

In-depth guide to using UltraTileFix grouts

UltraTileFix offer a comprehensive range of grout products for today's vast variety of wall and floor applications. Always select the correct grout for the application depending on the requirements. The following guide is aimed at identifying the critical points for each stage of grouting to ensure optimum performance of the product.

Guide to successfully using UltraTileFix grouts

There are 3 stages that need to be carried out correctly when using grouts. These are:

1. Mixing the grout
2. Applying the grout
3. Cleaning and finishing off the grout

Preparing to grout

Prior to carrying out any grouting remove all spacers and brush/blow away any loose tile adhesive from the joints. We do not recommend tiling over spacers as this can cause colour variation and will result in only a thin application of grout. Wipe down the tile edges to ensure a clean surface is available for the grout to bond to. Do not allow puddles of water to accumulate in the joint as this will greatly affect the grout performance.

Stage 1 – Mixing the grout

The critical points to remember are to use clean cold water with the correct ratio of powder (as stated on the product's packaging) and to always use a clean bucket for mixing. When mixing:

- The powder must always be added to the water gradually. DO NOT pour all the powder in at once.
- Mix the product to attain a smooth lump free consistency. This can be done using a mixing trowel

(or similar) or by the use of a mechanical whisk. When using a whisk keep the whisk below the surface and do not use at speeds greater than 300rpm as this will result in air in the product.

- After initial mixing leave the product to stand for approximately 2 minutes before mixing again. This ensures full reactivity and wetting of all the components in the grout.

- DO NOT mix more grout than can be used within the stated Pot Life (please note that Pot Life will be shorter in warmer weather and when mixing large quantities of grout).

- Ensure that the ratio of water to powder is kept consistent for all applications on a particular job to ensure consistent colour.

- Under no circumstances add extra water to the grout during its Pot Life as this will weaken the product and cause colour variation.

Stage 2 – Applying the grout

The critical points here are to work in small areas concentrating on completely filling the joints to ensure no voids in the grout body, and it is essential that the grout is left to 'firm' up before cleaning down. Before applying any grout ensure the tiles are fully secure and do not shift or move under pressure. Do not simply rely on the stated drying times for the adhesive used

as this can vary depending upon site conditions. When applying:

- Only apply a small amount of grout onto the tile surface.
- Using a grout float or a squeegee spread to the joints and compact the grout firmly into the joints. Always use the grout float or squeegee at an angle of approximately 30° to the tile, to enable the grout to move freely.
- Apply firm pressure to ensure full compaction. This will normally require applying more grout over the initial application a couple of times. Ensure this is done within the grout's working time.
- Once fully compacted remove excess grout by using the trowel or squeegee at right angles to the tiles, moving diagonally ensuring minimum contact with the grout lines. Should the grout be disturbed then refill and compact as above. This process should leave only a smear of grout on the tiles.
- Leave the grout to firm before carrying out cleaning.

Please note that there are many different terms used to describe the stage when grouts are ready for wet cleaning. All of them are basically referring to the point when the grout is not readily disturbed and will no longer be 'dragged' out of the joint when pulling a damp sponge across, but has not gone to the stage of cure where it is set hard. The time for a grout to firm up will depend on many factors. The material on the tile face is in a thin film and will firm/dry quite quickly. The time for material in the joints to firm up will depend on joint width and depth and the absorbency of the substrate and tile edge. For example, fixed biscuit ceramic tiles with thin joints, on a plastered wall will result in relatively quick firming of the grout as all surfaces can absorb the moisture from the grout. Fully vitrified tiles with wide joint widths on a very dense concrete floor will take considerably longer, as the moisture from the grout needs to evaporate from the exposed surface only.

Stage 3 – Cleaning and finishing off

The critical factors to remember here are ensuring that the grout has reached the correct degree of cure (as per the note above) and that minimal water is used. Excess water will absorb into the grout and often result in the various components in the grout being drawn to the surface causing colour differences.

- When cleaning down you will need a clean sponge and clean water. We do not advise the use of a waterboy as this often results in an excessive amount of water being used.
- When cleaning and finishing, as per the application of the grout, only work in small areas.
- Dampen the sponge with the clean cold water then wring out as much water as possible.
- Wipe over the surface of the tiles and the grout lines. This will remove the majority of grout from the surface of the tiles.
- Rinse out the sponge in clean water to remove the grout particles. Ensure this is done thoroughly.
- Rewet the sponge in clean cold water and wring out as much water as possible.
- Wipe down the joints and neaten the grout lines as well as wiping off any remaining grout residue from the surface of the tiles.
- This may often give the desired final appearance. If further wipe downs are necessary then repeat the process as above, but ensure clean water is used each time.
- Leave the grout to harden in the joints before wiping off any remaining haze from the tile surface using a soft dry cloth.

For further information, please call 01827 254402.