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MARCH 2009

# SELF LEVELING



## INSIDE TILE INC

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Customers want flat tiled floors free of any lippage. To achieve this, many installers turn to self-levelers. Self-leveling is a commonly used phrase when describing a broad range of cementitious products to aid in bringing a deficient floor into a flat or level condition.

It is recommended that floors be on a plane or “flat” within ¼” per 10 ft, and have no greater variation than 1/16” in 12 inches. Some installers can compensate the voids in the substrate by using a thinset mortar to flatten the floor. With a thinset mortar you can fill the voids with thinset, but then you get a low bond and compressive strength if the thinset is thicker than 3/8” to ½”. With medium bed mortars you can fill in the voids up to ¾”, but it is time consuming to set each tile flat if your substrate is that uneven.

Self-levelers are ideal to use to flatten floors. There are many products available and choosing the right self-leveler specific to the needs of the tile installation is key.

However, there is a bit of a learning curve with using self-levelers. Self-levelers have a short working time. It is critical to use a clean bucket to mix a successive batch. Using the same unclean bucket with residue from the first batch to mix a successive pour will shorten working time and affect the self-levelers ability to “self level”. Unlike grouts and thinsets, self-levelers also require **exact** product to water ratios for ultimate performance.

Self-leveling product require a primer prior to application. You should always use the recommended primer by the manufacturer. There is a chemical variation among the various brands of primers, therefore, primers are not universal.

Tile Inc. carries a variety of self-levelers. One in particular is manufactured by Mapei; Ultraplan 1 PLUS. This used in conjunction with Mapei’s Mapeprime 1K primer. The self-lever is a quick setting, self leveling, self drying underlayment and repair mix for interior application. It is ready for tile in 3 to 4 hours. It can be installed from feather edge to 1 ½” in a single pour. If you need up to 2”, prime the area again and pour the self-leveler again.

To get more information on products mentioned or to get additional help and information specific to your tile installation, give us a call. You can also check out product information at [www.mapei.us](http://www.mapei.us).

Gobis, David M. “Self-Leveling Underlayments. Common misconceptions, product recommendations and usage parameters.” Tile Magazine Jan./Feb. 2009: 13-17.