

CORK WALL TILES LAYING INSTRUCTIONS

CORK

Combining undeniable acoustic and thermal qualities, cork brings a warm and colourful touch in all interiors. Flexible, durable, waterproof and easy to install and maintain, cork is the perfect material for walls.

GETTING STARTED

The installation of cork wall tiles is a simple operation but it must be done correctly. The most common problems and source of dissatisfaction are not caused by the product itself but by inappropriate installation procedures (inadequate stabilization, deficient support preparation, use of wrong adhesives...).

Installing cork tiles in walls with excessive moisture should be avoided. When using levelling compounds the complete drying of compound is essential for a good adhesion. It is, therefore, important to follow the manufacturer's instructions.

It is important that the cork and the glue are at room temperature in which the installation takes place. Unpackaged tiles should be acclimatized at job site, for a minimum of 2 days, at normal room use conditions of temperature and relative humidity. Special attention should be taken if relative humidity is low (below 35%) or if the rooms are to be heated. If installation is to be done during winter months, we recommend that the room is heated up during the acclimatization period. On those special conditions, the acclimatization period should be extended to 3-4 days. During laying, the temperature and relative humidity should be maintained as stable as possible.

PREPARATION OF THE SUPPORT

The quality of a finished installation can be very much dependent upon the preparation of the support (wall) and the attention paid to the recommendations made by the manufacturers of the adhesives and levelling compounds.

It is essential that the substrate is levelled, smooth, permanently dry, firm and free of cracks, dirt, grease, oils, solvents, sealers, and old adhesives residues. Any unevenness must be levelled with an appropriate levelling compound.

New wall - The new wall must have been dried for at least 2 to 3 months before installation, so that any initial moisture could evaporate. As an untreated new wall is relatively porous (same in gypsum plaster), it should be applied a primer first.

Painted wall - This is an excellent substrate for laying cork wall tiles. However, it should be washed and, as soon as it is dry, it should be lightly sanded with grit 100-120 sandpaper.

TOOLS

Cutter, ruler, pencil, chalk line, roller, rubber mallet.

CONTROL

Before installation, please control the tiles. If you come across a defect in production please register the complaint at your supplier immediately and do not install!

When checking the cork tiles, keep in mind that you are dealing with a natural material. The tiles may have slight variations in colour or structure. They contribute to the charm and originality of a cork wall covering. To achieve the most pleasing blend of shades, shuffle tiles from different packs before laying. Check if there are no small differences in size between the different tiles. If this is the case, it is better to group the tiles of the same size.

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PLANNING THE LAYOUT

First, determine how you will install the tiles. Cork tiles can be laid staggered ("half-brick") or in line with each other ("in bond").

Once you have selected the layout, you must determine the starting point. Generally, installation starts in the middle of the wall and progresses towards the sides. The wall should be measured up and divided to determine the middle of the wall, drawing vertical and horizontal guide lines.

GLUING

The recommended adhesive for installing cork tiles is contact adhesive; this means that the adhesive has to be applied on both the support and the tiles. Stir the adhesive well before use. Follow the instructions on the adhesive packaging labels, as well as the information from technical data sheets.

Apply a uniform adhesive layer on the back of all the cork tiles using a low nap roller. Make sure that the applied amount is sufficient to form a complete film of adhesive (around 80-120 g/m²).

The adhesive on the back of tiles needs to dry completely. As the adhesive is a waterbased dispersion (most of it is water), it is very important that all the water dries off and that the cork tile is totally dry. We recommend that cork tiles can be pre-coated with the contact adhesive before the day they are laid (up to 24 hours in advance). On the day they are laid, the adhesive only needs to be applied to the wall and, following a sufficient drying time of 30-60 minutes (depending on the type and absorption of the wall), the pre-coated cork tiles can be fixed in place using the contact method. You should limit yourself to an area that can be covered in two hours.

Clean the used equipment with warm water.

LAYING

Place the first tile carefully in the middle of the wall along the starting guide line, pressing it against the wall. Once the first cork tile is in place, align the next tile to the edges of the first and the guide line. Special attention should be paid to the alignment of each tile, making sure that the edges of each tile are pressed against each other. When the first row is properly aligned then the tiles must be hit with the rubber hammer for positive contact between the wall and tile, particularly around the edges and corners.

ROOM CONDITIONS

It must be taken into account that expansion and contraction of the cork tiles may occur. This is a consequence of changes in interior temperature and relative humidity as well as in the structure's moisture content. A relative humidity between 40 % and 60 % is considered the ideal room condition, not just for your health and well-being, but also for your cork wall covering. When the rooms are heated during winter months, humidity is often below this range and this may lead to shrinkage of cork and the appearing of minor gaps.

PREVENTIVE CARE

The cork tiles must be kept clean. Use a damp cloth with water or a PH neutral cleaning product. Avoid cleaning products with abrasive ingredients, solvent or ammonia based.

Cork is a natural product and may tend to fade when exposed to sunlight over long periods of time. Use blinds or curtains to prevent cork fading by direct solar radiation.

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