

## A Detailed Guide To Tile Installation

Welcome to WEKRAFT by Metaxperia Home Solutions, a detailed guide to tile installation

So, you're ready to learn how to install tile? Great! After reading this guide, you should have a good grasp of what tools and supplies you'll need and a basic understanding of the tile installation process from planning to grouting.

This guide provides an overview of the process. Since we can't cover the full range of products and materials with all their unique specifications, we will occasionally guide you to check the manufacturer's recommendations. For more personalized assistance, visit your local tile shop and speak to one of our helpful tile experts.

### Table of Contents

1. Tools & Materials
2. Before You Begin
3. Planning Your Layout
4. Installation
  - Mixing Thinset
  - Laying Thinset
  - Laying Tile
5. Grouting
6. Sealing
7. Caulking

### 1. Tools & Materials

Below is a list of the basic items you will need to install your tile. For a comprehensive list of the tools and materials required for each step in the installation process, refer to our handy checklist.

#### Materials

- Tile
- Underlayment: backer board, membrane, waterproof underlayments, self-leveling, mudset, etc.
- Adhesives: epoxy, thinset, mastic, etc.
- Grout: epoxy, sanded, unsanded, etc.
- Sealer: stone sealer, natural sealer, or grout sealer

#### Tools

- Trowel
- Float (for grouting)
- Cutting tool: wet saw or scoring snap cutter
- Spacers: wedges, T spacer, or leveling spacers (depending on your space)
- Buckets
- Sponges
- Tape

- Utility knife

Not sure which tools are best for your project? Our tile experts are available to answer your questions. Visit your local tile shop for guidance, resources, and supplies.

## **2. Before You Begin**

It's important to have the right surface prepared before you start to tile. Determine your existing subfloor and adjoining floor height, and whether you want to include in-floor heating. This will help you decide which underlayment will work best for your project.

Ensure you are working on a clean, dry surface. Thoroughly sweep and vacuum your space before you install your underlayment.

## **3. Planning Your Layout**

As the saying goes, measure twice, cut once. Putting in the time to plan your layout before you begin will always be worth it in the long run and will make your installation look even better.

Once you have all the tools and materials you need, the next step is to start planning the layout of your design. This is an important step because once you start installing tile, it's hard to go back and rethink the layout.

## **4. Steps to Plan Your Layout**

- a) Find the Center of the Room: Measure the length of one wall and divide that number in half. Next, measure the opposite wall and divide that number in half. Then, draw a line on the floor connecting the two center points. Repeat this process with the other two walls. You should now have two lines that intersect at the center point of the room.
- b) Dry Lay the Tiles: Place tiles on the ground without adhesive, starting from the center point and laying a row of tiles (including spacers) in one direction. Adjust your starting point if your row ends with less than half a tile.
- c) Adjust for Design Features: Lay another row of tiles at a 90° angle from the first, and adjust your layout if you encounter a sliver cut. Account for any design features such as diagonal tile, unique patterns, or tiled borders.
- d) Plan the Tiling Order: Make sure to finish in front of a door so you can easily exit without stepping on the tiles. If you are tiling walls and floors, start with floors so that your wall tile will overlap and sit on top of the floor tile. This ensures that water will run onto the floor tile instead of into the grout joint or under the tile.

## **5. Installation**

Now for the exciting part! Here are the essential steps of installation with expert tips to make it all go smoother.

- a) **Mixing Thinset:** The consistency and timing of your thinset are vital to a successful installation. For the best results, know the open time and cure time of your thinset.

**Open Time:** The amount of time you have to work with your thinset before it hardens—typically between 30-40 minutes, but the timing can vary by type of thinset, temperature, humidity, and other factors.

**Cure Time:** The amount of time it takes for thinset to fully set once it's installed. Refer to the manufacturer's recommendations for cure times.

**Steps to Mix Thinset:**

1. Add water to your bucket according to the manufacturer's recommendations.
2. Add the thinset powder in batches to avoid clumping.
3. Mix thoroughly to achieve a smooth, consistent mixture.
4. Let the mixture set as recommended by the manufacturer.
5. Briefly remix before application.

- b) **Laying Thinset**

Thinset is responsible for keeping your tile attached to your floor, so it's important to make sure it's done right.

1. Apply thinset to the substrate or underlayment with your notched trowel.
2. For large-format tiles, back butter the tile by applying thinset directly to the back of the tile.
3. Hold the trowel at a 45° angle as you spread the thinset to achieve a thick enough layer.

- c) **Laying Tile**

When laying tile, use spacers to ensure consistent gaps and grout lines.

1. Apply firm, even pressure when setting a tile into thinset.
2. Wiggle the tile back and forth a bit to allow the ridges in the thinset to break down and fill in the valleys.
3. Check that 80-90% of the back is covered with thinset. If not, recheck the consistency and make sure you are using the correct size trowel at the correct angle.
4. Set your tiles in your chosen layout pattern, using spacers, until you reach the edge of the room.

## **6. Grouting**

Grout provides an important function, bonding your tile and preventing it from cracking and chipping due to the movement of your home.

a) Preparing for Grouting

1. Clean off any excess thinset from the grout joints with a utility knife.
2. Wipe down your tiles with an almost dry sponge.
3. Remove your spacers.
4. Apply a grout release if needed.
5. For natural stone or encaustic cement tiles, apply a stone sealer before grouting.

b) Applying the Grout

1. Load your grout float with grout.
2. Hold the float at a 45° angle to the tile and swipe diagonally from your grout line.
3. Fill the joint completely from top to bottom.
4. Clean the grout from the tile surface with a slightly moist sponge.

c) Striking the Grout

1. Use an almost dry sponge to smooth the grout lines.
2. Apply light pressure with your finger to the corner of the sponge as you pull it across the grout.

## 7. Sealing

Sealers protect your tile and grout and can enhance their appearance. Not all grouts require sealing, so check with a tile expert to determine if this step is necessary.

1. Wait until the grout is fully cured before applying the sealer.
2. Wipe off any excess sealer with a dry rag to avoid a filmy residue.

## 8. Caulking

Caulk creates a strong and waterproof bond between joints, whether between tiles, walls, counters, or bathroom accessories.

1. Caulk all 90° tile joints.
2. Ask a tile expert to recommend the best type of caulk and application method for your project.

By following these steps and consulting with tile experts when needed, you can achieve a professional-quality tile installation that will last for years. Happy tiling!