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Installation Guide for Cork Tile Walls and Ceilings

You must read and understand these instructions completely before installing Duro Design Cork. If these instructions leave you with unanswered questions or if you need additional information, please contact Duro Design toll free at 1-888-528-8518 before starting installation.

It is the responsibility of the installer to determine suitability of Duro Design Cork Tile for each application. Prior to installation, installer should inspect all material. Any defect must be reported directly to Duro Design. Should an individual tile be doubtful in appearance or dimension, the installer should not use the tile. Duro Design will send a replacement in a timely manner.

Duro Design guarantees the quality of our cork tile. Our warranty does not extend to the quality of work performed by a selected installer. Duro Design disclaims all liability for faulty installation of its product. This warranty does not cover material with visible defects once they are installed. Duro Design declines responsibility for failure resulting from or connected with substrate or job-site damage or deficiencies.

COLOR VARIATION

Cork is a natural wood product; variations in color, therefore, occur naturally. Mix tiles from different boxes to maintain natural color and pattern variation and achieve an optimal visual blend.

ACCLIMATION

Duro Design Cork Tiles must be allowed to acclimate on-site for **a minimum of 48 hours** in advance of installation. Stack boxes of tiles no more than 3 high on their edges. The adhesive and urethane varnish supplied by Duro Design should be stored at room temperature and not allowed to freeze. During storage and installation, maintain temperature and relative humidity to levels consistent with the conditions that will prevail when the building is occupied. Optimum conditions are 70°F (21°C) at 30-50 % relative humidity.

SUBSTRATE PREPARATION

Duro Design Cork Tiles may be installed directly over drywall or a sanded plywood (e.g. G1S). The substrate must be sound, clean, free of contamination, dry, smooth and flat with a maximum variation of 1/8" across 10'. Any surface imperfections in the substrate can telescope through the cork tile and be visible on the finished surface.

We recommend that drywall joints not be finished with standard joint compound, but rather with the cement compounds listed below with a fibreglass mesh tape. Plywood joints should be sanded flush. Fill and smooth all joints, cracks and imperfections with a Portland cement-based underlayment patching product such as Ardex Feather Finish, Henry 549 Feather-Finish, or Mapei PlaniPatch.

TOOLS NEEDED

- Vacuum cleaner and broom
- Tape measure
- Chalk-line
- Short nap (3/8") roller and frame for applying contact adhesive
- Painter's extension pole for glue roller and varnish applicator
- Clean paint tray
- Sharp utility knife
- Straight-edge or carpenter's square
- Small handheld j-roller
- Water-based low-VOC clear contact adhesive (supplied by Duro Design)
- MP765 water-based low-VOC polyurethane & catalyst (supplied by Duro Design)
- Synthetic pad wall applicator for varnish (supplied by Duro Design)

LAYOUT

Decide in which direction you will lay the tile in the space (i.e., running ↔ or ↕).

Establish a straight line parallel to the longest "reference" surface (a wall, ceiling or floor - depending on your application) that runs in the same direction as you want the tiles with the aid of a chalk-line:

Using a tape measure or ruler, measure the width of one cork tile away from that reference and make a mark at both ends. Snap a chalk line between these two points. Verify at several points that the distance between the line and the reference never exceeds the width of one tile. If the space is bigger than the width of one tile at any point (because of irregularities or imperfections), snap a new chalk line that is a bit closer to the reference. This chalk line will serve as your guide to keep your first row straight.

SPREADING THE ADHESIVE

Ensure that the substrate is clean and dust-free. Sweep or vacuum as necessary. Pour the adhesive into a paint tray and apply with a new short nap roller attached to a painter's extension pole. Take care to gently seal your chalk-line with the adhesive.

You may coat the entire area or as much square footage as you feel you can install in one day.



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Wait at least **30 minutes** for the contact adhesive to dry. The glue will become translucent (more transparent, less opaque) when dry. A slight gloss on the surface of the dried glue indicates that there is enough glue on the surface. If the substrate was too porous (absorbing the glue) and the dried glue looks dull (matte, no gloss), roll on another thin coat of adhesive and wait 30 minutes for it to dry.

Never install tiles onto wet adhesive. The supplied adhesive is water-based for easy clean up with water when still wet. Dried adhesive must be mechanically removed.

INSTALLING THE PRE-GLUED TILES

Make sure that you brush or dust off the back of the tiles before installing them. Any debris left on the back of a tile will telescope through the cork and be visible on the face of tile.

You will start your first row of tiles along your chalk line, leaving the space between the line and the reference surface to be filled later. Continue to work away from the reference line, laying parallel rows. When using a 12" x 24" format tile, subsequent rows should be offset to stagger the joints. As in brickwork, start a new row by laying a tile at the mid-point of a tile from the previous row to offset the joints.

Line up the edge of your tile with your chalk guideline and set the tile down lightly. Only apply pressure when the cork is perfectly aligned. Pressure will cause cork to stick firmly and further adjustment will not be possible. When laying subsequent tiles, play around with the flexibility of the cork to make the joints between the tiles as tight as possible and avoid gaps.

Use a small hand J-roller to press down all the edges and joints between tiles as you go.

Fill visible gaps between tiles with a color-matched latex caulking (available at flooring retailers) or wood filler putty tinted with touch-up stain supplied by Duro Design. Wipe away excess with a damp rag.

APPLYING THE URETHANE VARNISH

First, you must **catalyze** the MP765 urethane varnish. (Never use varnish uncatalyzed). Stir the varnish well to mix any solids that may have settled during shipping back into the liquid. Stir gently while gradually pouring the entire bottle of pre-measured catalyst into the MP765 varnish. Do not dump the catalyst in without stirring, as it may harden prematurely at the bottom of the can. Continue stirring for 3 minutes to ensure catalyst is mixed in. (NB: If using our ultra-matte finish, occasionally stir the catalyzed varnish *throughout* the varnish application process. This ensures even distribution of the matting agent which tends to settle to the bottom of the pail.)

The catalyzed varnish is good for four days but we recommend filtering it with the supplied filters if you are varnishing over the course of several days. Filtering the varnish when pouring into your applicator tray is also recommended.

- Pour the catalyzed varnish into a clean paint tray and soak the supplied applicator with varnish.
- Never use a roller to apply urethane as bubbles will result.
- Each coat should be applied thinly. Too thick of an application can result in runs and drips in the finish.
- Allow a minimum of **2 to 3 hours** drying between coats. Drying times will vary with ambient temperature and humidity.
- **Four coats** of varnish are required. Ideally, the first two coats of varnish are applied in one day, and the last two coats the following day.
- Fans may be used to accelerate drying time between coats, but be careful not to blow dust or debris into the wet varnish.
- Apply the first coat of varnish across the long dimension of the tiles, in a smooth, gentle motion (similar to cleaning).
- Apply the second coat perpendicular to the first coat, along the long dimension of the tiles.
- After the second coat is completely dry, fill any visible gaps between tiles with color-matched latex caulking or wood putty the colour of the raw (unvarnished) cork. We recommend a light brown shade like Lepage's light oak. Once the putty is dry, tint the putty using the supplied touch up stain. After the last 2 coats of urethane are applied, these patches blend in with the rest of the cork.
- Between the second and third coats only, we recommend a light manual (never machine) sanding using a 220-grit sanding paper followed by a vacuuming.
- After the fourth coat of varnish, allow **overnight drying**.
- To avoid streaks, the final coat should be allowed to dry slowly and without artificial ventilation (fans).



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MAINTENANCE

Your Duro Design cork tiles are well protected by our urethane finish. To keep your cork looking beautiful over a long lifetime, the secret is to keep it clean.

- When occasionally damp-mopping the cork, use a **hardwood floor cleaner** (e.g., Bona, Finitec, Basic Coatings) at a 1:10 dilution. Use a well wrung mop.
- **Do not clean with oil soap or apply wax as this will damage the urethane finish.**
- For cleaning small spots, like scuff marks, apply a hardwood floor cleaner with a spray bottle.

A well-maintained Duro Design cork surface will last for decades.

These instructions were compiled in Jan 2022.

The most recent revision of this document is always available at <http://www.DuroDesign.com/>