

You can do it...

...we can help!



Stripping, cleaning & sealing tiles



CTM

More than you expect. For less than you think.

Getting the best out of your tiles

At CTM, it's important to us that you get lasting enjoyment out of your new tiles. In the Tool Shed area of your store, you will find all the products you need to take care of cleaning and maintaining a beautiful finish. Each cleaning or sealing product is designed for a specific tile application. The instructions are clear and easy to follow. With a helping hand from your CTM sales assistant, you will be fully equipped to get the job done with confidence. It's also useful to know that you can always call for free **Tile and Floorcare advice on 0800 006 173**.

A quick pointer before we get started: This handy guide is primarily to help you clean and seal a new set of tiles. You may, however, want to keep your existing tiles, but strip them properly before cleaning and re-sealing. There's a section at the end of the leaflet to help you with just that. For new tile applications, read on.

Here's how you do it

The first important thing to note is what kind of tile you need to clean and seal. Products and applications will vary between **unglazed** tiles (those rustic looking terracotta-like surfaces), **vitrified** tiles and **polished porcelain**. Don't let this deter you. It's a simple matter of matching the right product with the right tile. Then just follow the step-by-step instructions.

1. First, the stripping

This initial step is for existing wall or floor tiles that need to be thoroughly stripped before applying a new sealing coat. (If you're laying new tiles, then you can skip straight to the next step below, which is cleaning.)

Stripping can be heady work, as strippers are designed to work aggressively and will give off strong fumes. Ensure you have protective clothing, at very least a pair of gloves and possibly an industrial mask to filter fumes. (WARNING: Do not allow open flames, or smoke a cigarette, in close proximity to a stripper. Seal containers tightly immediately after use and most definitely store out of reach of children.)

1. There are 3 types of strippers to use, depending on the job at hand:
 - a. To **strip off old seals** use **Seal Stripper (Fig. 1.1)** in its strongest, neat form. You should get around 5 to 10m² per litre.
 - b. To **strip off old wax polishes** use **Polish Stripper (Fig. 1.2)** either neat for very old wax residue, or a 4:1 solution with hot water for a less taxing job.

- c. The **stripping of bitumen and glue** will require **Bitumen Stripper** (Fig. 1.3). Use this neat. Again, you should achieve around 10m² per litre.
- At the outset, ensure that your working area is as well ventilated as possible.
 - Mask off any surfaces that may disfigure or corrode if a stripper comes into contact. (For instance, the aluminium frames or sliding mechanisms of a shower enclosure, as well as taps and bathroom accessories would need covering.)
 - It is best to work at small areas at a time to prevent the stripper drying before you get around to removing it.
 - In each working area, allow the stripper to take effect for 3 to 5 minutes. The longer you can leave it the better, but do be careful not to let it start drying. You'll get the hang of it on your first little area of application.
 - As soon as you believe the stripper has taken hold, add water to a scrubbing pad and begin vigorous, circular scrubbing. Try not to allow water to spill onto unstripped areas.
 - As you observe the residue lifting, apply a mop and rinse with fresh water. The idea is to lift the residue away from the tile face, so don't apply too much rubbing as this will only re-penetrate the tile face. (Again, it's a good reason to do small areas at a time, so you get used to the process.)
 - When you've completed the entire surface area, wash through-out with a solution of **Pro Care Heavy Duty Cleaner** (Fig. 1.4) and water.
 - Then rinse thoroughly again to ensure you discard all traces of the stripper.
 - Give the surface enough time to start drying and then inspect it closely. You're trying to achieve a uniform colour with no spots of residue. If you encounter particularly obstinate areas, re-apply the stripping process appropriately.

Fig.1.1



Seal Stripper

Fig.1.2



Polish Stripper

- Once you've allowed the area to dry thoroughly (24 to 48 hours with maximum ventilation) you can then get onto the business of resealing.

Fig 1.3



Bitumen Stripper

Fig 1.4



Heavy Duty Cleaner

2. Then, the cleaning

Luckily, the cleaning process is the same for all tiles. It's an important and fairly lengthy process, but do not be tempted to skip the proper cleaning of your tiles.

- Once your tiles are laid, spend a little time removing any excess grout. Use a cloth or a sponge to gently smooth over the grouting grooves.
- Now leave the grout to dry. Proper drying will take up to **14 days**. (Yup, it's a bit of a wait, but worth it.) Try to make minimal, or preferably no, use of a recently grouted floor area. Keep newly grouted floor or wall areas well ventilated.
- Remove any remaining specks or smudges of grout before you finally move on to sealing the tiles. The perfect product for this is **Pro Care Grout Adhesive Remover** (Fig. 2.1).
- To ensure that the surface is free from any residue left behind from the Grout Adhesive Remover and to neutralise the surface of the tile before

Fig. 2.1



Grout & Adhesive Remover

sealing, gently wipe with **Pro Care Heavy Duty Cleaner** (Fig. 1.4) using a clean cloth or sponge.

5. One more thing: your tiles should be allowed to dry from 24 to 48 hours after cleaning. To test if residue moisture has properly evaporated after cleaning, apply a piece of plastic or cling film to a tile for a good few hours and see if there is any sweating underneath. All dry, all good to go for sealing.

3. Now, the sealing

This is where the type of tile you are sealing becomes important. Follow the instructions below for either **unglazed** or **polished porcelain** tiles.

3.1 Sealing unglazed tiles

1. There are two types of sealants for the job of finishing an unglazed tile (like terracotta, for instance). You can use **Pro Care Surface Sealer** (Fig. 3.1.1), or a product called **Deep Seal** (Fig. 3.1.2). Both can be used **indoors or outdoors**. It's important to understand that the sealant you choose will impart a specific finish to your tiles, as well as offer different protection.
 - a. **Pro Care Surface Sealer**: This sealant is ideal for **unglazed terracotta type tiles**. It imparts more of a veneer or layer across the face of the tile, the effect being to add a shiny finish. There is **minimal colour change** to the face of a tile with Pro Care Surface Sealer.
 - b. **Deep Seal**: This is more suited to **vitrified unglazed tiles**. It is a more penetrating sealant with an added protection factor. Note that the absorption of **Deep Seal** also **deepens the colour of the tile** significantly. The effect is a matt finish.
2. Apply a thorough first coating of your preferred sealant (Pro Care Surface Sealer or Deep Seal). Use a good sheepskin applicator, rather than a roller. A roller does not apply as thoroughly and can cause bubbling. For best results be careful not to overload your sheepskin applicator with sealant.
3. For a uniform application and look, use long strokes back and forth. Don't apply in a circular motion. A further tip: If you decide to apply a **second coating** after the first has dried, apply this **across the direction** of your previous application.
4. Unglazed tiles are low in porosity and will only absorb a small amount of sealer. Take care not to over apply.
5. Now allow this first coating to dry for a good 4 hours.

Fig. 3.1.1



Surface Sealer

Fig. 3.1.2



Deep Seal

Fig. 3.1.3



Sparkle Shine

Tips & hints



Don't apply an exterior sealant in direct sunlight or onto hot, sun beaten tiles. The sealant will dry too quickly and not have enough time to penetrate and settle properly. A shaded or early evening time would work best.

3.2 Sealing polished porcelain tiles

1. As you can imagine, polished porcelain is pretty low in porosity and will only accommodate a small amount of sealant. Don't be heavy-handed. (It's still a good idea to apply a protective layer of sealant to polished porcelain. It extends the life span of your tile even further.)
2. The ideal sealant for polished porcelain is **Pro Care Porcelain Tile Sealer** (Fig. 3.2.1). Apply it in a very thin, light layer to give the tile a distinctive finish. Use either a sheepskin applicator or a lint-free cloth. Any Pro Care Porcelain Tile Sealer that does not penetrate the tile should be buffed away after 15 minutes with a clean, dry, lint-free cloth.

3. If it's a floor you're preparing, allow at least 24 hours to dry before stepping onto it. Also, do not allow contact with water for at least 48 hours (a shower wall, for instance).

Fig. 3.2.1



Porcelain Tile Sealer

Lastly, the ins and outs of cleaning

If you've followed the sealing and finishing procedures correctly, you'll enjoy a lasting look that will not require frequent care and touching up. But, as in all things, a little 'love and attention' every now and then will help to keep your tiles looking their very best.

4. Interior cleaning

This can vary depending on the amount of grime that builds up in the grooves and on the face of the tile. Dilute **Pro Care Heavy Duty Cleaner (Fig. 1.4)** with water according to the strength of cleaning power you require:

1:50 solution for mild cleaning

1:20 solution for medium cleaning

1:10 solution for particularly difficult dirt and grime

Once you have cleaned the surface, rinse it again with fresh water. If you want to prohibit the longer-term build-up of dirt and grime, use a daily or frequent wash of **Pro Care Everyday Cleaner (Fig. 4.1)**.

In high traffic floor areas, there will obviously be some signs of wear over time. No problem. Simply clean the area thoroughly and then apply a single coat of **Pro Care Sparkle (Fig. 3.1.3)** to the spots where tracking or wear is evident.

Fig. 4.1



Everyday Cleaner

5. Exterior cleaning

This will always be about protecting your tiles from the elements. A succession of harsh sunlight, driving rain, long dry spells, combined with high traffic, will cause a tile area to expand and contract, eventually affecting the top coating. Don't let the condition deteriorate for too long. A quick, replenishing coat of **Pro Care Heavy Duty Cleaner** will see you right.

You're done

It's so much easier when you know how. It's just a case of following the steps carefully to achieve the best results. And if you're still experiencing a few challenges, you know that help is always just a phone call away.

CTM AT YOUR SERVICE

Remember, when in doubt, ask the CTM sales staff or visit our website at www.ctm.co.za. Good luck, and enjoy your installation!