

THE TRADITIONAL LIME Co.



LIME MORTAR POINTING GUIDE

- 1) Rake out the joints, nice and square, twice deep as the joint is high.
- 2) Pre-wet the wall, saturate if wall is highly absorbent. Allow to dry back a little, to a damp state.
- 3) Use the lime straight from the bag, no additional water – if the mortar is exceptionally wet, leave covered overnight on a spot-board before use.
- 4) Push the mortar into the joint firmly, and slightly proud, and 'butter' the surface smooth.
- 5) Spray the joint work with a knapsack sprayer, for at least 2 days afterward, longer if not hardened, and keep covered out of strong winds and strong sun. Cover in Summer with wet hessian; In Winter with Hessian/Old blankets & plastic sheeting.
- 6) If curing nicely, scrape the excess surface lime away, to expose the darker mortar underneath. Push the mortar in again firmly if shrinkage, or cracking, is visible. Tamp with the churn brush and further mist spray.

Coarse Finish : either scrape with the edge of a pointing iron, or use a churn (stiff bristled) brush. Roughly brush away the surface, then 'tamp' it in by hitting the joint work.

Smooth Finish : Smooth trowelled, rag or sponge finish. This weathers just as well externally, but can be a more comfortable look on internal walls.

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Bear in mind on the first day after pointing, the lime should still be fairly soft to the touch. What we really want is difficulty to mark with a thumbnail; referred to as 'green hard'. Expect 3 days. At this point we are finished with the continual wetting down.

You can create the finished look at any point (and ignore the 'buttering' up stage), though for this to work the mortar needs to be applied as dry as possible (like plasticine, not porridge) Either way the removal of a few millimetres suits some instances better, as the removal of the top layer of pointed work also removes any 'blanched' (white 'bloom'/quick dried) areas and allows for better colour and early weathering.

Keep freshly applied mortar damp (as close to the colour it was when it first went in the wall) by continually fine mist spraying. Every 4 hours is usually enough unless in direct baking hot sunlight.

As you use lime, and become familiar with how quickly it dries (without wetting) you'll probably even develop a mode of pointing, with a dry firm mortar, and with the desired finish, which requires no other after care than to keep damp until it has cured.

The real secret is to keep it damp, until the lime mortar has once again become (lime) 'stone'.

Safety

Lime can be nasty stuff, so be sure to wear a dust mask (when mixing powdered lime) safety goggles and rubber gloves. If using powdered lime place the mixing area well away from (and downwind of) people or livestock. Always have a bucket of clean fresh water nearby to rinse your eyes. A hose is ideal for irrigating eyes that get lime in them. Irrigate for a full minute or more.

Lime is **alkaline**, you can dispense with the goggles and dust masks once the mortar is produced, but **keep your gloves on** and watch for torn gloves. Even 'dry' mortar entering your glove on a long day can wreak havoc on your skin. Wet lime burns the worst. **If the mix is sloppy, it may be best to keep your goggles on.**

Additional Lime Pointing Explanation

Joints should be twice deep as they are high. Brush out and **dampen the area you are pointing** and, using a small trowel, or piece of wood crafted on site, even using your gloved hands if you prefer, push the lime into the wall as **firmly as possible**, being sure it is bedded in nicely. No need to over work it; it doesn't need to be neat at this stage.

Continually spray your work with a fine mist of water if it looks like drying out. Too much sunlight or windy conditions accelerate drying out but prevents proper 'curing'.

Covering up the work with Hessian is the preferred method as you can keep this damp and it'll penetrate onto the joint work. Plastic sheeting will suffice, but will need to be removed periodically in order for the work to be kept dampened down.

Previous day's pointing should be scraped back (edge of trowel or stiff bristled brush) to the user's preference, but importantly, so as to look neat and tidy.

Keep work covered and sprayed with water until 'carbonated' back to stone. Keeping the lime mortar the colour it was when first applied (by wetting down) allows the mortar to cure properly through carbonation (re-absorption of CO² back to lime stone). Any leftover mix can be covered with plastic and used the next day. Unless it can't: because it's 'gone off' (a dry white, crumbly sand) in which case you can still use it to fill large voids, as you can with stones and earth, rather than waste too much lime mortar.

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