

# Travertine floor tile

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We have recently moved into a new home. We purchased what was described by the builder as Italian travertine that had been honed and filled. We are EXTREMELY DISAPPOINTED in the finished product. First, many of the tiles were chipped along the edges and the corners were broken off. The installers tell us this is normal for travertine due to the softness of the stone and cannot be avoided during installation. Is this true? Secondly, the finish on the floor looks like it has been damaged or is very dirty. I've mopped it repeatedly and even tried cleaning it block by block and drying it as I go. Nothing helps. When looking straight down on the tile, it looks nice. However, if we step back and look at it from a few feet away with light shining on the floor, it looks horribly dirty. Again, the installers and tile supplier have told us this is normal. Is this true? We understand that the filled places will have a slightly different texture, but the problem extends further than the filled areas. I've seen lots of travertine in other places and have never noticed this problem before. I am wondering if the installers cleaned it with something that damaged the finish. We're sick about the way it looks and are desperate for any suggestions that might help. Thank you.

Dear Lisa:

œ The installers tell us this is normal for travertine due to the softness of the stone and cannot be avoided during installation. Is this true? œ

It is false. There's no justification for breaking travertine tiles. You don't even need me to tell you this: you already saw many travertine floors and they were not chipped or broken, were they? The difference, as usual, is the human factor, not the stone.

œ Again, the installers and tile supplier have told us this is normal. Is this true? œ

If, like you say afterwards, the dullness extends beyond the filler, it is false. It is possible that the installer used a grout film cleaner to clean the excess of grout that he did not clean properly at the proper time. Grout film removers are typically acidic and can't be used on natural stone. This is just an assumption of course, but it has to be considered as a distinct possibility. As it all too often happens, when the tiles setter is hired by the GC, the final users œ you in this case œ are not getting what they paid for, but what the GC paid for, if you know what I mean! L

At any rate, with a decent expert on your side, you have a case which as black and white as they come!

If it were only for the non-uniform finish, the whole thing could be solved by the intervention of a bona-fide stone restoration contractor that would have to re-hone your entire floor with a good-quality honing powder. But that would not certainly make up for the chipped edges and the missing corners. They could be painstakingly made-up with polyester filler to match the color, but it's a chore and a half! The filler has to be applied in excess, let cured and then ground flush with the stone surface. And then, when the whole job is finished, it has to be re-shaped to match the edges and corners of the tiles in a way that the grout groove will be uniform. Not easy to find a pro that could pull something like that off in a satisfactorily way!

May I ask you now to please read and e-sign our Statement of Purpose at: <http://www.marblecleaning.org/purpose.htm>?

Ciao and good luck,

Maurizio Bertoli

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