

# How to Install a Slate Floor in 8 Steps

## User Guide

### Overview

This document is aimed at customers who wish to learn the key steps in installing a slate floor. The guide is also supported by videos on our [website](#)

### Step 1: Un-packing, mixing and sorting the slate

As slate is a natural stone, it's prone to being cut at different thicknesses. With some slates ranging from 5mm on one end of the tile to 15mm at the other end. This isn't always the case but the size/thickness does usually vary between tiles, however it is not recommended to lay a 5mm thick slate tile next to one of 15mm/20mm as the step created between tiles can prove to be not only dangerous but also very unpleasant to walk on and even look at. An effective method of sorting slate is to arrange them into 3 piles of thick, medium and thin. This will help during the installation of the tiles as you won't have any major differences in thickness, however to eliminate all steps between tiles is not always the case as most customers are expecting a slight step here and there (this is usually the desired effect when purchasing tiles such as natural slate).

### Step 2: Preparing the surface to be tiled

Most surfaces need to be sealed with a primer; this will improve the adhesion between tiles and adhesive. As it can be quite difficult to know which surfaces need sealing it's recommended to seal any surface that you may be unsure about. The recommended primer to use is Larsen's Acrylic Primer. Larsen's Acrylic Primer is a ready to use primer for use on porous and difficult substrates prior to tiling or screeding or to seal gypsum plasters or screeds prior to the addition of cement based adhesives. It can be used neat when sealing substrates or diluted with an equal quantity of water for general priming. This can be applied using a roller and it is coloured to ensure equal application. NOTE – before priming/sealing any surface, ensure it is swept clean of any dust, oil, grease and dirt etc.

### **Step 3: Planning & Setting out**

When planning & setting out for tiling it is best practice to centralise the tiling to the room/area to be tiled. This will minimize on waste and in most cases look better. To do this, do the following:

- Measure one end of the room to the other and mark the floor half way (divide the measurement in half).
- Repeat this at the opposite end of the room.
- Now join both centre marks using a long straight edge to create the centre line (In some cases a further few centre marks may be needed in order to be able to reach each mark with the straight edge).
- Now lay out a line of tiles each way from the centre line to establish the best starting position. Do this starting with the edge of a tile to the line, if this leaves very small, difficult or in-practical cuts anywhere then repeat this process but start a middle of a tile to the line rather than the edge of a tile. In some cases neither of these ways will be ideal so you may need to start off-centre in order to ensure best results all-round.

### **Step 4: Mixing adhesive and sticking tiles**

Once the best starting position has been established, you will need to mix up some tile adhesive, for this we recommend Larsen's Professional Fast Set PTB. Fast Set PTB is particularly suitable for solid bed fixing between 5 and 20 mm and readily copes with uneven tiles and substrates. Fast Set PTB is available in Grey and White and is suitable for fixing ceramic, fully vitrified tiles, natural stone and mosaics to a variety of substrates including heated screeds. NOTE – This is a fast setting adhesive so it's recommended to mix small amounts at a time.

When sticking tiles down into a kitchen, hallway etc. It is recommended to start at the furthest point from the door and work backwards towards the door to ensure that you don't box yourself into a corner as you will not be able to stand on freshly laid tiles.

Start spreading the tile adhesive onto the floor using a solid bed trowel; this can be acquired from most builders' merchants etc. Hold the trowel at a 45° angle when spreading adhesive. When laying the tiles remember to space them at least 5mm apart from each other this is for grout. It isn't always 5mm grout lines with all tiles but this is the recommended size for most floor tiles however allow for small variations in these sizes as natural slate isn't always cut completely square.

### **Step 5: Cutting the tiles**

Once you have laid a line of tiles down you will need to cut a tile to fit in against the wall/units etc. To do this you will need to measure the area where a tile is to be fitted (Remember to allow for grout spaces between tiles and against wall) using a tape measure and then transfer this measurement onto a tile using a pencil/marker.

In regards to actually cutting the tile some would say this is best done dry, this means using an electric cutter without water. NOTE - Not all cutters have the ability to cut dry so this can't always be done. If cutting wet (with water) then be sure to allow slate to dry completely before sealing. When cutting natural stone it is recommended to use an overhead cutter such as the RUBI DW range but as these can be very costly for someone that isn't doing this as a full time job, there are smaller and cheaper alternatives that can be purchased from most builders merchants. NOTE – for cutting instructions please refer to the operating manual that comes with the cutter.

### **Step 6: Sealing the tiles**

Once the adhesive has cured (set hard) it is very important to apply a sealer/protector. For this we recommend Larsen's Impregnating Sealer, this is ideal for providing a water repellent, stain resistant seal to slate and porous tiles. This is to be applied using a roller and must be applied evenly. It's recommended to apply 2 coats before grouting and once after.

### **Step 7: Grouting**

Once the sealer has cured, it's time to mix up the grout. For this we recommend Larsen's Professional Stain Resistant Wide Joint Grout. Professional Stain Resistant Wide Joint Grout is a specially formulated, flexible, cement based wide joint grout. This is to be applied using a grouting float spreading it into the gaps at a 45° angle NOTE – try to concentrate on keeping the grout as close to the edges of the tiles as possible, this is not crucial as you have sealed the tiles but will make it a lot easier to sponge off after. When grouting, you should only cover between 1-2 m<sup>2</sup> at a time and then sponge off as if grout is left sitting on tiles for too long it can be very difficult to remove! (Between 10-15 minutes is ideal). Once all the grout has been applied you may need to clean the tiles with a grouting sponge again but ensure to use fresh clean water every 2-3 m<sup>2</sup>. Once the tiles are clean and the grout has cured (set hard) another coat of sealer is required.

**Step 8: Routine maintenance.**

Depending on foot traffic, the floor will need to be re-sealed/cleaned with a professional tile cleaner every 6-12 months, for this we recommend Larsen's Concentrated Tile Clean. Concentrated Tile Clean is part of the Professional Tile Maintenance Range. It is a concentrated hard surface cleaner specifically designed for use in the routine cleaning and maintenance of tile and other hard floors

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