

## Grouting tips

The finished look of a tiling installation is down to the design and the tiles selected. There are, however, a significant number of grout lines also visible which can affect the final appearance. It is therefore important to grout carefully, getting the best result possible. Here are some tips to follow:

Mix the grout in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. It is particularly important not to make the grout too fluid as this will cause separation, resulting in a weaker surface of varying colour.

When mechanically mixing grouts a drill speed of less than 300RPM with the paddle held beneath the grout surface is ideal. Aggressive mixing can pull air into the product which can show as air holes upon curing.

Be patient and leave the grout to stand for a couple of minutes after mixing, allowing the reaction of all the components to begin. A quick stir after a couple of minutes standing is also advised.

Do not re-mix the grout after this initial period, and do not add extra water to try and retain mobility. If the grout has thickened up too much to apply then discard it.

Once in the joint, the grout should be left to firm before cleaning down. This is to ensure it remains in the joint and does not absorb significant levels of moisture when the area is cleaned.

NB: The time to firm is dependent on many parameters. The more porous a tile and/or substrate then the quicker the firming up will happen i.e. ceramic tiles will be able to be cleaned much earlier than porcelain tiles. Joint width will also play a part, with wider joints taking longer to firm. Finally, ambient conditions will

have an effect. Cold and damp environments with poor ventilation will result in the grout taking longer to firm.

When cleaning do not over apply water. We advise using a sponge or squeegee. If using a 'washboy' it is important to drain the sponge thoroughly otherwise this can reintroduce a significant amount of water into the grout, causing separation and surface patchiness when curing.