

**PALUMBO**

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# THE iMPACT OF GROUT

Believability™ has always been the ultimate goal of the craftsmen of Eldorado Stone. As our stone product line has developed, so has our understanding of what it takes to achieve the true art of stone masonry. → The following pages are intended to share with you what we have learned about the relationship between grout and stone. Grout (and sometimes the lack of grout) has an amazing impact on the look of stonework. Given this, we present the following information to assist you in your creative endeavors.



Though Eldorado makes it a point to evaluate the look of their stone on installed jobs, they understand that an installed stone's beauty is subject to personal taste. Sometimes however, an improved look could have been achieved had there been guidelines to follow. So after much discussion, both with stonemasons in the field and internally, many tips and techniques were uncovered that would help accomplish different authentic stone looks.

The following information helps illustrate, in their opinion, how certain finishes and joint styles can make their stone veneer look its best in today's marketplace. (Since most of the application procedures are the same for all their profiles, detailed instructions found in Eldorado Stone's Installation Procedures are not included here.)

Good luck! Enjoy the information presented here. And remember...don't hesitate to contact the many knowledgeable Eldorado reps if you have any questions or comments.

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# There are distinct grout techniques,

each with their own unique look: Standard Joints (Raked), Dry-Stack Joints and Overgrout Joints (historically referred to as a Sack finish). These three joint finishes play a major role when it comes to finishing a job that has the look and feel of real stone. Old-world installation techniques and methods that have been used for ages.

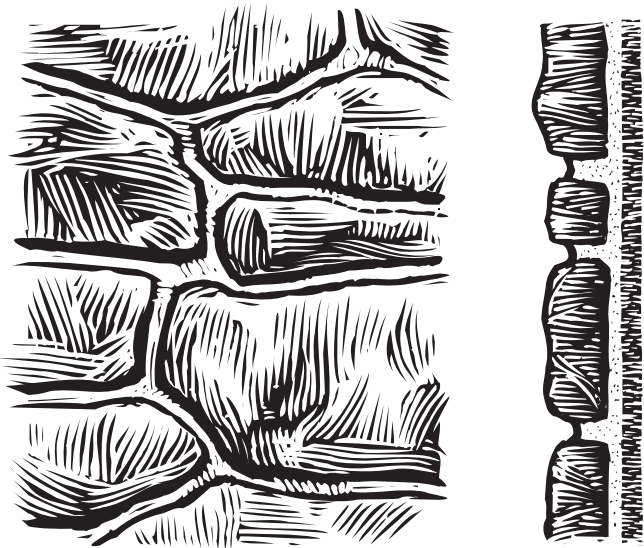
## Grout tips

Remember that selecting a grout technique and applying the grout is just as important as laying the stone. Your mason should work quickly but not hurriedly. A grout style should be chosen before commencing installation. You can, and many times should, add color to the mortar as an accent to more closely match the stone. Care should be taken to be assured that the color emulates a natural earthen sand color. Also, be aware of the geographic properties of different ingredients.

Keep the face of the stone clean (unless you want a slurry finish) because smeared mortar will permanently stain the stone.

- Don't grout more than you can manage at one time
- Joints can be tooled with specific masonry tools or with anything you find easy to use...a stick or your fingers. If it works use it!
- Don't allow joints to fully harden before tooling. Mortar should be pliable and crumbly, not too wet and not too dry.
- Overgrout joints can be tooled (somewhat) earlier than raked joints.
- Using a grout bag is much easier than hand "tucking" the joints.
- Timing is everything.

# Standard Joint



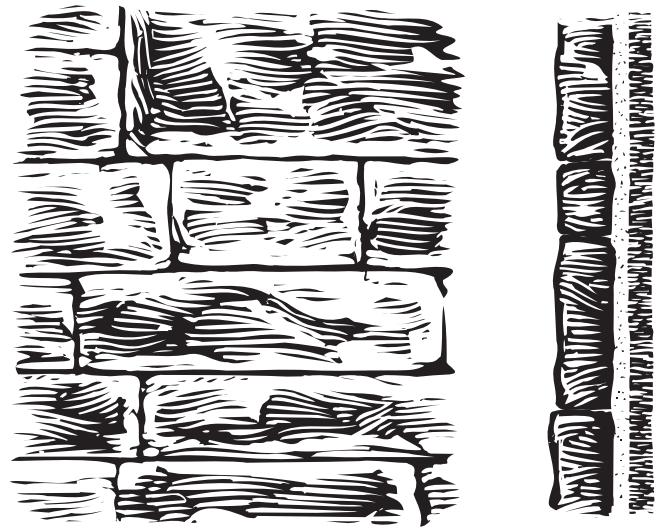
ELEVATION

CROSS SECTION

A Standard Joint (Raked) is achieved by laying each stone roughly one finger width apart from each other, then grouting between each stone. The semi-dry mortar is later “raked” with a variety of tools ultimately achieving a consistent depth and giving it that distinctive raked out look.

- More variation occurs in the topography since the mortar is struck back to a consistent plane depth
- Only grout as much as you can manage → More of the stone’s face shows than with overgrout → Run your finger over the grout — if it crumbles it is ready to be raked. → While viewing a cross section of the job visualize the mortar as a single plane. → Maintain the same depth of mortar — approximately 1/2” below the stone’s face.

# Dry-Stack Joint



ELEVATION

CROSS SECTION

Dry-Stack joint stonework is accomplished by “dry” fitting each stone prior to installation. Each piece can be laid with virtually no joint. Even though you’ve used mortar to set the stone to the surface, when complete, the finished look will appear as though no mortar was used to install the stone. The intent of a dry-stack look is a tightly stacked stone appearance.

- It is not necessary to grout Dry-Stack installation joints completely around each stone since it is intended to look like each stone has been laid on top of each other. → It is sometimes desirable to do touch-up grouting to fill noticeable voids where the stones are not a perfect fit and to conceal cut or broken stone edges. → To maintain a horizontal orientation, minute adjustments in spacing might be necessary. → Be sure to “back cut” the stone that needs its edge hidden if it has been cut to fit. → Use compressed air to dust out joints where brushes don’t reach.

# Overgrout Joint



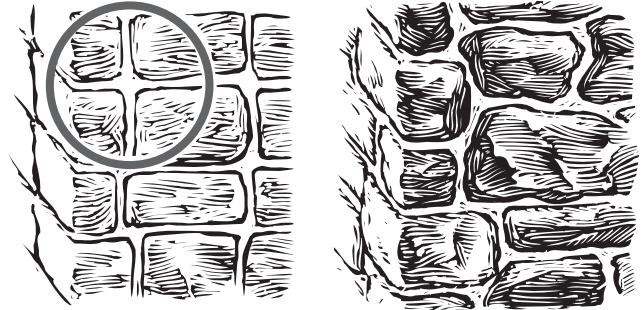
ELEVATION

CROSS SECTION

Overgrout, an increasingly popular way to achieve an old-world look, is sometimes referred to as sack finish — a name derived from old-timers who used burlap sacks to smooth mortar to a plane flush with the stones face. Today, trowels, tuck pointers — even fingers — are used to achieve the overgrouted or sacked look. This technique tends to make the stonework appear rustic and aged. The grout overlaps the face of the stone, widening the joints and making them very irregular. This old-world technique connotes different things to different people so make sure and have your mason prepare a mock-up before beginning any actual work.

→ It's important that the joint's mortar be applied without air pockets and are filled completely to the substrate. → Overfill joints when applying grout → Stone appears more uniform (topographically) because the mortar joint is closer to the face of the stone. → Mortar should be right between being too wet and too crumbly. → The overgrout technique uses almost every stone shipped because broken edges can be hidden by grout. → Use a trowel for a tempered, more faceted finish.

# General Observations



**CAREFUL! BE SURE AND STAGGER YOUR JOINTS TO AVOID THE '+ ' SIGN PATTERN THAT CAN OCCUR IF LAID AWKWARDLY.**

Always have your mason prepare a mock-up of the grout finish you wish to use (standard, dry-stack or overgrout) prior to beginning the actual installation. Make sure you understand how he intends to finish the joints. All the stones shipped to the site should be placed face up over an area so a mental inventory of the sizes, shapes and colors can take place. Many profiles require a rationing of certain stones throughout the entire process. Start at the corners and edges of the surfaces to be veneered and work inward. This will reduce the amount of cutting required to fit stones.

→ Adverse weather conditions affect manufactured stone during installation. → Alternate corner colors and shapes. → Avoid any "+" signs in the joints (see illustration). → Metal tools that strike the mortar breaks the skin which will cause moisture to rise and accelerate the drying time. It will also "polish" the grout.

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