

# THE BASICS OF POWER TROWELING

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As most of you probably know, power trowels are designed to flatten concrete by floating and finishing. The process of doing this is actually made up of two essential steps.

- **Step 1: Float the newly poured concrete**

The floating process levels high spots and fills the valleys, at the same time compacting the concrete. This brings the 'cream' to the top in preparation for finishing.

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- **Step 2: Finish the surface**

The operator will switch from using float pans or blades, to a finish blade that has a straight flat edge. This further levels the concrete slab and produces a hard, smooth and dense surface.

A **danger** to watch out for is **over-troweling**; this can close and seal pores in a slab. That glossy, smooth surface can actually retard the concrete drying process and extend the drying time required to meet a concrete moisture specification for a flooring installation.

There must also be a **balance** between completing troweling before the concrete sets too firmly to work, and allowing the nature of the drying slab to work to its best advantage. Finishing the surface at the expense of a drying schedule is never the best choice.

Walk-behind power trowels are typically used on jobs smaller than 5,000 square feet and range from 24 to 48 inches in diameter. The smaller size makes them well suited for working around obstacles.

For jobs larger than 5,000 square feet, it's much more efficient to use ride on machines for the bulk of the job. Riders are more powerful, and cover significantly more square footage than walks. An eight foot rider can generally do the work of three men with four-foot walks in the same amount of time.



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