



"HOW TO" GUIDE

ACID STAINING

YOUR HOW TO GUIDE TO ACID STAINING CONCRETE

Being properly prepared is key to any decorative concrete acid staining application. It is estimated that more than 95% of acid stain jobs that turned out unsatisfactory, resulted from improper or a complete lack of preparation. Please follow this guide as closely as possible for the best results. The first part of being properly prepared is knowing you have in hand all the tools and materials necessary to start and complete the job. Below is a list of the essential tools and materials needed. Please note, when performing a very detailed application, other tools and supplies may be needed for the detailed work.

Essential Tools and Materials needed:

1. Protection for Your Stuff (tape, plastic, etc.)
2. Protection for Yourself (proper clothing, eyewear, and rubber gloves)
3. Ventilation Equipment (or just a means of ventilation)
4. Floor Prep Materials (water source, soft bristle brush, *Crete Prep*, and a shop vac)
5. Application Materials (plastic pump-up sprayer, brush, or mop and bucket)
6. *Neutral Crete* (to neutralize the acid for sealer adhesion)
7. Sealer (for protection of concrete, use one of **AcidCrete.com's** products for best results)
8. Floor Polish, such as *Crystal Crete*. (for ultra shine and life of sealer)

Estimating your materials is also very pertinent to assuring a successful job. The best advice is to always over estimate. This way you wont run short on material in the middle of the application. Running short on material in the middle of an application will not only cost you time, but it could result in an undesired look as well. Always know the right amount of square footage of the area intended to be stained. Multiplication of the width and length will give you your approximate square footage. Don't forget to include small areas such as sidewalks, hallways, and any other smaller areas to be stained. Use this square footage number for all materials you will be purchasing. Please refer to the coverage chart available on **AcidCrete.com** for coverages of the materials needed to complete an acid stain job from start to finish.

When you are sure you have all the tools and materials needed to complete the entire application, the first step is to assure the concrete itself is prepared properly. A good cleaner such as *Crete Prep* is recommended. Depending on the concrete and how much cleaning it needs, *Crete Prep* can be diluted up to 1:2 parts water. The newer the concrete and the fewer the stains, the higher the dilution rate. Use full strength on extremely soiled floors. Apply with a polyethylene (plastic) pump-up sprayer with a coarse spray pattern to avoid inhalation and overspray. Allow *Crete Prep* to soak in for 5-10 minutes. Using a stiff bristle broom, agitate heavy soil and stains then rinse with water. Repeat application may be required for some heavier stains. Eliminate standing water with a shop vac. Let concrete dry 6-8 more hours to ensure it is completely dry prior to staining.

Once the floor is dry, be sure to have everything covered that you don't want to stain, and be sure that you are wearing your personal protection to avoid injuries. Do not step on the surface to be stained wearing shoes (oil on the soles could leave shoe prints in the finish, so wear only thick socks until the whole process is completed). *Concentrated Crete Stain* can be diluted up to 1:1 with water, so recommended test spots in an inconspicuous area should be done to assure desired look before applying the stain to the whole floor. Using either a poly pump up sprayer or mop and bucket (other methods may be used), start in a far corner applying in circular motions (only enough to wet the concrete) while walking yourself out of the room being stained (as stain is being applied, brushing it into the concrete may be desired). Let the *Concentrated Crete Stain* dry for approximately 24 hours (in warmer weather conditions, this time could be drastically cut). After the first coat has dried, wet a very small portion of the concrete to simulate what look you will get once sealer is applied. If this tone of the color used is sufficient, begin neutralizing the floor. If a darker tone is desired, apply another coat of stain using the same method as the first coat. Please note that when using multiple colors, use the lightest color first as the base coat. Be sure this is the tone you want, because once sealer is applied, what you see is what you get!

Neutralizing the stain with *Neutral Crete* is key to assuring good adhesion of the sealer. If the acid stain is not neutralized properly, your sealer may not adhere to the concrete very well and could peel up in a very short period of time. Apply *Neutral Crete* diluted to the recommended specifications using a mop. After that, mop the area again two-three more times, using just water (until rinse water is clean). This process will not only bring the acid down to a neutral pH, but will remove the excess residue as well. Do not walk on wet residue. Allow to dry for a full 24 hours and no less. The area must be completely dry or the sealer used could possibly turn out an undesirable milky white look. The next step is to seal the floor and then apply a wax or floor polish. Refer to the instructions found on the products label or each products web page found on **AcidCrete.com**.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- ◆ Acid stain is a water based liquid bearing minerals and acid content. It creates a chemical reaction in the concrete. Acid Stain is not a top coat and cannot be stripped off.
- ◆ Old concrete may be harder to stain than new concrete. As concrete ages, it wears, and as it wears, it exposes the natural aggregates in the concrete. Acid stain will only work on the cement portion.
- ◆ Concrete that has been strongly acid washed or etched may be unable to be acid stained.
- ◆ If the floor you are planning to stain has been sealed in the past, it will need to be stripped and sanded down to ensure that the stain will be able to react with the concrete. This is not guaranteed, but a good test is to pour water on the surface. If it beads the water, it has been sealed. If it does not bead water and the concrete seems to suck it in, chances are it will accept the stain. Not guaranteed though!
- ◆ Every slab of concrete is different! No one who sells a chemically reactive acid stain can guarantee that the color on the color chart is what will result every time. Test spots are highly recommended.
- ◆ Sealing an acid stained floor is a must to bring out the true color of the stain and to protect and prolong the life of the concrete. A polish or wax is recommended to protect and prolong the life of the sealer. Polish and wax will provide great scuff resistance to a great looking acid stained floor.

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