



PROJECT GUIDE

HOW TO INSTALL CERAMIC AND PORCELAIN TILE



Installing new tile on your floor can dramatically change the look of a room. This overview will give you a good idea of what's involved.

TOOLS

- Tape measure
- Backerboard
- Cement screws
- Backerboard scoring knife
- 5 Gallon Home Depot bucket
- Drill
- Super mixer
- Tile spacer
- Steel carpenter square
- 6 x 2 Margin trowel
- ½ in. x ½ in. x ½ in. Square notch trowel
- 36" level
- White rubber mallet
- Tile cutter
- Wet tile saw
- Tile nipper
- All purpose microfiber cloths
- Grout sealer applicator bottle
- Extra large grout sponge
- Water spray bottle
- Door jamb saw

MATERIALS

- Self-levelling underlayment
- Latex primer
- Thin set mortar
- Tiles
- Sanded grout
- Grout float
- Stone, grout & tile sealer



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STEP 1

PREP YOUR SUBFLOOR



Before you start, ensure the subfloor surface is smooth, flat, dry, clean and solid.

Remove any carpet staples or adhesive residue, check for moisture and smooth out hollows with self-levelling underlayment. If you're replacing a vinyl floor installed prior to 1990, consult a professional beforehand.



STEP 2

PLAN THE LAYOUT



Find the centre point of your room by snapping a chalk line in each direction, intersecting in the centre, and lay a single half row of tiles outward in both directions – using spacers but without mortar – to ensure your finished work will be centred.



Then snap a grid of chalk lines on the floor to act as a guide.



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STEP 3

MIX THE MORTAR



Mix the mortar specified for your tile according to the directions on the bag. Mortar is caustic, so be sure to wear protection. Mortar can't be used once it dries out, so don't mix too much at once.

STEP 4

APPLY THE MORTAR



Sweep and wipe the substrate with a damp sponge to remove dust. Then start at the centre point of the room and begin spreading a generous amount of mortar to the backerboard with the flat side of the trowel.



Then comb through the mortar with the notched side of the trowel, assuring that the mortar is combed evenly and in only one direction without any swirls.



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STEP 5

TEST YOUR MORTAR COVERAGE



Test the mortar by placing a tile firmly in the mortar and move side to side to collapse the ridges.



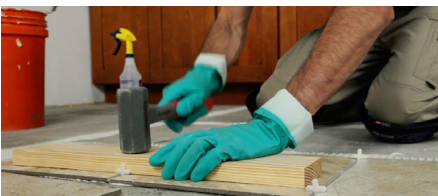
Then lift the tile and check to ensure the back is completely covered. If it's not, ensure you performed the test correctly, used enough mortar, mixed it properly and that it hadn't begun to dry out.

STEP 6

LAY TILES



Once you've confirmed you have the right consistency in your mortar, **align the first tile** with your chalk lines and press firmly into the mortar. Place two spacers along the side at either end and set your second tile by aligning the edge, hinging it down and slightly twisting it back and forth.



As you go, be sure to clean any dirt, dust or mortar with a damp sponge. Every 3 or 4 tiles, lay a short 2x4 on top and tap lightly with a rubber mallet to level the tiles and embed them firmly in the mortar. Clean any mortar from the tile before it dries and remove excess mortar in the grout joints as you go.



Finish laying all the full tiles in your first quadrant, being careful to keep the lines straight and not tile yourself into a corner. Then finish the other three quadrants and let the mortar harden for 24 hours before walking on the tiles.



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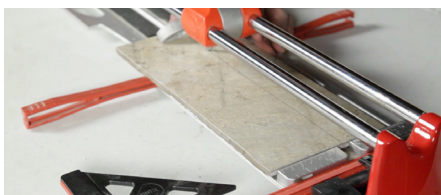
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STEP 7

MEASURE AND MARK TILES, CUT AND SET THE REMAINING TILES



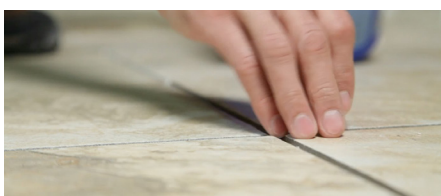
Now you're ready to cut tiles to fill the space along the wall. Place two tiles up against the wall to allow for expansion and grout (at least 1/4"). Then place the tile to be cut directly over the last set tile. Finally, place a marker tile on top of the tile to be cut so that it touches the upright tiles. Trace the edge of the marker tile to mark the tile below.



Place the marked tile on the cutter and align the cutting line with the scoring wheel. Push the cutter along the top of the tile with a single, firm stroke. Ensure that the foot of the cutter is fully resting near the edge of the tile and that the scoring wheel is not touching the tile. Press down on the handle to snap the tile.

STEP 8

REMOVES SPACERS, AND MIX THE GROUT



Once all the tiles are set, wait 24 hours, remove all your spacers and mix your grout according to the manufacturer's instructions. Clean out the joints to at least 2/3 the depth



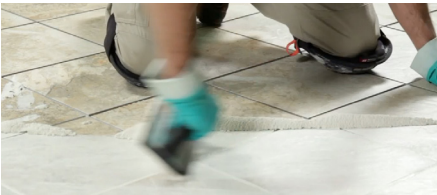


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STEP 9

APPLY THE GROUT



Holding a rubber grout float at a 45 degree angle, **spread grout** in sweeping arcs, pressing it into the joints to fill them completely. Remove excess grout by holding the grout float at a 90 degree angle, and sweeping diagonally to avoid dipping into the joints.



Give the grout a few minutes to start hardening and then **wipe the tiles in a circular motion with a barely damp sponge** to remove residue. Should you touch the tile, there should be very little transfer to your finger. Remove any remaining haze by buffing with a dry cloth.

STEP 10

CURE AND SEAL



After 72 hours, apply grout sealer along grout lines, making sure to wipe up any excess within ten minutes.



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STEP 11

COVER THE EXPANSION GAPS AND THRESHOLDS



Finally, **cover the expansion gap** along the walls with moulding or matching bullnose tile and install any desired thresholds between neighbouring floors.



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