

OPTICO TUMBLED STONE SERIES INSTALLATION GUIDE

READ COMPLETELY BEFORE STARTING INSTALLATION.

Thank you for choosing Optico Tumbled Stone Series mosaic pebbles are a naturally beautiful and unique surface covering that will provide years of natural beauty both inside and outside your home. There are virtually endless decorating possibilities that include: flooring, countertops, backsplashes, & walls. Indoor applications may be kitchens, bathrooms, entry ways, showers, fireplaces, and wherever you imagination takes you. Pebble tiles can be used as accents for tile, stone, wood, and many other surface coverings. Outdoor uses may include BBQ areas, walkways, decks, patios, water fountains, pools & pool decks, exterior walls, and used for creating unique landscaping features. Tumbled Stone Series mosaics are approximately 12" x 12" (305 mm x 305 mm) that are interlocking, and have a flexible backing that will allow the tiles to be used on curved surface such as poles or columns, as well as around the corner of a wall.

PLEASE NOTE

Tumbled Stone Series mosaic pebbles are created by Mother Nature; therefore no two pebbles will be the same. They will vary in shading, and will have natural imperfections. Because each Tumbled Stone Series mosaic is assembled by hand, there may be occasional "glue strings" on the surface of the pebbles. These can be easily removed by cleaning the surface with a solvent prior to color/shine enhancers and sealers. This Installation Guideline cannot provide all the information that may be necessary to install in all the various applications, and is therefore only a brief guideline. BuildDirect strongly recommends using a professional tile setter, especially if you are installing in areas that are subject to large amounts of water, such as tub and shower enclosures. BuildDirect is not responsible in any way for installation related issues.

Basic Installation Tools Needed

Level: Used on vertical surfaces.

Tape Measure: Use for accurate measurements.

Chalk Line: Used to establish a straight working line.

Buckets: For grout & adhesive.

Scrub Pad: Grout cleaning tool.

Grout Float: Used to apply grout.

Stiff Bristle Brush: Used to clean or remove excess grout.

Firm Round Edge Sponge: Used for final cleaning of grout, and to apply sealers, etc.

Rubber Gloves: To protect your hands when working with cement based products.

Mixer Bar: Used to mix mortar/thinset with a drill.

Notched Trowel: Used to spread mortar/thinset or adhesive.

Rubber hammer: Used to gently seat tiles into adhesive.

Surface Preparation

All substrates should be firm (not subject to movement), flat, clean, dry, and free from contaminates. Concrete substrates must be fully cured (minimum 30 days). Cracks in the concrete should be repaired using appropriate methods. Wood or other floor substrates will often require a tile backer board or membrane available from home centers and tile retailers. Painted surfaces should be roughened with sand paper or a wire brush. Water based paints are not suitable for tile installation, but can be prepared for use (consult your local paint retailer for appropriate primers). When installing in wet areas, it is highly recommended that a professional tile setter be used to prevent potential water damage. Flooring substrates that will be subjected to larger quantities of water should provide adequate drainage. If you are installing over another tile, the tile should be firmly adhered, acid etched, and roughened before installing Optico Tumbled Series Stone Series mosaics over the surface. If you have loose or missing pebbles, they can be easily replaced and glued to the mesh with an adhesive such as Liquid Nails. Apply a small amount to the back of the pebble, place in the mesh, and allow to dry completely.

NOTE:

Control (expansion) joints are necessary when covering large areas, and you will likely need to consult with a professional for proper placement and guidance.

Ensure all plastic film on the back of the mesh is removed before installation.

Adhesives

Use only high quality mortars/thinset and mastics from a reputable manufacturer. These manufacturers will have a wide range of products that are appropriate for different substrates and potential substrate movement. Cement substrates will generally require a cement based mortar/thinset, when movement of the substrate is not anticipated. On wood or other substrates, it is best to use a modified cement adhesive, usually 2-part and using a latex additive. Walls and other substrates will often require a mastic type adhesive. Carefully follow the adhesive manufacturer's recommendations when mixing, and use their recommended trowel size.

Spread no more adhesive than can be covered before it begins to dry (usually about 3 - 4 feet square). If the adhesive begins to dry, remove and replace with fresh adhesive. Place the tile into the adhesive and gently press on the surface of the tile until it is sufficiently seated in the adhesive. This can either be done with a tile float or a small piece of wood and a rubber hammer. The adhesive should ooze through the mesh backing and make contact with the back side of the pebbles. Be sure the pebbles are firmly embedded in the adhesive, but not too deep. Place the interlocking tiles close together, so that they will not have an obvious gap between the tiles.

When fitting along curved or straight areas, the tiles may be cut to fit with a razor knife or scissors. Any voids can be filled with the appropriate size pebble from the scrap or extra tiles. If you are fitting on a pole, column, or around a corner, you may need to remove some larger pebbles and replace with smaller pebbles. After setting the Optico Tumbled Stone Series mosaic pebbles, use the damp sponge to remove any mortar/thinset from the surface of the pebbles, as once it dries, it will be difficult to remove. Mastic will need to be removed with the manufacturer's recommended adhesive remover.

NOTE: Follow the adhesive manufacturer's recommendations to allow the adhesive to dry before applying grout. Usually, this is at least 24 hours.

Color Enhancers

You can enhance the color and shine of Optico Tumbled Stone Series mosaics by applying a compatible color and/or shine enhancer that is preferably from the same manufacturer as the sealer. It is best to apply the color/shine enhancer before using a sealer. Application can either be done before setting the tiles, or after the tiles have been set.

Sealing and Grouting

Apply a high quality penetrating sealer to the tiles before grouting, and allow to dry. This will help when cleaning excess grout from the tiles. Usually, sealers will not change or alter the colors of the pebbles. You should test on a scrap piece or extra tile to ensure that it will meet your expectations. The sealer can be applied either before, or after setting the tiles.

Generally grouts use a water mix, but if there is any chance of substrate movement, it will be much better to use a latex additive to provide some flexibility. Choose a grout that is appropriate to the circumstances for indoor or outdoor application. Usually a sanded grout will be used on the floor, but you can use a non-sanded grout for walls and countertops. Most grout manufacturers also offer matching caulks to complement their grouts. Note: By using different color grouts, you can alter the overall appearance of your Optico Tumbled Stone Series mosaic pebbles. You might want to practice on extra tiles with different colors, so you can achieve a look that you will find most pleasing. Grout is generally applied so that finally, about ¼ to ½ the pebble is above the grout. Grout an area of about 2 x 2 feet square at a time and cover the pebbles completely. When the grout becomes firm, you can remove excess grout with a brush or damp sponge, based on how much of the pebbles you



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wish to expose. Use a damp sponge for cleaning and removal of the haze of the grout. This may need to be done several times to completely remove all residue, and then buff off any remaining grout with a soft dry cloth. Once the grout is completely dry and clean (usually 24 hours), we recommend that you apply another coating of sealer. Reapply sealers as recommended by their manufacturer for maximum results.

Cleaning

Optico Tumbled Stone Series mosaic pebbles can be cleaned with neutral mild detergents, a vinegar solution, or a 10% hydrochloric acid solution mixed with water. Apply with a stiff bristled brush and then rinse with clean water.

CAUTION: Rubber gloves should always be worn when working with cement based products. Please keep Optico Tumbled Stone Series mosaic pebbles out of reach of children and pets, as they may present a choking hazard.