

## iStone Porcelain Panels Cleaning and Maintenance

The initial clean of an iStone surface is the single most important step to ensuring the ease of future daily maintenance. It requires the complete removal of grout and construction dirt from the surface of the tiles before they fully cure or dry. The clean must commence immediately after installation and grout application.

iStone panels can be cleaned successfully by scrubbing the newly installed surface with hot water and a suitable 'neutral' detergent cleaner. This must be directly followed by thorough rinsing and the removal of all rinse water with a wet vacuum or by towelling dry. If grout residue remains, further cleaning of the panels should be carried out in consultation with the grout manufacturer's instructions. It is important to be certain that all traces of grout have been removed; failure to do so will cause grout stain to be permanent or difficult to remove. Some grout manufacturers distribute products recommended for the removal of their grout from the surface of panels.

Prior to grouting any area complete a grout test patch, this will establish possible contamination of the grout pigmentation and/or the ease of excess grout removal. It is particularly important to do so when using different colour panels to grout, light coloured panels or smooth surfaces such as polished, honed or matt.

Please note that like any other floor materials, it is strongly recommended to apply a protective cover to the panels during all phases of construction.

Equipment: For more aggressive cleaning, floor scrubbers or floor buffing machines equipped with a nylon pad or brush are recommended. A wet vacuum should be used to pick up suspended grout and completely remove residue and construction dirt. If cleaning is done by machine, it is important to select the correct equipment (brush disc or cylindrical type) for the particular surface finish, location of installation and frequency of cleaning. We therefore recommend contacting the specific equipment suppliers for advice. Acid washing is rarely recommended, and is not usually necessary to successfully clean a new installation if the cleaning is done in a timely fashion. Caution should be exercised when using acid or acid-based cleaners, as they can adversely affect the grout and/or adjacent finishes or even the panels surfaces.

Once the initial cleaning has been thoroughly completed, a daily maintenance procedure can be followed for continuous and long-lasting appearance.

### Daily Maintenance

General maintenance and cleaning of iStone panels will vary depending on the surface texture and soil load.

General cleaning should be performed first by sweeping or vacuuming to remove loose soil or other surface contaminants, and then lightly damp mopping with clean water. Depending on the soil load, a more aggressive cleaning process may be required. This would include the use of a neutral cleaner or a general household cleaner, followed by a thorough rinsing. A neutral non-oil, non-soap or non-animal fat Ph cleaner should be used to avoid residues to build up.

To successfully maintain iStone panels some critical steps should be followed:

1. All spills should be cleaned as quickly as possible.
2. Follow the detergent manufacturer's instructions.
3. Allow enough time for the detergent solution to act on the soil load.
4. Scrub with a nylon pad or bristle brush.
5. Rinse thoroughly with clean clear water to remove the dirty detergent solution and emulsified soil. Rinsing is a critical step in the maintenance procedure. Remove the rinse water with a wet vacuum, dry mop or towelling.
6. The use of 'Magic Sponge', a micro fibre sponge {from 3M or other suppliers) can assist in removing stubborn spots.



As not all iStone panel finishes require the same cleaning methods, for best results the use of different techniques are recommended. Final cleaning techniques should be personalised to suit the actual installation requirements.

## Polished Surface

After kilning, the Super-Polished finished iStone panels go through an additional grinding stage where the surface is worked mechanically to achieve a very flat and shining surface texture. During this process microscopic pores are sometimes exposed, the surface is then factory protected (pre-sealed) to minimise any spill staining. A regular maintenance routine will keep this surface in excellent condition:

1. Sweep or vacuum the surface to remove loose dirt. An untreated, dry dust mop may be more effective than a soft-bristle broom.
2. Mop with a mild cleaning solution.
3. Rinse the surface thoroughly with clean, clear water.
4. Dry thoroughly with a soft cloth or buffing pad to increase the shine and prevent water spots.
5. Neutral PH cleaner are recommended as Acid or Alkaline based detergent or cleaning solutions will tend to damage the pre-sealed factory sealer when incorrectly used.

## Honed Surface

Honed finished iStone panels go through a similar process as the polished panels, except that the process is stopped before the surface shine is achieved. This leaves the panels with a satin matt surface which like all non-glazed porcelain panels, is more prone to surface marking, especially on some light colours.

There are some simple steps which can assist in reducing the amount of cleaning associated with this type of tile:

1. Black, hard rubber soled shoes can sometimes leave stubborn marks or scuffing; these can be easily removed by use of dedicated products (taking care to fully follow the manufacturer's instructions).
2. Door mats should be used; these are a very effective way of keeping out unwanted dirt.
3. When wet mopping use hot water mixed with an alkaline detergent, trying not to let the cleaning solution dry on the floor. It may be best to complete small areas at a time. Remove all cleaning solutions with clean water. Buff with a dry mop or towel.
4. If some markings appear to be more stubborn, an abrasive cream cleaner such a Jiff can be used.
5. Use a dry micro-fiber mop on a regular basis to remove dry debris.
6. Sweep or vacuum the floor eliminating loose dirt and other foreign materials.
7. Saturate the surface with a mild cleaning solution and hot water, agitate, and allow it to remain on the surface for 5-10 minutes. Do not allow cleaning solutions to dry. It may be best to complete small areas at a time. Remove the dirty cleaning solution and rinse the surface with clean, clear water. Buff with a dry mop or towel.
8. A neutral PH cleaner is recommended as acid or alkaline based detergents or cleaning solutions will tend to damage the pre-sealed factory sealer when incorrectly used.
9. If the surface is extremely dirty, a more aggressive cleaning method may be necessary. Sealing is optional if easy cleaning and maintenance are of significant importance, especially when selecting light colours.



## **Matt/Natural/Structured Surface Tiles**

The undulation of these surfaces makes it necessary to clean the entire surface, including all low points; this necessitates some additional dirt removal procedures. Standard damp-mopping may not effectively clean these finishes. Also, it is necessary to thoroughly rinse the surface to completely remove all dirty cleaning solution. Regular cleaning using the following procedures will ensure the appearance of the panels:

1. Sweep or vacuum floor debris. If sweeping, use a soft-bristle broom and sweep in two directions. Firstly, follow the direction of the tile and then sweep diagonally across the tile to ensure complete removal of all foreign material.
3. Saturate the surface with a neutral detergent cleaning solution and hot water and
4. agitate. Allow the cleaning solution to remain on the floor for 5-10 minutes. Scrub the
5. floor with a brush in a circular motion.
6. Rinse the floor with clean, clear water to suspend contaminants and completely 6. remove any soiled cleaning solution.  
Remove rinse water with a wet vacuum or dry towel.
7. In high-traffic areas, or areas where the surface is exposed to a heavy-soil load, it may be necessary to scrub the floor once a day and damp-mop at intervals during the business day.
8. Sealing is optional if easy cleaning and maintenance are of significant importance, especially when selecting light colours.

