

Laying Paving

– How to accurately lay slabs and flags.

Laying Paving – Flags and Slabs

Once beddings have been prepared you are then ready to lay your paving.

Laying

Think about the best place to start laying your slabs/flags. It is usually best to start against a hard edge such as a wall. Plan the laying. To minimise cutting.

Walk the flag into position where the bottom edge is hanging over the lip edge for the preceding unit, roughly halfway. This ensures that when the flag is lowered into position it remains relatively 'tight' to the preceding flag.

Holding the top of the flag with both hands, squat down behind the flag and lower it carefully into position, allowing it to pull you up out of the squatting position. This will put less strain on your back.

Once the flag is in position, it should be compacted down to the required level using a rubber mallet. Use a series of light taps aimed at an imaginary line midway between the centre of the flag and the outside edges. Once compacted this should be firm and stable and have no rocking movement.

Use a straight edge to check alignment and level to the string lines or other level guides. A spirit level will help you check the fall is heading in the right direction for drainage.

If the flag is too high it can only be tapped down a limited amount of times, beyond a certain point no further compaction is possible. If you persist in hammering the flag may break. At this point you need to lift the flag and reduce the bedding.

If the flag is too low it will have to be lifted and more bed added.

Jointing

Buttering

Cement mortar joints need to be "buttered"; the edge against which a flag is to be placed has to be smeared with mortar, so that the flag can be pushed against it and thereby ensure a completely filled joint. Further, buttered joints help ensure regular, even joint widths.

Dry joints

Leaving joints dry and relying on filling them with a polymeric mortar on completion of the laying often saves time and will help avoid accidental mortar staining. When using this method, it is advisable to use small pieces of plywood or other temporary spacing materials between flags to maintain regular 8-10mm wide joints.

Close Jointing

This is only suitable for flags with straight square edges. The gap between adjacent flags should be 2-5mm and will be filled with kiln-dried jointing sand that is brushed into the joints once the flags are raised. Flags must not touch each other as this can cause chipping or spalling of the edges.