

Distinctive Grout Techniques

Stone Grout (and sometimes the lack of grout) has an amazing impact on the look and authenticity of stonework. Selecting the desired grout technique and grout color is often as important as selecting the stone. There are three distinct stone grout techniques: Standard Joints (Raked), Dry-stack Joints and Overgrout Joints.

Dry-stack Joint

Dry-stack joint stonework is accomplished by “dry” fitting each stone prior to installation. Each piece can be laid with virtually no joint. Even though you’ve used mortar to set the stone to the surface, when complete, the finished look will appear as though no mortar was used to install the stone. The intent of a dry-stack look is a tightly stacked stone appearance.



Standard Joint

A standard joint (raked) is achieved by laying each stone roughly one finger width apart from each other, then grouting between each stone. The semi-dry mortar is later “raked” with a variety of tools ultimately achieving a consistent depth and giving it that distinctive raked out look.



Overgrout Joint

Overgrout, an increasingly popular way to achieve an old-world look, is sometimes referred to as a sack finish. Today, trowels, tuck pointers – even fingers – are used to achieve the overgrouted or sacked look. This technique tends to make the stonework appear rustic and aged. The grout overlaps the face of the stone, widening the joints and making them very irregular.



Brick Grout, both in color hue and finished joint methods, significantly enhance the beauty and authenticity of Eldorado Brick installations. Using Eldorado Brick with any of a number of notable grout techniques assures you, not only of the old-world charm you desire, but the believability you expect.

Standard Joint

In this illustration, Castello RomaBrick is installed with a gray grout in a standard, raked joint finish. A jointer or other blunt masonry instrument is used to achieve a consistent depth which creates the familiar concave, raked out look to the mortar.



Overgrout Joint

When you compare this photograph with the photo of the standard joint, you'll notice how different the brick looks. In both instances, Castello RomaBrick was selected, but the grout technique makes the brick look much different. The same gray grout is used but the mortar overlaps the face of the brick, widening the joints and producing an irregular, rustic look.



Weep Joint

Riverbed TundraBrick demonstrates a most dynamic and expressive technique often called "weep." The colored grout literally oozes out of the joints to appear as though there's been too much grout squeezed into the joints. The distinctive "weeping" creates the unique surface texture seen in many installations.





Brick Grout (Continued)

Bead Joint

Cleaner-looking and more controlled than a weep joint, this technique has grout still extruding beyond the brick face. Riverbed TundraBrick used here is the same brick as used in the weep joint photo, but with different visual results. In both circumstances, the grout color and technique alters the face of the brick slightly.



Grapevine Joint

Here, ModenaBrick with a colored grout is featured with a unique technique often referred to as a grapevine joint. Dragging a thin, blunt instrument (not unlike a twig) along the middle of the wet grout – horizontally and vertically – scores the grout leaving a thin visible linear cavity.



Full Joint

When you compare this grout technique with the photo of the grapevine joint, you can see how grout technique influences the perception of the installed brick. Once again, using ModenaBrick with a colored grout, this full joint is similar to a standard joint. However, the grout level is almost flush with the face of the brick, slightly exposing the edge detail.



Helpful Grout Tips

General Observations

Always have your mason prepare a mock-up of the grout technique you wish to use prior to beginning the actual installation. Make sure you understand the intent of the finished joints. All the stones shipped to the site should be placed face up over an area so a mental inventory of the sizes, shapes, and colors can take place. Many profiles require a rationing of certain stones throughout the entire process. Start at the corners and edges of the surfaces to be veneered and work inward. This will reduce the amount of cutting required to fit the stones.

- Adverse weather conditions affect manufactured stone during installation.
- Alternate corner colors and shapes. Avoid any “+” signs in the joints.
- Metal tools that strike the mortar breaks the skin which will cause moisture to rise and accelerate the drying time. It will also “polish” the grout.

Grout Tips

Remember that selecting and applying the grout technique is as important as laying the stone. A grout style should be chosen before commencing installation. You can, and many times should, add color to the mortar to more closely match the stone. Care should be taken so that the color emulates a natural earthen sand color. Also, be aware of the geographic properties of different ingredients. Keep the face of the stone clean (unless you want a slurry finish). Smear mortar will permanently stain the stone.

- Don't grout more than you can manage at one time.
- Joints can be tooled with specific masonry tools or with anything you find easy to use. If it works, use it!
- Don't allow joints to fully harden. Mortar should be pliable and crumbly; not too wet and not too dry.
- Overgrout joints can be tooled (somewhat) earlier than raked joints.
- Using a grout bag is much easier than hand “tucking” the joints.
- Timing is everything.