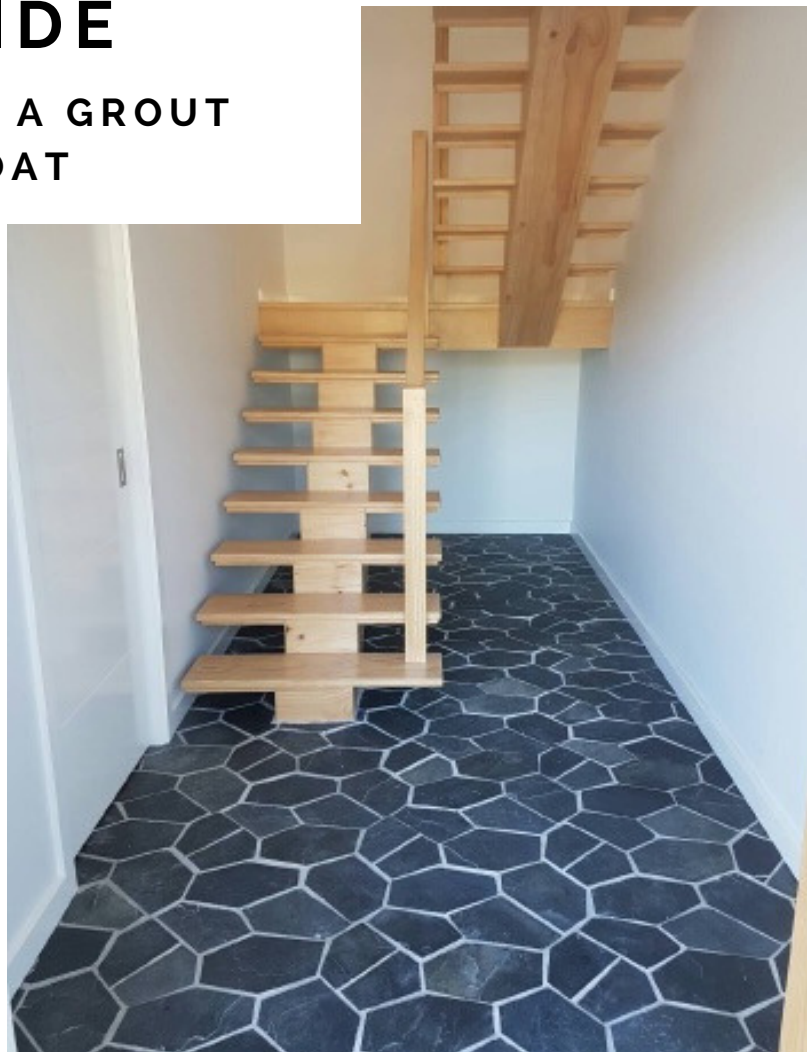




The
SIMPLISTIC
GUIDE
ON USING A GROUT
FLOAT



Everything that you could need to know about using a Grout Float

Grouting is a crucial part of any tile installation because grout fills the spacing connecting tiles, called grout joints, creating a continuous surface. The best way, in our opinion, is to apply grout using a rubber grout float, which consists of a rectangular rubber pad that is firm but flexible. The process of grouting with a float includes filling the joints with freshly mixed grout and scraping the tiles clean of excess grout.





Choose the Right Float

There are two main variations of rubber grout floats: wall floats and floor floats. The difference being that wall floats have softer rubber pads than floor floats, which can be quite stiff. Wall floats are generally perceived as easier to use and are easier to use for reaching into corners, they're a better all-around choice for beginners. The tools you find at the store may not say "wall" or "floor," and some may be called "universal." Just compare the softness of the pads to identify the type. Also, spend a little extra for a quality float, especially if you have a large tile job. Grouting completes to look of your job, and the last thing you want is your grout float letting you down. If you are undertaking a large DIY project, choose a grout float that feels comfortable in your hand. Try out different models before buying. If you have a big job in front of you, a little bit of extra comfort makes a huge difference.



Tip:

Clean first: Make sure all the tiles are clean. Using a utility knife, carefully scrape out any thin-set mortar (the tile adhesive that you used to bond the tiles to the concrete slab) that may have squeezed out between the tiles when you set them. This will be a different color than the grout and will show through. Give all the tiles a wipe with a damp sponge.

Choose a product: Choosing a grout recommended by your stone supplier is wise, as depending whether natural stone or man made, requirements vary. Take into account the size of your grout joints and the size of your budget, when purchasing quantity as shades can vary slightly batch to batch and being one bag short at the end of the job is much worse than having one bag extra.

Grout comes in a variety of colors. Use the color charts or examples available at most stores to find one that works well with your tiles. .

Move the Float Diagonally

You dab some grout onto your tool and start spreading it across the tiles, holding the tool at an angle. The principle is the same whether you are grouting indoors (for a bathroom, for example) or outdoors (as when laying tile for an outdoor patio). As a general rule, always move the grout float diagonally over the grout joints. This prevents the edge of the float from sinking into the joints and pulling out the grout. Sometimes you have to work parallel to joints, such as when grouting along the edge of a wall or floor.

But otherwise, sweep the float diagonally.



Tip:

It is very important when grouting natural stone, that you keep in mind it is porous and can stain. Therefore when you are grouting, if you apply this to only the edges, or drop in splotches it can leave a stain similar to a picture frame
(as shown in below picture)

You want to grout over the entire tile, and then clean the entire tile in sections of 1-2m² at a time. This way, if there is any marking, you won't notice as the *slight* stain is across the entire tile, rather than just the edges which would stand out.

Clean regularly with a sponge, ensuring the water is clean.



Use a Lower Angle for Filling

Fill the grout joints by spreading the grout across the tiles while holding the float at an angle of about 45° to the tile surface. This is the standard for floor tile. When tiling walls, you may find a lower angle (perhaps 30°) more effective for filling the joints.



Use a Steeper Angle for Cleaning

When all grout joints in a work area have been filled, make a second pass with the float to remove excess grout from the tile faces. This time, hold the float at a steep angle of about 80° to 85° --almost straight up and down. A steep angle cleans the tiles without pulling grout from the joints.



Tip:

Cleanliness Is Next to Godliness

Keep your grout float clean. While you are grouting, keep a tile sponge and bucket of water close by. Periodically rinse off your grout float. It will be easier to spread the grout if the tool is clean.

A rubber grout float does a nice job of scraping the excess grout from the tile faces, but it can't make the tiles clean. It usually leaves a film of chalky grout residue that you clean up with a grout sponge after the grout has set. Your cleaning pass with the float should remove all blobs and chunks of grout. Grout an area of around 1-2m² then, wipe the surface of the tile with a damp sponge to remove the remaining grout. Wring out the sponge, then repeat. Always use clean water from another bucket to get the sponge damp.



Good Luck!

Keep an eye out for next week's 'How to' post, we will be giving you the tips of how to lay vertically and some of our other natural stone products.

If you have any Questions, queries or concerns please give the Slate discounts team a call at the office on 9706 9767 and we will be more than happy to assist!