

architectural handmade bricks n pavers

Mortar & Bricklaying Guide

Traditional Mortar

Architectural Handmade Bricks perform best when laid using a traditional lime mortar made from a small number of quality ingredients.

We recommend using only:

- Portland cement
- Genuine hydrated lime (powdered lime)
- Quality bricklayer's sand
- Clean water
- Mortar oxide (where coloured mortar is required)

Avoid the temptation to improve mortar performance with proprietary additives such as:

- Liquid lime
- Waterproofing agents
- Plasticisers
- Bonding agents
- Anti-efflorescence additives
- Other chemical modifiers

In our experience, traditional mortar provides the best workability, the most consistent performance and the easiest brickwork to clean.

Recommended Mortar Mix

Standard Conditions

- 1 part Portland cement
- 1 part hydrated lime
- 6 parts quality bricklayer's sand

Cold Weather

When laying in cold conditions, increase the cement content while maintaining the hydrated lime.

- 1 part Portland cement
- 1 part hydrated lime
- 4½–5 parts quality bricklayer's sand

Reduce the amount of mixing water to produce a firm, workable mortar.

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Water Content

Architectural Handmade Bricks are relatively dense and absorb less water than many conventional masonry units.

For this reason:

- Use only enough water to achieve good workability.
- Avoid wet or sloppy mortar.
- A firmer mortar supports the weight of the brick more effectively.
- Firmer mortar produces cleaner joints and improves laying efficiency.

Cold Weather Laying

Cold weather slows the hydration of cement, meaning mortar takes considerably longer to gain strength. Because Architectural Handmade Bricks absorb less moisture from the mortar, this effect can be more noticeable than with highly porous clay bricks.

To improve performance during cold weather:

- Use the recommended cold weather mortar mix.
- Reduce the amount of mixing water.
- Keep the mortar firm.
- Store bricks dry before laying.
- Protect fresh brickwork from rain and frost.

Avoid attempting to compensate for cold conditions by adding excessive water or chemical additives.

Cleaning as You Lay

The best brickwork is cleaned progressively during construction—not after completion.

Traditional lime mortar makes this process much easier.

As the mortar begins to firm

- Brush the brickwork with a soft bricklayer's brush to remove loose mortar – careful not to drag wet mortar onto the face of the bricks. A damp sponge can also be used, but take care not to use it when mortar is still wet and soft – this will drag mortar onto the face of the brick).

As the mortar hardens further:

- Brush the brick faces and joints with a light wire brush to remove any remaining residue and clean up the mortar joint.

Cleaning the brickwork as it is laid significantly reduces the need for acid/chemical cleaning and high-pressure washing.

Aggressive cleaning methods can damage mortar joints, altering their appearance.