

## DIY tiling



*What type of tile  
is right for you?*

**CTM**

*More than you expect. For less than you think.*

## Choosing the right tiles

The importance of choosing the right tiles for your environment cannot be overstressed. At CTM you'll find the widest range of tiles, both local and imported, at prices that simply can't be matched. You'll also find all the advice and guidance you may need. Before you go shopping, however, there are some important factors to bear in mind:

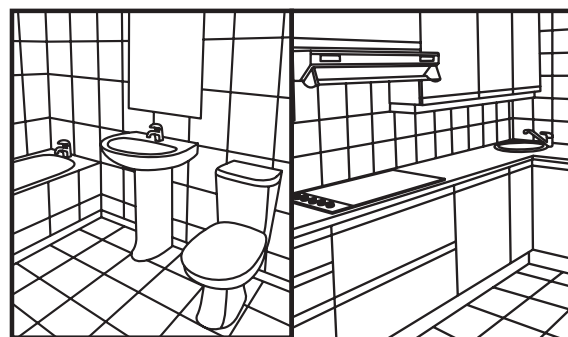
- First, there's the colour and pattern of your tiles.
- The texture and finish add another dimension.
- Grouting will also affect the overall result.
- It's the combination of these elements that makes each tile installation a unique statement. Remember that your tiling will form part of your overall decorating scheme, so plan the entire look in advance.
- Next, you have to decide whether you're going to buy tiles for walls, floors, wet areas or outdoor use.
- You also have to decide on the quantity of tiles you need. If the tiles are to be installed on the diagonal or in any pattern that will require cutting, more tiles will be needed.
- Once you've measured the area to be tiled, it makes sense to order about 10% - 15% more. This will cover the loss of any tiles that have to be cut, and it will ensure that replacements from the same shade lot are available for remodelling or fixture moving in future.

## Types of ceramic tiles

A ceramic tile is simply a mixture of clays that is shaped and then fired at high temperatures. The tile that results can be glazed or decorated, or left unglazed. Do-it-yourself tiling has become so popular, manufacturers now produce a whole range of tiles designed especially for this market.

### Glazed tiles

Glazed tiles come in a variety of colours and finishes – from matte to satin to high gloss – and offer an almost infinite variety of decorative possibilities. Advances in technology have allowed manufacturers to create glazed tiles for both wall and floor application.

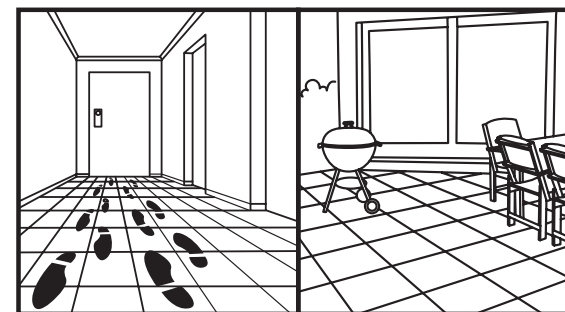


The raw materials for glazed tiles are selected to make sure the body of the tile will take well to decoration. Cottoforte, Earthenware and Majolica are all suitable materials for the glazing process, each with its own unique colourings and characteristics. These tile types, made according to the traditional 'double firing' (Bicottura) technique, are mainly used for FLOORS.

Another technique is 'single firing' (Monocottura), where bisque and glaze undergo a single firing at extremely high temperatures. Monocottura tiles usually have a matte finish and a flat back, and they're slightly thinner than double-fired tiles.

### Unglazed tiles

Unglazed tiles have a completely different character and appeal. Their properties make them ideal for different applications, including areas with heavy traffic like entrance halls and shopping malls, both indoors and out. Unglazed tiles include Red Stoneware, Terracotta, Clinker and Porcelain (China Tiles, Fully Vitrified Stoneware or Impervious Stoneware).

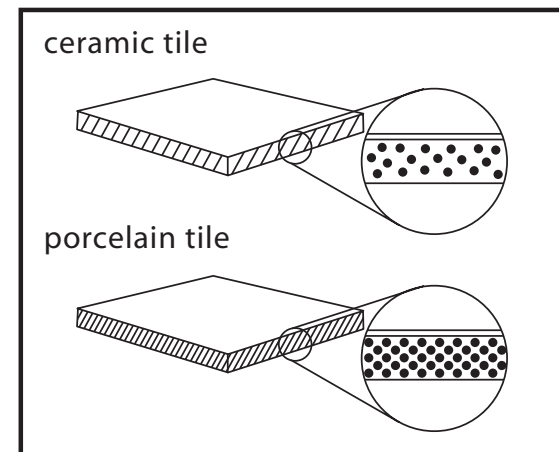


Unglazed tiles usually have natural colours and a smooth, matte surface, although other colours and textures are available. Terracotta, for example, may have a rough surface or it may be polished to a high sheen, which intensifies its natural colour. Porcelain may also be polished, or, like Clinker, may be coated with a thin layer of glaze. Speciality tiles are also available for a wide range of different applications.

## Floor tiles

Don't compare floor tiles without comparing their construction. Modern technology offers you a wide range of materials, each with its own unique characteristics. Ceramic tiles are the most familiar, but are they pressed or extruded, glazed or unglazed? Are they calibrated, or otherwise? What is their PEI rating? And finally, what is their grade?

Porcelain floor tiles are a relatively new development, but they, too, come in varying forms. The first thing to determine is whether they are, in fact, porcelain. Many tiles are sold as porcelain based on the white clay from which they are formed. But true porcelain is created in the furnace.



Higher temperatures cause a change in state, resulting in a product that is denser, less porous and thus stronger than the more familiar ceramic tile. Porcelain tiles may be glazed or polished once, twice, or even three times. And in all cases, they may be rectified, calibrated or rustic in their finish.

You will find examples of each in our Tile Gallery. More importantly, you will find that because we started life as the Ceramic Tile Market over 30 years ago, we know the difference between one tile and another. And because we have our good reputation to protect, we take a lot of trouble to protect you.

### 1. Polished porcelain tiles

This is a tile with an impressive sheen. The highly reflective surface adds depth and dimension to a room. Because they are manufactured mainly in larger sizes, their application is suited to larger floor areas. Durability compares with, or even exceeds, the strength of natural granite. That's why you will find them in high-traffic, upmarket commercial environments.

Polished porcelain is available mostly in neutral tones. It adds a striking complement to more modern, uncluttered interiors, sometimes interspersed with either matt or shiny mosaics, an elegant border or an elaborately contrasting rossone.

Having grown in popularity, porcelain tile technology has seen many developments. First-generation porcelain tiles offer a simpler face, with or without repeated veins and textural movement. Second-generation tiles are referred to as 'double loaded', offering many more colours with added reflective depth. Third-generation tiles achieve an even livelier look, with textural movement running diagonally across the face. A more recent introduction is a natural-looking, random vein.

The technology used in each tile can dramatically influence the price. The uncompromising value that CTM insists on, however, means you're assured of the very finest manufacturing processes and finished quality.

### Maintenance +

An added attraction of polished porcelain is that it is fairly low in maintenance. However, the polishing process can open up pores on the surface of the tile. Once installed, take care to apply a proper sealant. It's a simple process, but it ensures protection against staining.

### Tips & hints !

Before purchasing and installing your polished porcelain tiles, check with your salesperson that the body quality of the tile is stain resistant and that the face of the tile is properly polished and free of dull spots. Request a sample check throughout your batch.

## 2. Glazed porcelain tiles

Porcelain tiles are a lot more resistant to water absorption than ceramic tiles. The glazing also bonds strongly with the tile body, resulting in an extremely hardy and durable tile surface. With such hard-wearing properties, the glazed porcelain tile is an extremely popular choice.

CTM's vast range of colourways, surface structures and profiles give you the freedom to explore all manner of design styles and applications, from clean modern and classic looks to natural and rustic environments. But it doesn't end there. Consider complementing your choice of tile with mosaic accents, borders details and attractive rosson features. A number of products masquerade as porcelain tiles. Some tiles may be manufactured from porcelain clay, but rely more on preparation and firing to resist water absorption. For your peace of mind, check with your salesperson on the water absorption percentage of the actual clay body.

### Maintenance +

Glazed porcelain tiles require relatively little maintenance and are well suited to high-traffic areas. Even with a fair amount of dirt and grime trudging across the floor, your porcelain tiles will retain their appearance. Of course, even the hardest materials eventually succumb to wear and tear. Simple precautions pay dividends, like placing a mat at the entrance to trap dust, or limiting heavy-duty footwear across your floor.

### Tips & hints !

Ensure that you purchase a batch with consistent colouring and shading. Check sample tiles across your batch. Your salesperson will confirm whether the material is genuinely first or second grade. Some tiles are meant to have a natural colour variance, so double check before you buy.

## 3. Glazed ceramic tiles

Glaze is the layer found on the face of the tile by firing an applied coating. This has three effects. First, it creates an impermeable surface.

Second, it protects the tile for considerably longer wear. And third, it adds an attractive, reflective sheen to the base colour of the tile.

Glazed ceramic tiles are suitable for many interior designs, from classic and modern to natural and rustic. Durability can vary, depending on the resistance to abrasion. With proper maintenance and treatment, you should enjoy a good 10 years of a beautifully finished surface. So the ultimate value of glazed ceramic tiles from CTM is that you enjoy a great product that saves you even more in the long run.

### Maintenance +

While glazed ceramic tiles don't require much upkeep, it helps to have a mat at the entrance to a floor area to trap grit and dust. Also, try to take care that heavy footwear is not frequently used over the surface.

### Tips & hints !

Ensure consistent shading and quality in your batch purchase of glazed ceramic tiles by checking the box labelling and inspecting sample tiles across the batch. It'll give you peace of mind that you won't run into matching problems should you require additional tiles.

## 4. Heavy-duty tiles (Kilimanjaro tiles)

These tiles are exceptionally strong and durable. The extrusion process applies highly compacted pressure to the make-up of the tile body, while a higher firing temperature contributes to creating a rock-solid tile.

The look is 'earthy', imitating natural stone. In fact, heavy-duty tiles can be confidently used for both interior and exterior areas. Ask your salesperson about the non-slip tile, particularly if you're considering outside use. And don't worry about covering or protecting the surface.

### Maintenance +

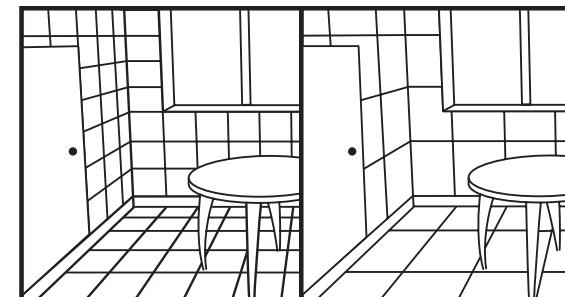
Take care to lay these tiles with larger grouting gaps. Please adhere to the tiling instructions on the box. The recommended gap is 8 - 10mm. This will accommodate slight variances in size when laying the tiles. Thereafter, no particular upkeep is necessary, except for cleaning as required.

### Tips & hints !

Heavy-duty tiles are available in three sizes, but mostly 300 x 300mm. You may notice slight tonal discrepancies between tiles. This is part of the natural appeal and intended charm of the tile.

## Wall tiles

Wall tiles are the most durable and long-lasting of all common wall coverings and are ideal for wet areas or wet rooms. They are easy to clean and even grout between the tiles can be restored using simple, low-cost products.

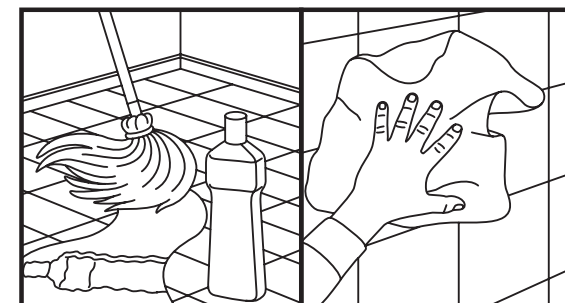


CTM stocks a very large range of wall tiles in many sizes and colours, plus a large range of decor items to complement the tile ranges. Wall tiles come in small sizes and formats such as 200mm x 200mm and 200mm x 250mm, through to large sizes such as 250mm x 400mm and 330mm x 450mm. The size of the tile affects the appearance of the wall. The larger the tile, the bigger the wall looks.

Wall tiles come in many designs, from tiles with a shiny marble appearance to rustic matt imitation travertine. Combining tiles with decor items such as listellos or mosaics provides infinite possibilities.

## Tile care and maintenance

Tile cleaning and maintenance has never been so easy. CTM offers a range of different cleaners for different purposes. Should you have any queries or problems, please visit your nearest store for more details.



## Glazed tiles

- For the most part, glazed tiles simply need to be wiped with a damp cloth or sponge to maintain their lustre.
- Stains may be removed with a mild solution of Porcelain and Ceramic Tile Cleaner.
- Do not use abrasive cleaners, as regular use will eventually scratch the glazing of the tiles.
- Soap should also not be used, as it leaves a film that dulls the lustre and promotes the growth of mildew in damp areas.
- Any cleaning solution should always be thoroughly rinsed off with clean water.
- Glazed tiles require no polishing or buffing to maintain their finish. The only exception may be terracotta or quarry tiles which could be oiled, waxed or sealed. CTM would recommend Surface Sealer or Deep Seal.
- Soiled grout can be cleaned with a plastic bristle brush and Grout Renew. Do not use steel wool, as minute particles remain behind and rust in the surface of the grout, producing unsightly stains.

## Unglazed tiles

- Unglazed floor tiles and terracotta tiles can be cleaned with the same solutions used for glazed tiles above.
- Do not use powdered cleaners, as undissolved powder penetrates the pores and dulls the tiles.
- Sealants are recommended on unglazed tiles.
- Where required in residential situations, the manufacturer's instructions should be followed.
- With normal use, sealants usually do not last longer than three or four years and resealing may be required.

## Showers

- Shower areas require a thorough weekly cleaning to remove hard-water deposits, soap scum and traces of bath oils.
- Showers should also be well ventilated in order for them to dry out thoroughly to prevent the growth of mildew on walls and floors.
- Mildew can further be controlled by spraying or wiping the mildew down with Mould Buster.

## CTM AT YOUR SERVICE

Remember, when in doubt, ask the CTM sales staff or visit our website at [www.ctmtiles.com](http://www.ctmtiles.com) Good luck, and enjoy your tiling!