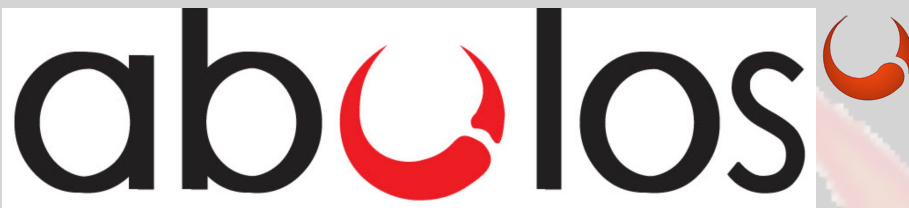# Installation Tips & Tricks

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## Introduction
The following information is intended as an overview of the tile installation process. It is not meant as a step-by-step instruction manual, but rather as a way to familiarize yourself with the basic process. Carefully follow all instructions provided by the manufacturers of your setting materials to ensure success.

## Tools
Have the right tools and installation products before you begin your tile installation. Some of the supplies you may need are a wet saw, tile nippers, safety glasses, trowels, sponges, grout, tile spacers, thinset, gloves, a grout float, and a few buckets.

## Surface Preparation
Your installation surface or subfloor (if using floor-rated tile) must be sound, flat, solid, and clean of all debris.

## Layout/Dry Laying
Plan your layout by measuring carefully to minimize cuts, and dry lay your tiles for fit. Ensure that all of your tiles are marked as the same dye lot number. Additionally, it is beneficial to mix tiles from different cases to prevent any obvious shade variations.

## Cutting Tile
If you need to cut the tile, use tile nippers, a tile cutter, or a diamond-tipped wet saw to cut it to a desired size. Follow safety precautions and wear protective glasses.

## Thinset and Mastic
Be sure to select the correct type of adhesive suitable for your installation. This can vary by tile material and installation location. There are a variety of adhesives available, such as mastic, thinset, polymer-modified thinset and epoxy. Follow the instructions provided by the manufacturer of your chosen adhesive.

## Laying the Tiles
Apply the thinset with an appropriately-sized notched trowel, then lay and press the tiles in place, using a rubber mallet if needed. Use spacers to create uniform grout lines.

## Grout Selection
Sanded or non-sanded grout should be used, depending on the product you are installing. Floor tiles must be grouted. For grout lines of 1/8" and larger, sanded grout is more suitable. The sand in the grout mixture decreases the shrinkage as it cures, making it ideal for wider grout lines. Non-sanded grout is used for grout lines 1/8" and smaller. It's also best for mosaics and decorative tiles with delicate finishes, such as metallic pieces or high gloss products, as the texture of sanded grout can scratch them.

Grout color is a matter of personal taste. Please note that grout colors have a drastic impact on the look of your installation.

## Applying Grout
The setting material must be fully dry before attempting to grout. Consult the instructions for your setting material to find the recommended drying time. Apply grout in small sections using a rubber float. Pull the grout across the surface, pushing it fully into the grout lines and keeping excess from building up on the tile surface. Keep the grout level, without any pits or low spots.

## Grout Cleanup
With a dry, lint-free cloth, remove excess grout from the surface of the tile. Lightly dampen a sponge with warm water and continue to clean grout off of the tile. Once it appears to be clean, wipe it down again with a fresh, lightly damp sponge to remove any grout film. After about 15 minutes, buff the tile with a soft cloth. Finished grout should be smooth, uniform in color, and have no visible holes, pits, or uneven height issues.

# Special Notes for Mosaic Tiles

## Mesh Backing
Our mosaic tiles have a mesh backing that ensures appropriate bonding during installation. For optimal performance, avoid exposing the mesh to excessive moisture before installation, which could result in the tiles falling off the mesh backing. For this reason, it may be beneficial to remove the tiles from the mesh and cut them individually with tile cutters or nippers rather than with a wet saw.

## Stainless Steel and Aluminum Mosaics
You can prevent scratches on these surfaces by using a clean sponge, keeping the protective cover on and applying non-sanded grout during installation. If necessary, cut this tile from the rear with a diamond-tipped wet saw to prevent uneven edges. Cut edges can then be treated and smoothed with fine sandpaper or a metal file.

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