

Keep Tile Looking New

Sage Homes has created many beautiful showers and baths for our customers. Proper tile and grout maintenance is the key to long lasting beauty. Knowing what kind of tile is installed in your bath will help you understand how to take care of it.

STONE TILE LOOKS DIRTY

Stone tile is a beautiful and durable building material that has been used for many years all over the country. The problem is when it's not taken care of properly, its color can be muted or altered, making it less attractive than when it was installed. With a material that can theoretically last as long as stone tile, cleaning is a task that will eventually take its toll unless you use the proper techniques. Stone tile is usually sealed with either a penetrating stone sealant (often times called a color enhancer sealant), or a standard stone sealant. Soap, shampoo, conditioners, and other body care products will leave a whitish residue on the tile that shows up over time. If the tile is properly sealed, this residue can be removed by proper cleaning. If the wrong chemicals are used to clean the stone, it can make the appearance worse.

STONE TILE FADING

The delicate colors of stone can definitely be altered by the improper use of cleaning chemicals, but there are other factors that can cause stone tile fading, as well. Mopping with dirty solution, using chemicals that are not designed for stone care, and large amounts of direct sunlight can each affect the color of natural minerals within the tile. This causes fading and color changes that most homeowners simply don't want.

STONE TILE CLEANING

Stone is a natural material which should be cared for with proper maintenance procedures. The hardness and absorbency of the stone will help decide which chemicals, pads, brushes, and equipment are necessary to maintain the stone.

You need to know that bleach and ammonia will strip away the protective coating of the sealant very quickly. This makes many standard tile cleaning products unsuitable and will leave your stone and grout more vulnerable to dirt and debris. Many tile stores carry cleaning detergents for stone tile. Lightly soiled tile requires a light duty cleaner. Heavily soiled tile requires a heavy duty cleaner. Be sure to read the labels carefully. Heavy duty cleaners may require you to reseal the stone and grout once it is dry.

PORCELAIN AND CERAMIC TILE CLEANING

Porcelain and Ceramic tile have a fired coating on top of them which lends itself to easy cleaning and care. They usually require no sealant to be applied to the tiles themselves. In our experience, most tile cleaners are effective and safe to

use on ceramic and porcelain tile. If it has bleach or ammonia in it, you need to be concerned with the effects on the grout sealant.

GROUT IS DIRTY

Most people will recognize the effects of dirty and soiled grout. Grout is a cement type product. It is sand held together with bonding materials that dry hard once applied. It is porous. If the grout is not sealed, it will allow water to move through it and get your wall board wet. Grout sealant soaks into the grout and dries – creating a water tight seal – for a while. With typical shower cleaners, the sealant does not last long though. Standard shower cleaner chemicals break down the sealant and remove it. Over time, grout becomes less protected through the use of the shower and the cleaners you use on it. Dirt and soap scum get pulled into the grout more quickly without the protection of the sealant. This makes a perfect environment for mildew and mold to grow which makes your grout look even worse. This is why your shower grout will look dirty again soon after you have cleaned it.

GROUT CLEANING

Once the sealant on your grout has been broken down by use and chemicals, your best option is to clean it thoroughly until its color is back to normal, let it dry, and then reseal it. By refreshing the sealer, you give the grout a new barrier against dirt and water. Resealing your grout will make the day-to-day cleanliness of your shower better, and easier to maintain. Using a non-bleach, non-ammonia type cleaner will help reduce the breakdown of the sealant.

GROUT RESEALING

Grout sealant is inexpensive and easy to apply with a foam brush. We recommend to our clients that they perform grout resealing 2-3 times a year to keep the grout in the best condition. It takes very little time. Be sure to follow the directions on the container. Sage Homes offers this service to our clients.