

Tru Tint WB Stain FAQ



Important Expectations Before You Begin, aka Reality Check

Decorative concrete stain is not paint and cannot produce identical results on every slab. Every concrete surface has different porosity, finishing methods, age, patching, moisture content, and previous contamination. Because of this, final color and mottling will vary from project to project. The photos shown online are examples of possible outcomes, not guaranteed replicas. ALWAYS test a sample area before completing the full project.

How do Walttools brand water-based stains work?

They carry pigments into the pores of the concrete, offering a transparent or semi-transparent mottled look rather than a solid, painted look.

What is the difference from acid stain?

Water-based stains are non-toxic, have zero VOCs, dry faster, and produce more consistent, predictable colors. Acid stains chemically react with the concrete and often produce more rustic and highly variegated results.

Do they require a sealer?

Yes. The color itself remains in the concrete, but the surface should always be sealed to protect the finish from wear, staining, moisture, and UV exposure. A high-quality sealer is especially important in high-traffic areas.

Can I use them outside?

Yes. They are UV-stable and hold up well in direct sunlight when properly sealed and maintained.

How long do they last?

Longevity depends heavily on surface preparation, UV exposure, traffic, weather conditions, and sealer maintenance. Indoor applications typically last much longer than exterior applications.

What is the application process?

Surfaces must be clean, porous, and free of sealers, grease, curing compounds, paint, or contaminants. Stain is typically applied with a handheld or pump-up sprayer in thin coats.

What is the dry time?

Typical dry time is 30–60 minutes depending on temperature, airflow, humidity, and surface porosity. Additional coats are usually applied within 1–4 hours.

Can I use them on old concrete?

Yes, as long as the concrete is clean and porous. The stain will not properly bond to sealed, painted, dirty, or contaminated surfaces.

Why doesn't my stain look like the picture online?

That is due to the nature of your concrete. Every slab absorbs stain differently based on porosity, finishing methods, age, and previous contamination. More porous surfaces absorb stain quickly and appear darker and more intense. Less porous surfaces allow the stain to spread more and usually appear lighter. The photos online are examples of possible outcomes, not exact guarantees.

I can barely see the stain and the concrete looks unchanged. Why?

These stains are very transparent. Most often, the chosen color is too light for the concrete surface beneath it. Dark concrete surfaces CANNOT be made lighter using transparent stains. In some situations, the stain may appear almost invisible.

Will a water-based sealer and a solvent-based sealer give the same appearance?

No. Solvent-based sealers tend to make the colors beneath much bolder, darker, and richer. Water-based sealers usually produce a softer and more muted final appearance. It is CRUCIAL to test your stain and sealer combination in a sample area before completing the project.

Why did the color change after sealing?

Sealers dramatically affect final appearance. Many customers are surprised at how much darker and richer the stain becomes after sealing, especially with solvent-based sealers. Always test the final stain and sealer combination before full application.

Will these hide defects, stains, and blemishes?

No. Decorative stains are transparent and generally enhance variations, defects, patches, saw cuts, and blemishes rather than hide them. Many customers consider this part of the decorative appearance.

Can I use this on my new garage floor?

Yes, BUT the concrete must be porous enough to absorb the stain. Most garage floors are hard troweled and burnished for durability, making them too dense for proper stain penetration. In these situations, the surface usually needs to be mechanically opened using a concrete grinder with approximately a 50-grit diamond tool.

Can I use this on a sidewalk that is brush finished?

You can, but brush-finished concrete is one of the hardest surfaces on which to achieve a soft mottled look. Brush finish is highly absorbent and the texture lines often dictate the direction the stain flows. These surfaces usually produce darker and more dramatic color variation.

Are there weather requirements?

Yes. Do not apply in rainy conditions or when temperatures are below 40°F. During hot summer weather, concrete surfaces can become MUCH hotter than the surrounding air temperature, causing the stain to dry too quickly and potentially become dark or blotchy. One helpful technique is to thoroughly dampen the concrete first and allow it to become “damp dry” before staining. This cools the slab and slows absorption for a more even appearance.

Why does my concrete absorb differently in certain areas?

Concrete is rarely uniform. Different finishing techniques, patching, curing compounds, old sealers, moisture levels, surface wear, grease contamination, and previous repairs can all cause uneven absorption and color variation. Even slabs poured on the same day can stain differently.

Can stain make my concrete look exactly like marble or the photos online?

Not necessarily. Dramatic mottling and movement come from a combination of application technique, layering, dilution, surface porosity, and the concrete itself. Some slabs naturally produce more dramatic effects than others.

Can I darken the color if it looks too light?

Usually, yes. Additional coats can deepen the appearance. Some applicators also adjust dilution ratios to intensify color. Keep in mind that solvent-based sealers often make colors appear much darker and richer after sealing.

What is the best way to ensure I will like the final appearance?

The most successful projects start with a test sample. Always test both the stain color and the final sealer combination in a small inconspicuous area before completing the project. This allows you to verify color, absorption, and final appearance on YOUR specific concrete surface. This can take some time but it is much better than trying to fix a big mistake.