



Installation Guide: Marble

Elon® **ALWAYS** recommends that all installations be done in accordance with local building codes and adheres to Tile Council of North America specifications.

Preparation

Prior to installation of Natural Marble:

- Open and inspect all marble cartons.
- All cartons should be opened, and material should be separated to allow the installer to layout all pieces and blend them together to give the final installation a uniform color blend, known as "Dry Laid."
- On large jobs, blend material from multiple pallets during Dry Laying.
- When laying out the installation, DO NOT set marble with a "Butt Joint"; Tile Council of North America suggests a minimum 1/16" grout joint.
 - For grout joints 1/16" - 1/8" width, use Unsanded Grout.
 - For grout joints 1/8" - 5/8" width, use Sanded Grout.

Installation

When installing Natural Marble:

- Use a white thinset when installing any light-colored natural stone.
 - Using grey thinset could show trowel ridges or shading through the marble, affecting the finished installation color of natural stones.
- On natural marble with fiberglass backs, always use a quality Latex Modified Thinset to ensure proper adhesion to the fiber back.
- Many manufacturers recommend using latex modified thinset for marble rather than mastics, which may stain and discolor many natural stones.
 - Always follow manufacturers' Limitations and Instructions.
 - Test for compatibility
- When used in showers or tubs, Marble should never be set with the bottom course extending into the shower base or tight to tub lip. Always leave a minimum gap of 1/4" above and perpendicular to the floor or lip of the tub or shower base and use a waterproof flexible sealant where they meet per TCNA specification B412-23.
 - This prevents water from wicking up the body of the marble, preventing discoloration.
- For marble shower floors, recommend installations that incorporate a Complete Water Management System (e.g., Bonded Waterproof Tiled Shower Assemblies - Schluter) vs. Traditional shower installations (Mud job).

Grouting

Grouting Natural Marble:

- The use of sanded grouts may cause scratching of polished or high honed marble.
 - When using sanded grout, always conduct a test sample first.
- The use of products like Aqua Mix's Grout Release or pre-sealing marble prior to grouting helps prevent pigments in grout colors from staining natural stone.
 - Pre-sealing makes for easier installation cleanup of grout residue.
- When using High-Performance grouts, ones which don't require that the joint be sealed, natural stone should be pre-sealed prior to grouting with 2 coats of products like Aqua Mix's Sealers Choice, Enrich 'N' Seal or Grout Release. This will minimize the polymers in the grouts from discoloring the natural stone.
- When using Epoxy, Urethane, Sanded or Unsanded grout, always conduct a test sample first to determine compatibility with the stone.

Sealing

Sealing Natural Marble and Grout Joints after installation regardless of the finish:

- Always use a high-quality penetrating sealer like *Aqua Mix® Sealers Choice® Gold* to maintain the stone's natural color or a high-quality color-enhancing penetrating sealer like *Aqua Mix® Enrich 'N' Seal™* to enhance the natural color of the stone.
- When sealing natural marble, apply each coat in a different direction (e.g., first coat Left to Right, Second coat Front to Back).
- Multi-sided or 6-sided sealing of material 48 hours before installation will help minimize darkening of Marble on shower floors caused by water absorption and reduce the formation of effervescence and rust.
 - Use on material in areas with excessive moisture exposure: shower floors, marble walls along the base of the shower or tub flange, soap niches.
 - As per National Tile Contractors Association Reference Manual, Custom, or Mapei technical articles.

Common Problems

Common problems in Natural Marble:

- Stain Removal:
 - Sealing marble will help reduce staining.
 - Always clean up spills promptly.
 - Minor stains occurring in natural marble after installation can be removed using a Product like *Aqua Mix® Poultice Stain Remover* per the manufacturer's directions.
- Etching in natural stone:
 - Sealing marble after installation will help minimize etching.
 - Enhancing Sealers may help hide the dullness of some etched stones, but professional repolishing may be required to eliminate it.
- Lippage or uneven surface height issues are often a result of improper installation.
 - Always inspect material for uniform thickness before installation.
- Recycled or discolored water in wet saws trays and cleaning water can permanently stain natural stone.
 - Many natural stones tend to be extremely porous prior to sealing, Elon® recommends that all water being used to cut or drill natural stone be kept fresh and clean.
 - Elon® suggests a separate clean container of fresh non-recycled water be used in all wet saws and drills when working with natural stone.

Installation is Acceptance

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