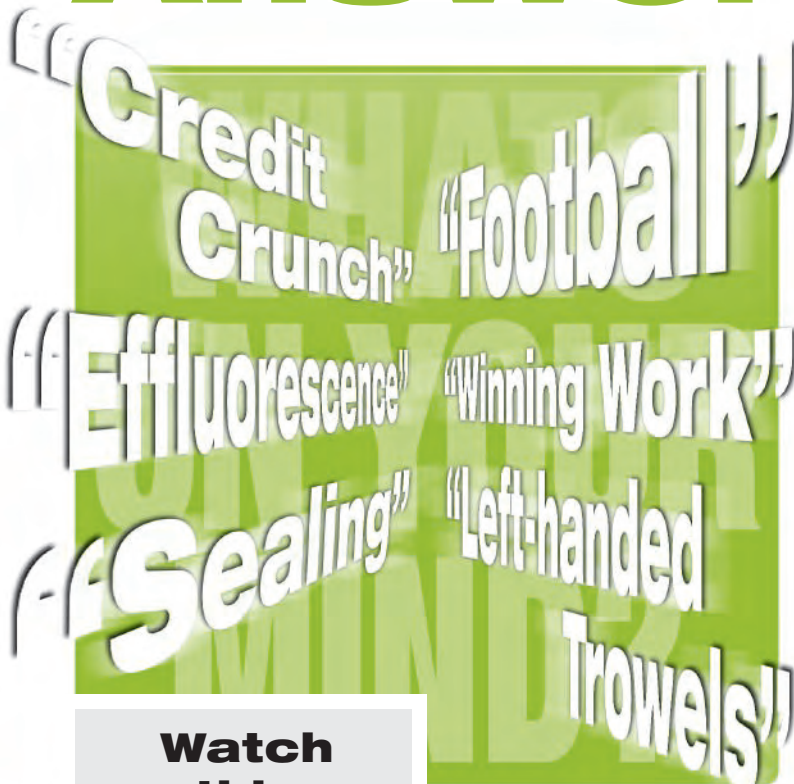


## Answers forum



Fixers love tilerworld.com – and not just as a great source of new business leads. The forum, with its wide variety of threads, is increasingly popular. Whatever the question, another fixer or one of the BAL team, has the answer.

When a Bradford fixer asked about setting out, eight of his peers were soon contributing their favourite tips. This must be a hot topic: inside a week, the answers had been read more than 400 times.

Another sought advice on fixing a mix of large format tiles and mosaics to very uneven walls. Rapid replies included suggestions from six different tilers. Most recommended the 'dog tooth' method, with their answers offering descriptions, diagrams and even a video.

One of the most regular users mentioned that he was thinking of buying a new driver. Within 25 minutes, he started to receive recommendations, complete with reasons and photographs. The forum is that fast, that powerful.

Questions or opinions about fixing? Join [www.tilerworld.com](http://www.tilerworld.com) and log-on to the forum.



### Watch this space

Would you like to vary an adhesive's setting time to suit a job's specific needs?

Watch out for BAL Variset XP, coming soon. You have never seen anything like this – and it will change your life.

**BAL Variset XP:** you choose the setting time.

## Easy win!

Starting with our next edition in Autumn, Fixer Focus and our other free news updates will be sent direct to you by email.

To make sure you don't miss out on all the latest news,

views and industry trends make sure you send us your email address.

Do this by 31st August 2009 as one random entrant will win a **Samsung 32" HD Ready LCD TV!**

So just email the words **"Contact me by email"** together with your name and full address to [fixerfocus@building-adhesives.com](mailto:fixerfocus@building-adhesives.com). "Simple," as Alexander the Meercat would say...

### Powerful, fast and white

What do you do if you need gear just like BAL Supercover Rapid Flex, but in white?

Simple: keep an eye on your stockist's shelves. Before you know it, you will see the latest addition to the Supercover family. Trust BAL to give you what you want.



# Fixers United

No, this is not a football team, it is the industry's reaction to [www.tilerworld.com](http://www.tilerworld.com). Thousands of fixers are now registered, right across the country, with hundreds of tilers using the free service on a regular basis. Feedback has flooded in – and it is unvaryingly positive.

**Colin Sanger**, of Hitchin, loves the opportunity of displaying his work to a growing audience of possible customers. "It is a really exciting service," he says, "and one I am proud to be part of."

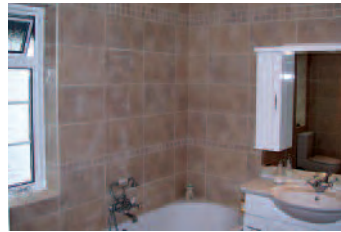
It gives me the chance to reach so many more potential customers, for them to see the standard of work I can offer. It means they can be confident in my work before we even meet."



In Ashford, Middlesex, **Gary Knowles** agrees and applauds the power of [www.tilerworld.com](http://www.tilerworld.com) to deliver real value to

fixers. He says, "The site is really simple. I can even pick up my quote requests and reply when I'm on site, using my Blackberry."

Getting the emails, and then winning the work, is fantastic."

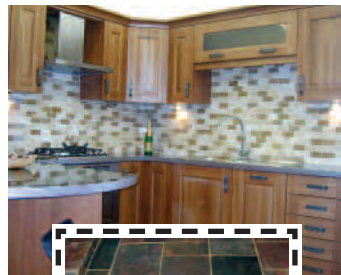


**Andy Howard** likes the site not just for what it brings him, but also for its value to his potential customers in the Stevenage area. "TilerWorld is a great site for

both tilers and their customers," he says. "Even if the customer doesn't win the free draw, they still know that they are dealing with a top-class tiler."



Sheffield fixer, **Ilan Wardle**, sums this up by being brief and to the point: "Customers are looking to hire a professional."



In Sandbach, experienced tiler **Richard Knight** has no doubts. "Any tiler who wants to be seen as a real professional

should register with [www.tilerworld.com](http://www.tilerworld.com), complete their profile and encourage customers to rate their work."



**For large format floor tiles in the bathroom or a mosaic splashback above the sink, the first duty is to be attractive. How well tiles are fixed in place is not obvious and is not necessarily considered by the end user. As long as it looks good, they are happy... until something untoward happens.**

## Warm toes on

Underfloor heating remains popular for both new build and refurbishment. Fixing tiles over it is not difficult, with care and preparation.

Check with the manufacturer that the system can be used with the proposed substrate, within the relevant environment, and is stable enough to receive a rigid tile finish.

### [www.tilerworld.com](http://www.tilerworld.com)

- Your new customers requesting quotes
- Your skills on show to the market
- Your positive customer ratings displayed
- Your testimonials available for all to read
- Your peers on-line in the forum
- Your tiling questions answered fast

# Looking good is not enough

Often, a householder only realises that there is more to wet area tiling than its appearance if a wall tile falls off, mould appears or they trip on a cracked or lifted tile. These may not happen for months. Consumers will not blame themselves for not knowing that tiling a wet area has special requirements, so the tiler can expect a call.

Fortunately, getting the job right should be straightforward. Formal standards cover almost every aspect of tiling, regularly reviewed and updated. BS 5385 Part 4, revised this year, is specific: "Wall and floor tiling – Part 4: Design and installation of ceramic and mosaic tiling in special conditions – Code of practice." This includes the requirements for tiling in damp and wet conditions, noting that, "The use of impervious grouts and adhesives is no substitute for a tanked installation." Following standards matters, because of the special needs of wet areas. Their unique tiling requirements require careful preparation and application and the background's water sensitivity will be critical.

Wall backgrounds such as plasterboard and gypsum plaster can be acceptable for domestic installations, if the plaster is at least four weeks old or the plasterboard suitably well braced. Cement-and-sand render, at least two weeks old for new render, is ideal. Existing ceramic tiles and suitably braced cement tilebacker boards are also suitable.

It is essential that water-sensitive backgrounds or any non-water-tight substrates are protected using a suitable tanking system. Installing a waterproof membrane on a substrate places a barrier between the surface and the source of wetness. For domestic applications, the BAL Waterproofing Kit for Showers is ideal. A single box contains everything necessary: a light grey, flexible, seamless tanking system comprising an acrylic-based primer, an acrylic-based coating, polyester tape and matting.

Care is needed to prevent water penetration, particularly in joints and corners, but without compromising flexibility. Adhesives and grouts should be chosen for

their water resistance, with strong consideration for the threat of bacteria and black mould. Naturally prevalent in any wet area, these are capable of causing problems even within waterproof grouts and sealants. Wherever possible, antibacterial products such as those incorporating Microban® antibacterial protection are strongly recommended.

Just adhering to standards is not enough. Fixers must make potential customers aware of them. BS 5385 should be mentioned everywhere from business cards to professional-looking quotes.

Standards matter. For wet areas, BS5385 is increasingly vital to tilers both as a set of best practice guidelines and as a way of demonstrating professionalism. Customers will only know about it, though, if you tell them about it – because you can be sure that it will not be mentioned by the less professional competition.



## perfect tiling

Use a suitable reinforced floating screed, normally traditional sand/cement, at least 75 mm thick. Allow at least three weeks to dry, if containing Portland cement to BS EN 197-2 2000 Cem1 – or one week if BAL Quickset Cement is used.

After drying, heat the screed gradually by no more than 5°C each day to 25°C, maintain that for three days, then allow natural cooling to room temperature. The heating system must have been turned off or, in cold weather, turned to below 15°C at least 48 hours prior to application.

When using cable or mat heating systems you must apply a suitable smoothing compound, such as BAL Ultrabase. Movement control joints will be essential at all perimeters and anything penetrating the screed.

Expect regular temperature variations. Use a flexible adhesive or a cementitious adhesive with admixture: BAL Single Part Flexible or BAL Gold Star with BAL Admix AD1. For fast fixing, use BAL Supercover Rapidset Flex or BAL Supercover Rapidset with BAL Admix AD1.

A number of highly polymer-modified BAL grouts are available.

For a single layer of timber, BAL Single Part Fastflex is recommended. Grout with BAL Wide Joint Grout with BAL Admix GT1 diluted at 1:1 with water.

After tiling allow 14 days drying, before bringing the floor to its normal operating temperature, gradually, at 5°C per day.



**Remember**  
To make sure you receive future updates and the chance to win a Samsung 32" HD Ready TV see our "Easy Win" article on the first page.



# Guaranteed confidence

The Tile Association is about to launch the only insurance-backed warranty scheme for fixers working in the domestic sector. This will give TTA registered fixers a significant advantage over their competitors.

Just like TilerWorld, TTA is careful about who it accepts into its ranks. TTA registered fixers are recognised as the best in the industry. When your potential customers see the TTA logo, it reassures them that you are a skilled professional.

As a TTA member, you gain access to a technical helpline and receive a copy of each TTA technical document as it comes out.

Find out more from [www.tiles.org.uk](http://www.tiles.org.uk), email [info@tiles.co.uk](mailto:info@tiles.co.uk) or call 020 8663 0946.

# Winners all



Ian Moore thanks fixer Andy Howard

Everyone wins with [www.tilerworld.com](http://www.tilerworld.com), with its variety of benefits for both tilers and their customers.

Some win more than others, as every customer posting a rating could win back the cost of their tiling, up to £1,000. Congratulations to Lionel Sheppard, Simon Webster, Kate Simpson and Ian Moore. They all found professional tilers through [www.tilerworld.com](http://www.tilerworld.com), then posted ratings. That was all they had to do, in order to win their cash back. They are all now firm fans of [www.tilerworld.com](http://www.tilerworld.com).

It takes more than luck to become Tiler of the Month. Step forward, Richard Knight of Sandbach, Hitchin's Colin Sanger, Gary Knowles of Ashford and Ian Wardle in Sheffield.

These highly-skilled fixers have been the first to receive the plaudits of their peers. All were recognised for quality of workmanship, standards of customer service and sheer professionalism. One thing they all have in common is that customers applaud their work, as shown through their [www.tilerworld.com](http://www.tilerworld.com) ratings and testimonials.

So, making your profile comprehensive can mean much more than a source of new business leads. It could bring national recognition, leading to even more customer enquiries – and it could mean hard cash for your customer.

## Free for all to see

Customer ratings and testimonials are terrific for driving in enquiries. They also give people ideas: "I want a shower like the one you have on TilerWorld."

See how powerful the effect can be. Enter 'EX1 3XZ' as a postcode on [tilerworld.com](http://tilerworld.com) and admire Jon Davies's gallery. In more than 80 photographs, his skills are displayed for all to see.

He is not alone in making the most of the free service. Enter 'S8 7DQ' and check Dale Gozzard's stunning murals and mosaics. Notice how many other tilers are nearby, with five offering galleries. How many enquiries will local tilers without galleries receive?

Posting your own gallery on [www.tilerworld.com](http://www.tilerworld.com) is fast, easy and free. Stand out from your competitors, by showing the world just how good you are.

# Stone certainty

With natural stone from slate to sandstone, there is one certainty: each needs different fixing treatment.

Best practice is covered in BS 5385: Parts 1, 3 and 4. Typically, new concrete needs at least six weeks' air drying before tiling. Sand-and-cement screeds require at least three weeks. To fix after 24 hours, replace ordinary Portland cement within the screed with BAL Quickset Cement.

For walls, allow new rendering to air dry for at least two weeks (three weeks for swimming pools). With rendering based on BAL Quickset Cement, just 24 hours' drying is needed. With BAL Quickset Render, work begins after three hours.

For light coloured stone, white cement-based adhesive will avoid discolouration. Rapid-setting adhesive reduces the risk of staining. Use BAL PTB Flexible White to reduce the level of water that could cause staining.

'Green' stone type can become dimensionally unstable when wet. Use a resin-based adhesive, such as an epoxide resin type R1 or R2 to BS EN 12004: 2001.

Spot-fixing natural stone tiles may result in shading. Use a solid bed of adhesive, eliminating all voids under the stone.

Match the grout colour to the stone's colouring, especially with porous stone.

A suitable sealer around the edges of very porous stone avoids a 'picture frame' effect. Further reduce the risk with a rapid-setting grout or a cement-based grout containing a water-retaining agent.

For white or light-coloured stone, avoid grouts containing grey Portland cement. BAL Microcolour Wide Joint Grout has the added benefit of Microban® anti-bacterial protection.

Use a neutral curing silicone or similar to seal movement joints in stone tiling. Avoid acetoxysilicones and other acid curing sealants for such natural stones as limestone and marble. Sealant movement joints are unsuitable for high traffic areas, so use pre-formed movement joints.

