



Maintenance for Metal Tiles

Metal wall tile can add a wonderful accent to any room. They're as easy to put up as ceramic tiles and in most cases, they are quite easy to maintain as well. This doesn't mean they are maintenance free, however. Like everything else in your home, they need to be cleaned and cared for.

The type of care and maintenance will depend on the type of metal wall tile you choose, and the effect you desire. Copper tile, for example, will change its patina with exposure to air and moisture unless you seal it, and iron tile will rust unless it's regularly cared for. Many other types will only need to be cleaned.

Step 1 - Sealing the Tile

Only two types of wall tile need to be sealed: iron tiles and copper tiles. Sealing helps protect the original finish and stops oxidization that will otherwise happen over time as the surface interacts with moisture in the air. In the case of copper, this would mean it turning darker and acquiring a patina, while iron will start to show rust.

A good solvent-based sealer will stop this happening. It can be sprayed or brushed on the tiles, and forms a barrier to stop moisture penetrating into the tile. Make sure, though, that you cover the entire tile surface, as even a small untreated area will oxidize.

Step 2 - Cleaning the Tile

Most metal tiles can be cleaned with warm water and dishwashing detergent. Wash down with a micro fiber cloth and rinse thoroughly so no streaks show on the metal wall tile.

When cleaning stainless steel tiles, don't use soap and water. Instead, go for a proper stainless-steel cleaner, applying it with a dry cloth that's free of lint. Be very careful, since stainless steel tiles scratch easily.

With copper, unless you've sealed the surface, you actually have a couple of choices. You can allow the wall tiles to age and just clean them regularly with soap and water, or you can use copper cleaner to keep the original shine. The only difference is with patina copper tiles which come with a clear coat protection. In this case, never use copper cleaner, but stick to soap and water to keep the tile clean.

Titanium tiles need special care, even if they're just titanium colored. Don't use soap and water to clean them, but make up a solution of equal parts vinegar and water then apply with a clean, dry cloth to maintain their shine and cleanliness.

Step 3 - Removing Stains

It's possible that you could end up with stains on stainless steel wall tiles, caused by deposits of hard water. The tiles tend to look quite ugly under these circumstances, but the stains are very easy to remove. Make a paste, using either baking soda and water, or borax and water. Apply to the entire surface with a cloth (not a brush) then rinse off using warm water and a clean, dry cloth. This should remove the stains. If small marks remain, repeat the procedure. Don't rub too hard or you might scratch the tiles.