

Is Your Grout a Sponge?

BY CHRISTINA FITZWILLIAM



CO-OWNER
*John
Fitzwilliam*

THAT SANDY STRIP of grout between your tiles is a very important part of your tile. Without it, anything spilled on your floors would start an ecosystem of its own. Your grout is your first line of defense against soil, dirt, and liquids. A properly sealed grout line will protect the integrity of your floors, but a tile and grout floor that has not been sealed acts like a sponge, soaking up every nasty spill and particle of dirt it comes into contact with. New grout should always be properly sealed, cleaned regularly, and a new application of sealer should be applied every 12-24 months thereafter.

Cleaning your grout can be tricky. Scrubbing the grout may remove dirt in the surface of the grout but not eliminate the stain. Stains can then creep back to the surface again, causing frustration to the homeowner. Bathrooms pose the toughest challenge, since this room tends to be damp and provides a breeding ground for bacteria, mold, and mildew. Chemicals can cause

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discoloration and break down the integrity of your grout, leading to costly repairs. In addition, marble, granite, and high gloss tiles are especially sensitive to some cleaners, which can lead to permanent damage.

The best way to test whether your grout needs resealing is to place a few drops of water on the grout line and see if they remain on the grout surface or soak right in. If they disappear, it's time to reseal. If you aren't comfortable cleaning your grout, or if persistent stains are a concern, it's time to call a professional.

Surface Doc, inc. owner, John Fitzwilliam, says he gets more requests for tile and grout cleaning than any other service his company offers.

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