

DIY tiling



Tiling:
The A-Z guide.

CTM

More than you expect. For less than you think.

Tiling your own walls and floors is not only a rewarding and cost-saving exercise, it also adds beauty and value to your home. Follow this step-by-step guide to achieve a professional finish with the superb selection of ceramic wall and floor tiles available from your local CTM outlet.

You'll need the right tools

CTM stocks all the right tools for your tiling project, or you can hire the tools from a tool hire shop to save money. You will need the following:

General trowel: Used for applying mortar, plaster or adhesive

Grout squeegee: Used to apply and smooth out grout

Tile cutter-breaker: A compact tile cutter for scouring and breaking tiles

Wall trowel: A toothed trowel with 6mm notches that spreads the adhesive evenly on the walls

Floor trowel: A toothed trowel with 10mm notches for spreading adhesive on floors

Spacers: Ensure you get the right size for your tiles (see side of tile box for the correct size)

Tile cutter: For straight cuts; various types and sizes are available

Tile files: To smooth off the sharp edges on cut tiles

Spirit levels: One smaller and one larger spirit level for areas of different sizes

Tile nippers: For nibbling away bits of tile to create various shapes

Rubber mallet: To tap the tiles firmly into the adhesive

Knee pads: Tiling a floor can take its toll on your knees...

Chalk line: Used for marking out straight and accurate tile reference lines

Edge trim: Edge trims are essential for finishing of the edge of tiles. They are available in various colours and finishes, to give a refined look.

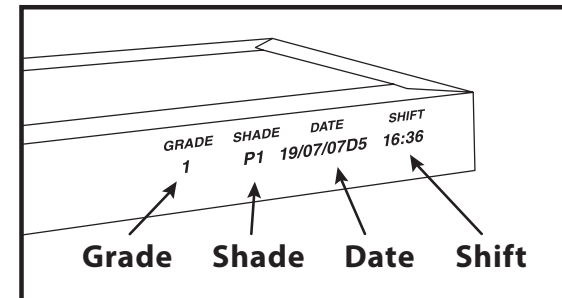
Scorer, sponge, pencil, tape measure: Essential tools for the job

Before you start

- Ensure all surfaces you will be tiling are smooth and level – check this with your spirit level. Uneven concrete floors can be made smooth and level with a layer of mortar (self-levelling screeds are also now available); uneven walls, with a layer of plaster.
- Make sure all mortar and plaster has dried properly.
- Tiles and tools may drop and cause damage, so cover surfaces like counter tops with sturdy material like old carpets or thick cardboard.
- Tape over cupboards with masking tape to stop dust from getting in.
- Make sure all surfaces are clean and free of dust before you lay your first tile.
- Plan your layout with care so that the tiles align properly. Time spent planning is never wasted.

Check your tiles

- Before you start tiling, you need to check that all your tiles match according to shade, code and production date. You will find this information on the side of each box of tiles.
- During the production process, slight variations may occur from batch to batch, so ensure that all your tiles come from the same batch.
- Now it's time to mix and match. Select a reference tile that is the exact colour and texture that you chose in the store.
- Open your first couple of tile boxes and begin mixing the tiles around. Wipe the powder residue from the back of the tiles with a damp cloth.
- Use your reference tile to ensure that all tiles are as close as possible to the correct shade and texture. Some tiles are designed to provide more variations than others, so consult our sales staff if you are unsure.
- Any tiles that vary too greatly from the reference tile should be put aside.



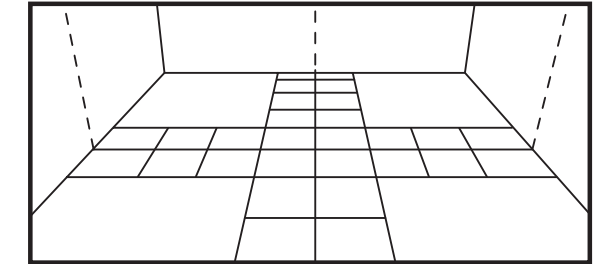
Planning your layout

Walls

- When measuring your walls for tiling, remember that very few walls are actually true or square, so don't depend on the corners to provide a perfectly vertical line against which to align your tiles.
- First, measure the wall from side to side and mark the centre point. Using your chalk line, draw a vertical line through this point.
- Next, measure the wall from top to bottom and again mark the centre point. Using your spirit level, draw a horizontal line through this point. You now have two lines that will act as guides when you start tiling.
- If you're tiling around features such as a bath, worktop or windowsill, select the feature where alignment is most visible and adjust your horizontal reference line up or down to allow for a row of uncut tiles above or below this feature. Remember that this line will run around the whole room, so plan well in advance.
- Plan your tile layout by measuring along the horizontal reference line to the end of the wall, marking the position of each tile as you go. Remember to leave spacer widths between tiles.
- Follow the same procedure with the remaining walls.

Floors

- To plan your floor layout, find the centre points of your walls and strike two chalk lines across the floor by connecting the points on opposite walls. The floor will now be divided into quarters.
- Starting at the centre point on the floor, place two rows of tiles along the lines as shown, making sure to leave spacer widths between the tiles as you go.

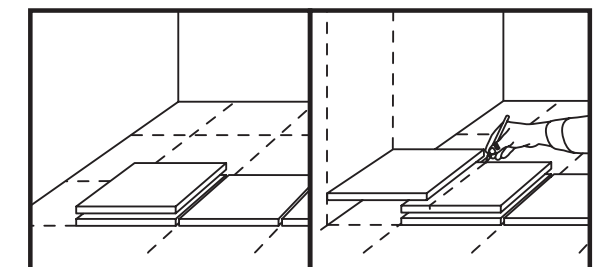


- You may now want to move one or both rows of tiles slightly to avoid cutting narrow strips along the walls. This also provides even borders on opposite sides and keeps the floor looking balanced.
- If tiles must be cut, ensure that they need not be cut by more than half the size of the tile. If the tiles do need to be cut by more than half, rearrange the row of tiles to accommodate another full tile in the row.

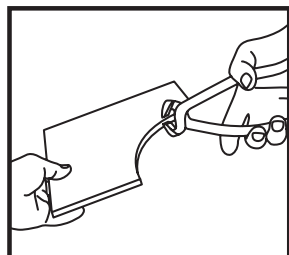
Cutting tiles

Cutting tiles for corners or spaces is an important part of your DIY tiling project. Remember, CTM is always there for advice if you are unsure about anything. Cutting tiles is really not difficult, you simply have to apply a few techniques.

- To cut tiles to fit at the base of the wall or around the edges of the floor, place a loose tile over the last full tile in the row.
- Place another tile on top and slide this top tile towards the wall until it touches. Remember to take the spacer width into consideration. Also consider the flow of any type of pattern on the tiles.



- Using the edge of the top tile as a guide, draw a line on the tile below as shown. When you cut along this line, the smaller portion of cut tile will fit exactly into the remaining space.
- Use your tile cutter to cut a straight line. First score firmly along your marked line and then break the tile. Practice makes perfect!
- To cut a curved shape from a tile, draw the shape on the tile. Then, using the tile nippers, remove small bits until the curve has been achieved.

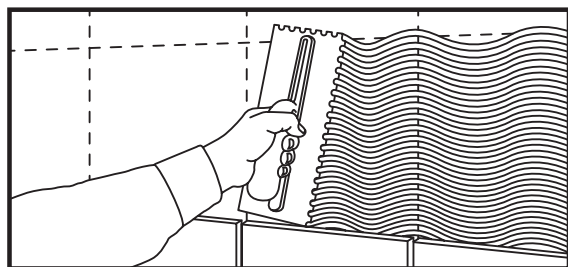


Tips & hints

Always lay all your full tiles before you lay the cut tiles. And remember the old tiler's saying: measure twice, cut once!

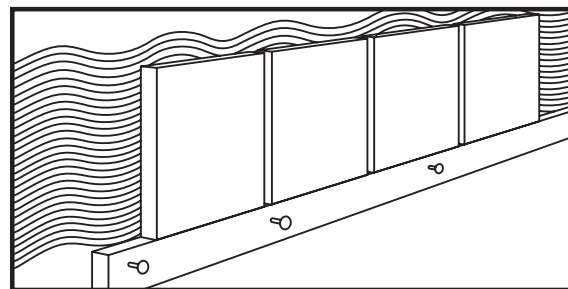
Laying the tiles

- If you are tiling both your walls and your floors, it is a good idea to start with the walls to prevent damaging your newly tiled floors.
- Mix only enough adhesive for approximately a square metre of tiling (about a quarter bag) according to the instructions on the bag. Tile adhesive starts drying quickly, especially on hot and humid days.
- Ensure that the consistency of the tile adhesive is correct. If the mixture is too runny or too hard, the tiles will not stick properly.
- Starting from the centre line on the wall, use your wall trowel to spread a layer of adhesive at least 3mm thick for a single row of tiles along your horizontal reference line. For floors, the adhesive needs to be a minimum of 5mm thick.



- Apply only enough adhesive for about four tiles at a time, otherwise the adhesive will dry before you can bed your tiles.
- The first row of tiles is crucial. Press the tiles gently into the adhesive. Ensure that each tile is correctly positioned and that it lines up with the horizontal and vertical reference lines. Place spacers between tiles to ensure that the distance between all the tiles is uniform and equal.

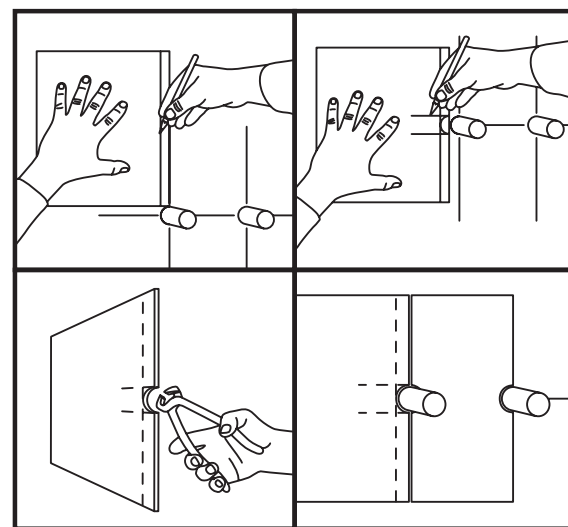
- Use the rubber mallet to tap each tile firmly into place, but be careful, the mallet is solid enough to break the tiles.
- Using a piece of wood as a baton along your reference line is a good way to keep your tiling accurate and ensure that your tiles will not drift or slip. (Remember, you will be removing the piece of wood, so don't nail it in too firmly.)



- Once the tiles are firmly in place and reasonably dry, remove the spacers. Do not leave the adhesive to dry completely, or you'll have trouble removing the spacers. Scrape excess adhesive out of the joints before the adhesive dries too hard.
- Wipe the tiles thoroughly with a damp sponge to remove all excess adhesive.

Tiling around tap points

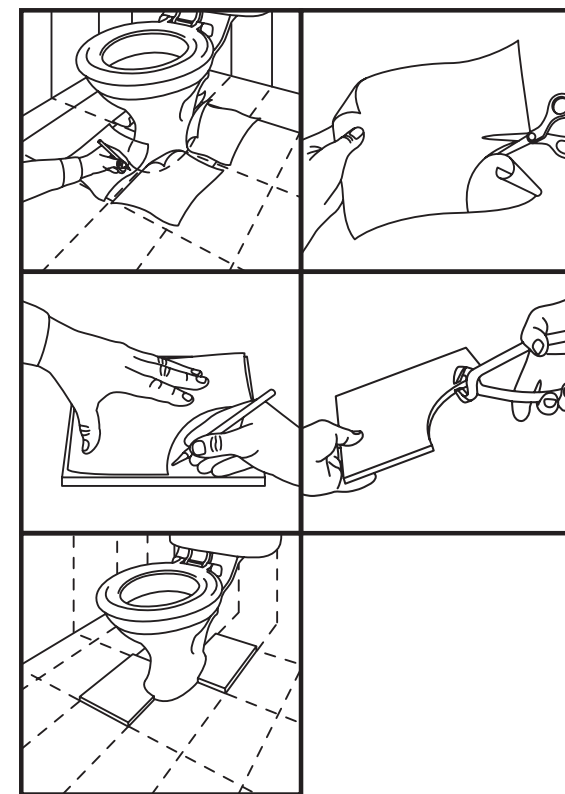
- First determine the centre point of each tap horizontally and vertically and mark horizontal and vertical lines on the wall with your pencil.



- Place the tile on the vertical reference line and mark off the depth, which is half the width of the tap point.
- Your tile layout will determine where the half-moon should be cut from the tile. Draw a line across the tile where you marked off the depth of the cut. Then mark the width of your tap points on the tile.
- Using your tile nipper, carefully nip off bits of tile to produce the half-moon shape that you have drawn on the tile.
- Should the hole be in the centre of a tile, score the circular shape, place the tile on a hollow surface and then gently tap out the circle with the back of the tile scorer.

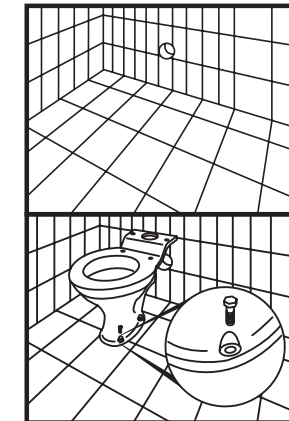
Toilets

- Plan your tiling to allow grout lines that meet at the front of your toilet base as illustrated.



- Cut a sheet of newspaper into four tile-sized pieces and place the pieces around the base of the toilet.
- Pressing each piece of newspaper down on the floor, carefully mark the curve of the toilet base on the four pieces of paper with a pencil.
- Cut along the curved lines. You now have four pieces of newspaper

- that will fit exactly around the base of your toilet.
- Place each piece of newspaper on a tile and mark the tile along the curved line. Cut out the shape with your tile nippers and test the fit.



Tips & hints

Rather than tiling around your toilet, use the opportunity to install a new toilet – it makes sense to upgrade while you're tiling. CTM will also advise you on tiling your whole bathroom floor and then affixing your toilet on top of the tiles. This provides a far neater installation and will allow you to remove your toilet without replacing your tiles in future.

Grouting and cleaning

Laying the tiles is only part of the job, so don't forget to also get the grout from your CTM store.

- Let the tile adhesive set for at least 2 days. You can purchase a faster-setting adhesive, but it is more difficult to work with because it dries more rapidly. Once the adhesive is completely dry, it's time to start the grouting process.
- First, clean out the excess adhesive between the tiles (this is easier to do while the adhesive is still a little wet).
- Mix the grout according to the instructions on the pack, making sure you achieve the right consistency.
- Press the grout evenly into the joints with your grout squeegee and smooth out the grout between the tiles.
- Once the grout is dry, wipe off the excess using Grout & Adhesive Remover (your CTM store will have some in stock) and a clean sponge or cloth.
- Use Pro Clean (also available from CTM) to neutralise the surface.

CTM AT YOUR SERVICE

Remember, when in doubt, ask the CTM sales staff or visit our website at www.ctmtiles.com Good luck, and enjoy your tiling!