Pointing & Jointing Guide

Pointing your paving is the finishing touch to your project and it’s little details like this that can really set your landscape apart. Attention to detail with your pointing will not only aesthetically complement your paving choice but will ensure that your patio remains intact and looking fantastic for years. In this guide we cover the most popular pointing techniques for residential schemes and the effects they can have on your build.

A timeless jointing option

A mortar mix has been the most common material for pointing paving for decades. It can be used with any paving stone material and different sand or dye can be used to adapt its appearance to match your scheme. Mortar is generally made from anywhere between 1 part cement and 4 parts building sand at the stronger end, to 1.5 at the weaker end. The consistency of the mix should be workable and damp but not wet enough for water to be dripping from the mortar. You should always use a good quality plasticiser in the mix to increase workability.

In the mix

We generally recommend a 1:4 mix of cement and fine building sand for your mortar, as previously mentioned we also strongly recommend the addition of a good quality mortar plasticiser to aid flexibility and workability - this can be bought from most good builder’s merchants. To aid the mortar’s adhesion to the paving and bed itself you may want to paint a little SBR into the jointing gaps which will act as a ‘primer’ and ensure there is a strong bond between the mortar, the paving bed and the surrounding paving stones. Pointing paving with mortar is a fairly slow process so you shouldn’t mix much more than a barrowful at a time.

Get pointing

There’s no way around it, using mortar to fill your paving gaps is a time consuming process. However the finish it can provide is beautiful and when done right it lasts for decades. Before pointing you should check whether you need to seal your paving to protect it against cementitious spills - for some paving materials this may be essential. Pointing should be undertaken on a dry day and when the temperatures are above 3C and below 30C. Create a barrow load of mixture at a time and fill your pointing joints systematically using a pointing trowel, being careful to minimise any spills onto the paving surface. Compact the mortar into the joins using the edge of the trowel until you’re confident that the joint is filled to a good density. If you need to you can mask the edges of your paving with cardboard to prevent spilled mortar from marking the slabs. After a short while the mortar should harden slightly - it is then ready for striking. Strike the mortar by running the edge of your pointing trail across the joins at a slight angle. This polishes the surface slightly and helps the mortar to harden. At this stage you can also use different implements to create different mortar shapes - such as bird-beaks or square edges - most people create a gentle bowl trough shape.
Pointing the easy way

A modern alternative to traditional mortar, brush in jointing compounds are quick and easy to use. A big advantage with these compounds is that they can be used in the rain so the British weather won’t get in the way of you completing your project. Although more expensive than mortar to buy this method of pointing can be up to ten times quicker than using a traditional mortar mix - you can save some serious time using this stuff. Available in several colour options there’s always a choice that can work with your scheme.

Colours and surface finish

We offer three different jointing compound colours that complement our paving perfectly; Buff, Grey and Black. You can find a range of imagery on these options on our website and you can also pop into our showroom to take a look at some samples. The finish of sweep-in jointing compounds is slightly rougher and more granular than mortar however you can produce a smoother look if the compound is smoothed off with a trowel type instrument after application.

Get sweeping

Firstly you should check whether your paving should be sealed prior to pointing. If you bought your paving from us then check your Product Handbook or give one of our sales team a call - they’re there to help. Before using the jointing compound make sure that all pointing gaps are clean and clear of debris. For the compound to work your joins need to be at least 5mm wide and 25mm deep. Empty the pointing mix onto the patio, empty out enough to point around 5-10m² and wrap the rest up back in the foil bag to keep it fresh. With a soft brush sweep the mixture into the paving gaps, at this stage you may want to add a little water with a watering can to help the compound mould together and flow into the gaps. Next top up the joins with more grout material and then sweep off the excess at a 45 degree angle to minimize disturbance of the compound sat in the joins. Try to ensure that no excess jointing material is left on the surface of the paving as this could mark or stain your paving. To finish, trowel off the joins with a suitable tool to compact them and provide a smoother look. After three-four hours the compound should be set and very firm to the touch, this is the stage when you can do a final clean of your paving area if required. Consult our cleaning and maintenance guide for the most effective cleaning procedures.
Porcelain tile grout is the best way to fill the jointing gaps in our porcelain paving range. The grout we provide is a cement based compound that can be used externally and internally so you can flow joins from inside to outside if that's what floats your boat. Our grout can fill joins as narrow as 2mm all the way up to big wide 20mm joins. It also contains a fungicide to inhibit the growth of mould and reduce dirt pick-up. Available in 3kg bags and a wide choice of colours to match any of our beautiful porcelain tile options.

Get grouting

For most grouts to work efficiently you'll need a period of 36 hours or so of dry weather and the temperature needs to be above 5°C. Ensure that the adhesive the tiles are bedded on is fully dry, as long as it is - you're ready to get grouting. Our grout is best when mixed with roughly 1 litre of water per 3kg bag however if you’re not using our product you should consult the instructions or the manufacturer. Mix the grout compound with the appropriate amount of water either by hand or with a slow speed paddle until a creamy paste is created. You'll need to use this mix within one hour and don't add additional water to improve the workability of the mix - if the paste becomes unworkable, discard it. Using a grouting tool or squeegee work the grout thoroughly into the tile joins. Remove excess grout as you go with a wet cloth - be careful not to use something too fibrous on our outdoor tiles as the anti-slip surface will pick up the fibres. Then use a suitable tool to compact and smooth the grout mix into the joins. After initial hardening of the grout, clean the tile surface once more using a non-fibrous cloth. Work diagonally across the grout lines so as not to disturb them. To aid cleaning you may want to use Stone and Masonry Cleaner, or some other suitable detergent but be careful not to get any into the grout joins before they’ve had a chance to fully set. Protect the paved area from damp for 24 hours after grouting. Once the grout is completely set you may find there is some light grout hazing. This can be removed with a full clean of the area using a product like HG Cement Grout Film Remover.

Colour options & texture

We stock four different colours of porcelain tile grout to suit different design schemes and tastes. The colour options range from light beige through to grey and black; check our website or better still, pop in to see us for further information and samples. When cure this grout provides a smooth finish that is very slightly granular - similar to the finish of a smooth fine cement.

The perfect partner for porcelain

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