

## Preparing Your Floor

No matter what type of floor you now have, if you want your mats to perform at their best, you must level your floors prior to mat installation. Concrete, asphalt, and wood floors are usually level at the outset and need little preparation other than a thorough cleaning. If they are lumpy and uneven, however, you can follow the recommendations below for leveling a dirt floor.

When a dirt floor or "natural base" is present, either in a new barn or one that is being refurbished, we recommend using crushed stone dust over the base. The stone dust should be at least four to six inches deep. So, start by cleaning all the old bedding (if any) out of the stall. Then add the stone dust and level it by dragging an old 2x4 (or something similar) across it. Tamp well, and water the stone dust to help it settle. If a low spot appears add another shovelful of stone dust. Remember, a well-tamped, level floor is the secret to success.

As for the type of stone to use, some common types of stone around the country are limestone, blue stone, granite, and caliche. Use a stone size of  $\frac{1}{4}$ " and smaller, all the way down to dust. It's the combination of dust and stone that will make for a well-compacted floor. There are many names for this kind of stone dust. Some of the more common names are "crusher run", " $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch minus", and "screenings". Your local quarry will steer you right if you carefully explain what you need. If your quarry doesn't have a stone dust of  $\frac{1}{4}$ " and smaller, you can get away with a larger stone. In this category, "DG" (dense grade) or "road base" will work if the others are not available. After leveling this material in a stall you will need to remove any large stones that may still be on the surface. Important: Never use sand to level a floor unless it is "dead" sand, meaning that it's very heavy and compacts very firmly. Common sand will not compact properly, and mats will move when placed over such a shifting base. Also, never use clay to level your floor unless you are intending to then cover it with stone dust. Clay does not drain urine well, and you will be displeased with the results.

## Installation Procedures

Protector Stall Mats are very easy and simple to install. All you need is a utility knife (Stanley 10-399 or 10-100 are good, inexpensive choices) a piece of chalk, a tape measure, and a straight edge. Make sure you have several replacement blades since rubber tends to dull a sharp blade rather quickly.

1. Draw your stall floor plan to scale on a piece of paper. Using a properly scaled drawing of a 4'x6' mat, decide on how to best lay the mats. This will help you a lot when you are actually doing the work.
2. Clean and prepare your floors as recommended.
3. Oftentimes it is easier to cut your mats in the aisle rather than in the stall. Prepare your work area so that you have plenty of room for dragging mats around and getting on your hands and knees while you are cutting. **Tip #1:** Rubber mats are heavy and awkward to move. Here are some tips on how best to do it. If you have some Vise Grip "C" Clamps, you can clamp them onto the mats so that the "C" becomes a handle. This is a very good way to move mats. However, if you don't want to go to the expense of buying these clamps (two would be enough), here's how to "drag" them. Kneel down at the 4'-end of the mat, and grab both corner edges on the

6' side. Stand up. The mat should now be sagging at the middle and hitting you in the knees. Using your knee, kick the center of mat's edge away from you while bringing your arms in closer to your sides at the same time. The center of the mat's edge should now be bulging away from you. You can now drag the mat without the edge of the mat scraping your shins. If you have someone to help you carry the mat, both of you should do just as described, and you will be able to carry the mat easily between you somewhat like a sling.

4. Bring the first mat into the stall. We suggest that this mat lay across the doorway as shown in the illustration in order to make sure that there is no seam in the doorway. We suggest you trim the mat around the posts which frame the doorway so that the mat covers the threshold area and extends all the way to the back edge of the door. By doing this, a nervous horse will be unable to get his hoof on the edge of the doorway mat and paw it up.
5. Bring in each successive mat. Lay them in place, trimming if necessary. Continue in this fashion until the stall is complete.

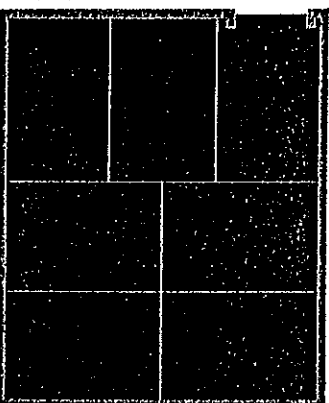
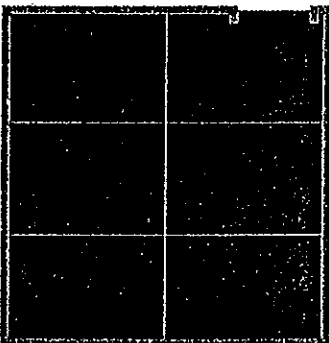
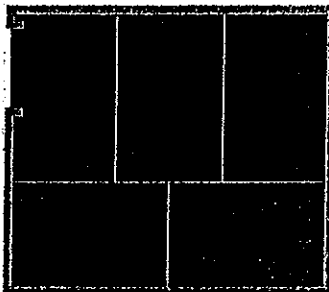
**Tip #2:** Any mat edge that you trim should be placed against the wall. This will guarantee that only good, "square factory edges" will always butt up against each other in the floor area.

**Tip #3:** Measure twice, cut once!

**Tip #4:** Trimming and cutting is not hard. Using a knife and straight edge is the easiest way to accomplish the task. Measure for your cuts (remember, the pebbled side of the mat is the top side; the grooved side is the bottom side) and make chalk marks on the mat accordingly. Span the distance between the marks with your straightedge. Holding the straightedge in place with one hand and one knee, draw the knife along the straightedge thereby scoring the mat. Keeping the straightedge in place, score the mat three or four times. Then set the straightedge to one side, grab the edge of the mat next to the beginning of the scored line, and lift the edge one or two inches off the floor. (You can even place a board under the mat to help suspend the edge.) The scored line will "break apart" slightly. Simply keep running down this scored line with your knife until you cut all the way through the mat. Just drag the knife with some pressure applied; do not attempt to "saw" with the knife.

**Tip #5:** Using a circular saw is not easy nor is it as accurate as using a knife. It can be done however if you follow these suggestions. 1) Saw through the mat in at least two, if not three, passes. A blade will quickly bog down and make the rubber "gummy" if you try to cut too much in one pass. 2) Use soapy water on the blade or mat to help lubricate the action. Don't use a silicone spray as this will tend to make the mat surface slippery for your horse until it wears off. 3) There will be a lot of smelly, "rubber smoke" as you use the saw. Ventilate the workspace well. 4) There will be a lot of "rubber dust" (just like sawdust) during the job, too. Clean up carefully as rubber dust tends to be a little slippery, plus you don't want any on the ground where a horse might be able to eat it.

**Tip #6:** Installing Protector Stall Mats is exactly like installing tile. Use our suggestions and your common sense and you'll have no difficulty. AND if you need any help, please don't hesitate to call.



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