



TILE INSTALLATION GUIDE

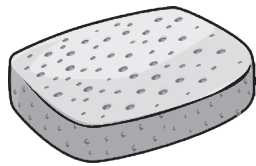
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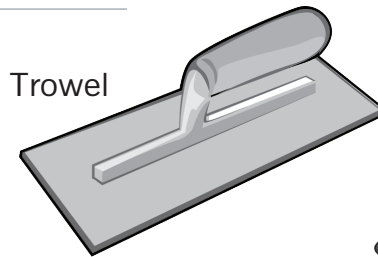
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Believe it or not, basic tile installation does not require extravagant tools and years of experience. With the right planning, materials and attention to detail, it is certainly achievable with our simple guide below. Please visit the Tile Council of North America website (www.tcnatile.com) for more extensive projects requiring anti fracture membranes, draining systems, radiant heating, showers or other complexities.

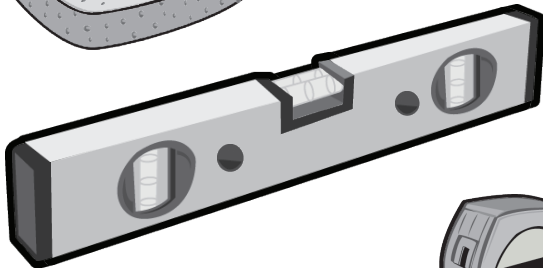
Tools Needed



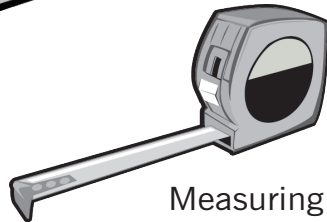
Sponge



Trowel



Level

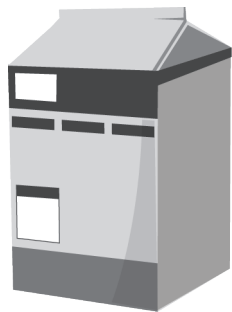


Measuring Tape



Wet Saw

Materials Needed



Grout



Tile



Thinset

TILE INSTALLATION GUIDE

2



Preparing the Surface

Before you begin, it's important to inspect your substrate to insure it is not flexing and is sturdy enough to support the tile. Another key factor, is fl flatness. An uneven floor, or wall can lead to broken tiles and chipping grout. If floors are uneven and walls are not plum, additional steps are needed before tiling can begin. Also, if installing in an area that is prone to get wet (ie. Kitchen or bathroom floor) then additional steps should be taken to waterproof your space. Visit the Tile Council of North America Website for more details (www.tcnatile.com).

Dirt, moisture and oils will interfere with the adhesion of the tile. Give the substrate a thorough cleaning; remove any waxes, sealers, curing compounds, paint, dirt, grease, oils, old carpet adhesive or other debris. The best way to do this is with a sharp scraper and some good old-fashioned elbow grease since chemicals and acids will permanently penetrate the substrate and be impossible to remove. Once all debris is removed, allow surface to dry and vacuum up all dust.



Laying it Out

The goal when laying out tile is to get the maximum amount of whole tile as possible and to save the awkward cuts for areas that can be covered by vanities or cabinets. It's better to take the extra time to perform a "dry layout" and plan your layout than to regret mistakes made later. Another important step is to open all boxes of tile before beginning and mix at random as you install because every box comes from a different die lot and might have the slightest variation in color.

Find the midpoint of each side to the surface area you are tiling. Snap a chalk line from midpoint to midpoint on alternate sides, essentially determining your center point. When tiling on a wall, use a level to ensure a straight line. Measure how many tiles are needed to get from center point to wall, and if you are left with less than half of a tile at the wall, adjust your centerline to create a more eye-pleasing layout.



Adhering It

The type of adhesive you select is dependent on the characteristics of the tile you choose, for help selecting the right one visit the Tile Council of North America Website (www.tcnatile.com).

Next, mix your adhesive in small batches, only making the amount you will need for 30 minutes because much longer than that and it will dry out. First, spread about a quarter inch of adhesive using the flat side of your trowel, making sure not to cover your grid lines. Then, switch to the notched side of the trowel and holding it at a 45-degree angle carve grooves into the adhesive.

Continue to next page

TILE INSTALLATION GUIDE

3



Beginning at your center point and moving outwards; set your tiles one by one, pressing firmly down with a little twist to really station them into place. If your tiles do not have built in lugs (little nubs on the side of the tile that make it self-spacing), you will want to use spacers to leave room for grouting between tiles. Please note, the Ceramic Tile Guide recommends tiles not be installed with a joint width less than 1.5 millimeter (or .06 inches). As you meet the walls and other pipes or obstacles you will need to cut your tile using a tile cutter, nippers or a tile saw. When tiling against a tub, sink or kitchen counter, allow a little extra room for caulking, which will help with waterproofing.

It's recommended that you tile one whole surface at a time. If you need to stop mid-wall or mid-floor, please be aware that slight movement is to be expected as the adhesive dries. With that in mind, you will not want to match already dried tiles perfectly with ones just being laid as they will dry and be uneven.

Once your tiles are all in place, give each piece a good tap with a rubber mallet to strengthen the bond between adhesive and tile. Now is a good time to check your installation and make sure all pieces are level. Suction cups can be used to pull up any pieces that have been pressed down too far and a rubber mallet can be tapped on tiles that are too high. Now is also the time to remove any excess adhesive from your joints or on top of the tile with a putty knife or damp sponge. After setting tile into adhesive, let it sit for at least 24 hours before walking on it or grouting.



Grouting

Once tile has been set and left to dry for 24 hours, remove any spacers that were used and you are ready to grout! Be sure to read the instructions on your grout container carefully, and mix only enough to last you roughly 30 minutes to avoid drying out. Fill each tile joint with grout by slopping it on the tile and then pressing it firmly into each space with a rubber float held at a 45-degree angle to tile surface.



Cleaning

allow grout to set for 30 minutes or so, until it's firm to touch, and then wipe away all excess with a large sponge and bucket of water. You may need to repeat this step a few times until your tiles are shiny and clean.

Disclaimer: This guide is meant to serve as a general resource for tile installation, not an exact how-to guide. We suggest you consult a contractor before installing your tile due to the volume of tile and project variations.