

CREATE USES OF STONE THROUGHOUT THE HOME



**STONE VENEER**  
TO MORTAR OR NOT TO MORTAR





# Stone Installation: to Mortar or Not to Mortar?

Throughout history, stone has remained an essential construction material. The strength and incredible durability of stone make it a preferred choice of building products for supporting a structure's weight and withstanding the elements.

Beyond its supreme functionality, stone also offers an aesthetic appeal unmatched by many materials, making it beloved by architects and designers. With a full range of colors and textures, stone provides an eye-catching addition to the exterior and interior of many homes.

When it comes to installation, stone can be installed to create a mortared or mortarless look. For a mortared look, builders install the stone with mortar layers or joints between each stone highlighting the mixture of shapes. For a mortarless look, builders can use a dry stacked technique, carefully positioning stone pieces on top of each other so that they appear to be laid without any grout. Mortared stone is sturdier and will remain in place over time. Dry stacked stone relies more heavily on gravity and precision, and may be more susceptible to popping out of place.

Choosing to mortar or not to mortar depends on your budget, where the project is located, and how it will mesh with the rest of the home's design.

## Where Can You Use Stone?

Builders use stone in creative ways throughout the home, both inside and out. In the interior of the home, you'll find stone often featured in the following ways:

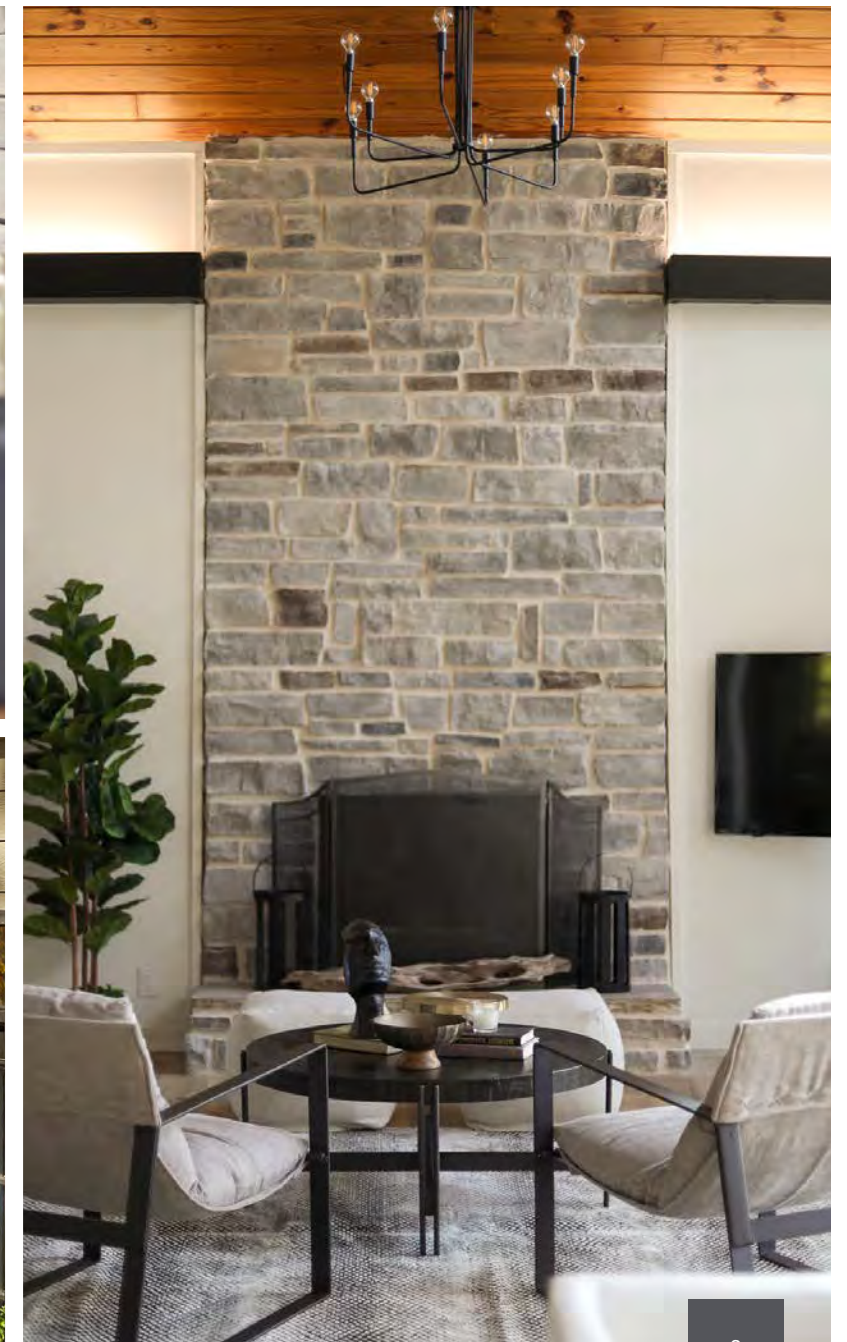
- To frame a fireplace
- As an accent wall
- As a kitchen backsplash
- On a kitchen island front
- To define a threshold or doorway arch

On the exterior of the home, stone can be used to:

- Contrast or complement a brick wall
- Decorate a chimney
- Create an accent wall
- Complement a doorway



Without Mortar | Cashmere Stackstone



Mortar (Cream) | San Moritz Glen Ridge



Mortar (Cream) | San Moritz Glen Ridge

Mortar (Gray) | Granite Glen Ridge



# When To Mortar

Mortared stone is typically less expensive to install than dry stacking. With mortared stone, builders have more control over the look of the project and can make it stand out or blend in as much as possible.

If your project will be on the exterior of the home, mortared joints will withstand stronger to harsh weather conditions and the typical wear and tear of nature's elements over time. The mortar will help reduce moisture retention, prevent insects, and keep the stones in place.

Beyond functionality, mortaring offers more options to create a unique look, whether complementary or as a bold statement through use of thin or thick mortar, application technique, and color choices. A mortared stone wall can be a dramatic accent or a complementary frame, depending on the width of the joints, shape of the stone, and color of the mortar.

# When Not to Mortar

Dry stacking requires more labor and thus may come at a higher installation cost. From precisely cutting the stone so it lays properly, to carefully placing it, this process may also take longer than the application of a mortared stone. The thinner the stone, the more it will cost to cut.

Dry stacking works better indoors, as it will naturally have some spacing between the stones that is not conducive to preventing moisture and keeping insects out. Dry stacked stone may also shift naturally as it reacts with the elements, which could lead to a compromise in the structural integrity of the element being built with stone. In some instances, some mortar may still be used to hold the stone in place. To maintain a dry stacked appearance in this instance, use of a thicker stone is recommended since it can hide the slight use of mortar.

With dry stacked stone, builders also have less control over what the finished product will look like, since the stone will have to fit together to create an interlocking pattern. However, for some projects, a more natural appearance that celebrates the beauty of imperfection is ideal for the aesthetic.

Dry stacked stone is a popular choice for framing fireplaces, defining the threshold or entryway of the home, or as an accent wall. It also blends seamlessly with design profiles like the popular modern farmhouse.

# The Verdict: to Mortar or Not to Mortar

In the end, when deciding whether to mortar or not to mortar, consider:

- Is the project on the exterior or interior of the home? If the project is on the outside of the home, go with mortared stone so it lasts longer. If the project is on the home's interior and not susceptible to harsh weather conditions, mortared stone or dry stacked stone will have a similar lifespan. In this instance, the choice will then depend on the desired design aesthetic.
- What other design elements will surround the project? Choosing whether or not to mortar depends on the home's overall design profile. Is it classic? Mortared stone with wide joints looks more traditional. Is it contemporary? Mortared stone with narrow joints looks more modern. Is it farmhouse-style? Dry stacked stone evokes a more rustic look and feel.
- How much do you want to spend? Dry stacking will be a more labor-intensive installation, and thus cost more to install. For budget-conscious builders, mortar may be the better option.



Mortar (Black) | Kentucky Gray LedgeStone



Without Mortar | Kentucky Gray LedgeStone



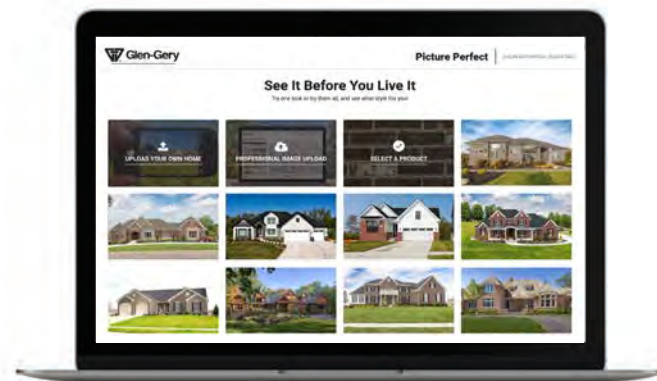
Mortar (Gray) | Kentucky Gray LedgeStone



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Find your style at [glengery.com/visualizer](http://glengery.com/visualizer)



Mortar (White) | Cashmere Limestone

## You + Your Style

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A BRAND OF

**BRICKWORKS**

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