



How to waterproof a shower recess

One of the biggest on going problems facing homeowners is that of moisture damage. The greatest risk is where water pipes penetrate through into the walls with taps, showers and plumbing, as at this point, water, through inadequate seals or damage to the pipes will enter the surrounding walls and cause ongoing problems.

Water damage usually presents it's self by chalky or powdery plaster on the reverse of the leak. Unfortunately this is often in areas which are not in common view such as laundry cupboards, wardrobes and alike.

Depending on the cause of the problem, you may be able to repair the leaks without the need to access the pipes. Pipe damage is usually identified by rising damp where the damage is not directly behind the shower or water source, and could even be on an external wall where the dampcourse has been compromised. In this scenario, treating the symptoms will not alleviate the problem and will mask further damage until it is unreparable.

In situations where the shower is the source of the water, the moisture is travelling through the grout and substrate through poor quality or cracked grout, cracked tiles, (both of which can be fixed by applying a waterproofing solution to the surface of the tiles) or by a poorly instructed or missing waterproof membrane under the tile adhesive. This is more evident where the fall of the tiles is not great enough to shift the water, and the water pools on the floor for long periods of time.

SOLUTION 1 - REPAIRING LEAKING SHOWERS WITHOUT REMOVING TILES

Materials

ShowerTite
Paint brush
Paint stirrer
Stanley Trimer
Silicone sealant
Caulking Gun

Step 1 – Prepare the surfaces

It is important that prior to applying any type of waterproofing solution to the face of a tile, that you firstly check the result the solution will have on a tile. While in

most cases the tile will not be adversely affected, testing on a spare tile is recommended.

It is important that the surface is dry, clean and free from any build-up chemicals as these will be sealed into the surface if not removed. As "ShowerTite" is a fine material, it does not have the ability to bridge cracks in tiles or grout. If the grout is showing any signs of damage, it is worth re-grouting the shower prior to applying the sealer.

As the solution dries clear, you will also need to develop an action plan to ensure that no areas are missed, as this will result in a failure of the waterproofing system.

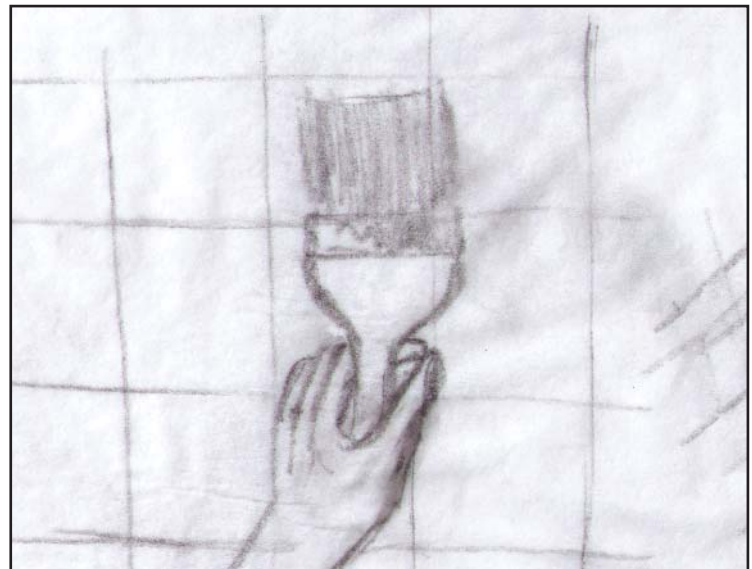
Step 2 - Preparation

Remove any silicone sealant strips and soap build up. Clean mould off tiles and grout using Bondall Tile & Grout Cleaner. Rinse thoroughly with water.

Remove and patch all loose and missing grout. Add HydroCrete into the grout to aid waterproofing.

Step 3 – Applying the sealer

Working in small areas from the corners, paint the surface with the solution. It is best to work quickly and apply liberal amounts of solution (without allowing droplets to form) to work the material into all corners and joints.



Leave the floor of the shower (if tiled) until last, otherwise you will loose track of where you have been.

Allow 15 minutes for the initial application to react then apply a second. For better penetration and less risk of missed areas, work across the shower recess at 90 degrees to the first coat.

Step 4 – Finishing Up & Drying

Once all the coats are complete, allow 24 hours for the material to fully cure before using shower. Regularly check for further moisture ingression, and re-coat as required.

The advantage of this type of system is that an effective result can be achieved without the need to re-tile the shower.

SOLUTION 2 - REPLACING TILES AND APPLYING A WATERPROOF MEMBRANE

Materials

AquaTite (or DuraTite)
PolyWeave
Epoxy-Prep
Cold Chisel
Floor Scraper
Masking Tape (35-40mm)
Grout
Tiles
Cement Based Tile Adhesive
Notched Trowel
Grout Float

Step 1 – Removing the Old Tiles

To properly install a waterproofing membrane, you will need to remove all the old tiles, grout and tile adhesive, back to the bare substrate to give you a clean and flat surface to start with.

In older showers where the water is not draining to the floor waste, you will need to build up the fall of the area. It is important that you block the floor waste while working with the concrete. The fall you should aim for is 1cm - 2cm per 100cm.

You will need to allow the concrete to fully cure prior to applying the membrane.

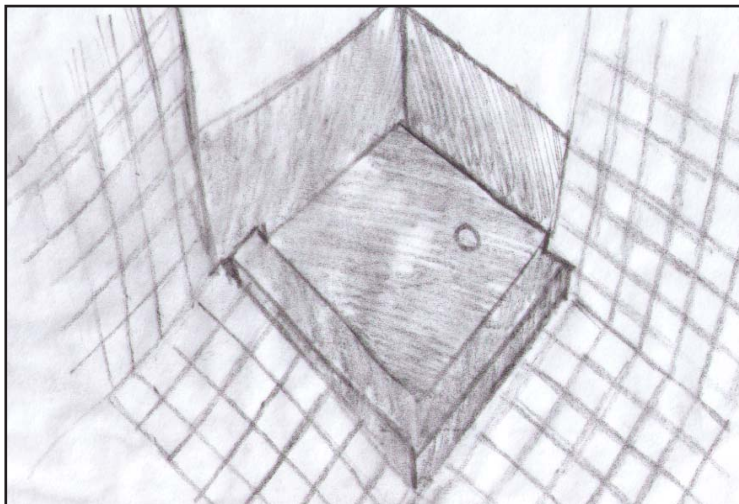
Step 2 – Checking for moisture

This step is advisable if moisture is still present. In a similar fashion to PondTite (see instruction sheet), apply Bondall Epoxy-Prep Surface Conditioner across the entire shower area, as this will allow the AquaTite better grip with the substrate and therefore a more secure bond.

Allow the Epoxy-Prep to properly dry prior to applying the AquaTite

Step 3 - Corners and Joints

When applying AquaTite over corners of shower recesses and expansion joints, a 50mm wide fabric bond-breaker (PolyWeave) is required. Apply 35-40mm wide masking tape over the joints first then apply 75mm wide



coat of AquaTite each side of the joint, into which the PolyWeave should be embedded, followed by a fully saturated coat and allowed to dry,

Step 4 – Painting the Membrane

Working in the same fashion to the Epoxy-Prep, liberally apply AquaTite ensuring the PolyWeave is fully covered. As the membrane is grey in colour you are able to ensure even coverage. It is important that no render or cement is visible through the material.

While Australian building codes only require that the membrane is present in the first 1200mm, it is better to coat the entire shower cubicle to reduce the risk of further damage.



Place the tiles carefully to ensure the membrane is not compromised.

Once again allow the required amount of time for the membrane to dry before applying another coat, and apply the material 90 degrees to the first coat to reduce the chance of missed areas.

Step 5 – Re-tiling

With the membrane now installed, you can apply the tiles as per normal. It is important to note that the membrane is thin and you will need to be careful when spreading the adhesive with the notched trowel that you do not tear the membrane.

When planning the tile layout for the base of the shower. You should always have at least one grout line intersecting the floor waste. If this is not possible with the design selected. Try shifting the layout 45 degrees, as this will allow the floor waste to intersect while providing an interesting layout on the floor.

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