or oils on the surface and the drying rate caused by weather conditions. In order to maintain a consistent color on the grout, wipe up spills quickly.

SEALING

There is no product that will make your floor stain-proof. Sealing the grout will assist in minimizing the absorption rate of liquids and cleaning. However, sealing the grout will darken the shade and involves routine maintenance of stripping and re-applying. It is also difficult to match the shade of the grout once it has been sealed in the event a group repair is necessary. Always check the manufacturer's recommendation on the label before applying.