

How to Lay Ceramic Floor Tiles

1 HOW MANY FLOOR TILES

Measure the room's length and divide it by the length of one floor tile.

Measure the width of the room and divide that by the width of the tile.

Multiply the two results together (round up any numbers to the next whole number). This will give the number of tiles you need.

2 PREPARING THE SURFACE

It's a good idea to buy 10% more floor tiles than you need to allow for incorrect cuts and broken tiles.

Floor tiles can be laid on concrete or timber flooring.

If you're laying floor tiles on a concrete floor, make sure the floor is dry and clean.

If you're working with an uneven concrete surface, make sure the floor is clean and dry. Then apply a self-levelling compound. Follow the instructions that come with the compound (**fig. 1**). Leave the compound to dry overnight.

When it's dried you might find there are ridges on the floor. Use a medium-grade sandpaper block to smooth them off.

If you're laying floor tiles on floorboards you'll need to fix a layer of exterior grade plywood (minimum 15mm thick) to the floor. Simply screw down to the floor every six inches along the joists using a self tapping screw before laying your tiles (**fig. 2**), alternatively you can use 'Ditra Matting' which can be purchased in store.

3 PLANNING THE LAYOUT

Before you fix your ceramic tiles to the floor it's important to plan the layout! Doing a little preparation will help you avoid uneven spacing or poorly aligned rows of tiles (**fig. 3**). The most visible row of tiles will be the one lining up with your room entrance - so use this as a starting point.

With a pencil or chalk, draw a line perpendicular to the main entrance (**fig. 4**).

Lay a dry set of your ceramic tiles along this line to the other side of the room.

Use a tile spacer to make sure the tiles are evenly arranged (**fig. 5**). Tile spacers come in various sizes all of which can be purchased from our showroom.

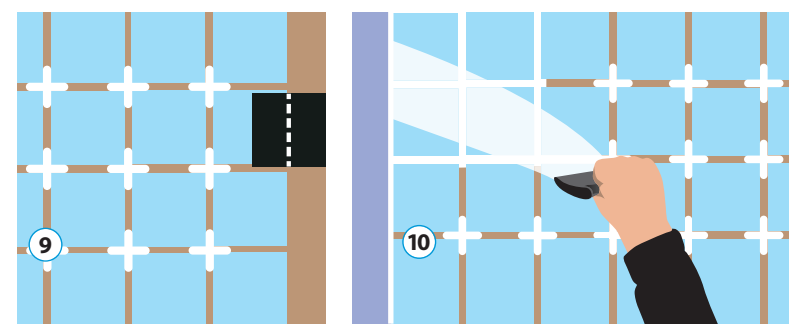
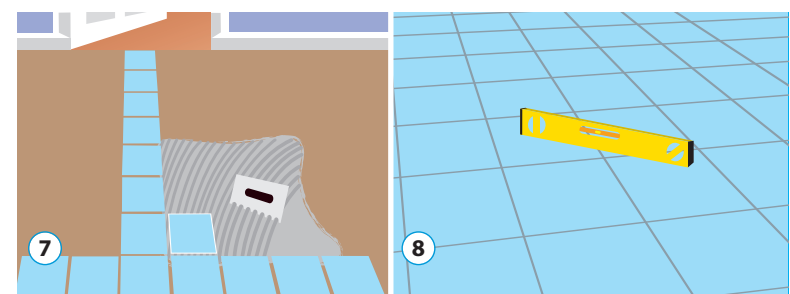
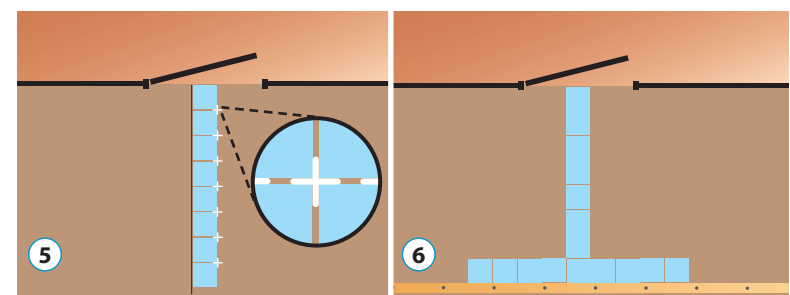
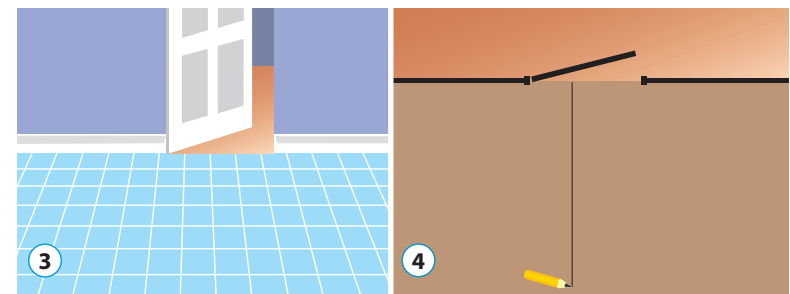
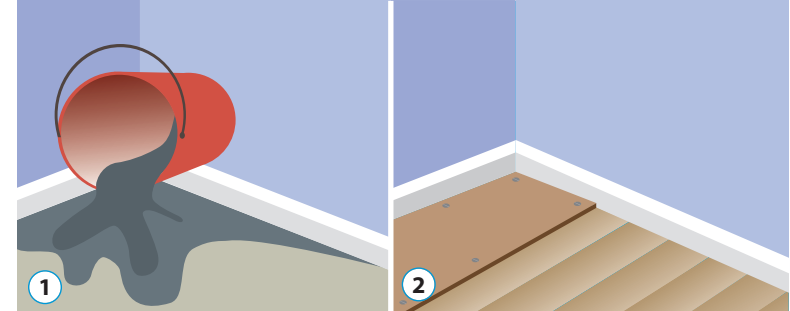
Once you get to the other side of the room you'll be left with a space smaller than a whole tile. Screw a 1in-thick piece of wood to the floor perpendicular to the tiles. You'll be using this as a guide to lay all the other tiles against.

Lay a line of tiles along the timber guide (**fig. 6**). This will ensure you finish with an equal border at both ends of the room.

If you end up with a different size space on one side of the room to the other, shift your perpendicular line slightly to rectify this. The point where this line touches the board will form your starting position.

Helpful hint..

Remove inward opening doors before starting to tile as the tiling will raise the level of the floor. You might have to adjust the door length before rehanging.



Tools for the job..

Available from DTW Ceramics



Sponge



Tile Nippers



Levelling Compound



Spirit Level



Rubber Hammer



Knee Pads



Adhesive Trowel



Tile Spacers



Adhesive Grout



Silicone Sealant



Tile File



Grout Spreader



Electric Tile Cutter

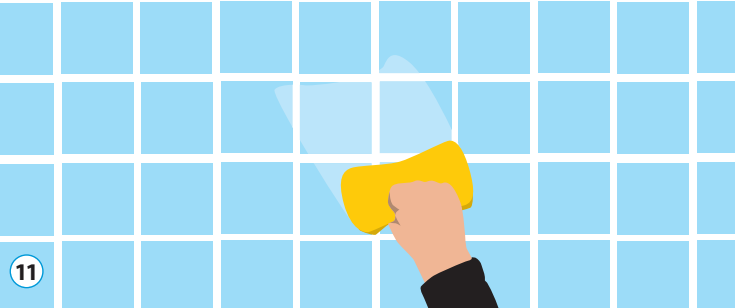


Manual Tile Cutter

Safety first..

Always wear goggles and a dust mask when cutting tiles as tile fragments may cause injury and we recommend you wear gloves when grouting tiles.

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4 LAYING THE TILES

Now you're ready to fix your ceramic tiles to the floor from the starting point.

Before you lay any tiles, check there aren't any colour variations.

Use a trowel with a notched edge or a spreader to apply adhesive to a square area of the floor - approximately 1sq.m at a time ensuring all the area is covered.

Fix your ceramic tiles to the adhesive-covered area (**fig. 7**). With your spacer check they're equally arranged (**fig. 5**).

Use a spirit level to see that the tiles are flat. Place it across each row and diagonally (**fig. 8**).

If a tile is higher than the others, tap with a rubber hammer until level. If a tile is too low, lift and reapply adhesive.

Helpful hint..

Occasionally lift a tile to check a solid bed has been achieved. Hollow areas will create weak spots in the finished floor.

Once you're finished, leave the tile adhesive to set. Drying times may vary, depending on drying conditions and thickness of the adhesive and type supplied.

Remove the wood border with a claw hammer.

5 CUTTING TILES FOR YOUR BORDER

Place a full tile upside down on top of the last full tile so that it overhangs and touches the wall. Mark this tile at the point where it overlaps the one beneath. This will show the size that the tile needs to be cut to (**fig. 9**). Don't forget to allow for the spacers.

You can use an electric tile cutter to cut your ceramic tiles or a manual cutter both available from DTW Ceramics UK Ltd.

If the cut is more complicated then use a tile saw.

Place tile adhesive to the back of the border tiles rather than on the floor.

6 GROUTING YOUR CERAMIC TILES

Allow for the tile adhesive to dry before you grout the tiles, drying time depends on type of adhesive used.

Mix up the grout - follow the pack instructions. Use a rubber-edged squeegee to fill the spaces with the grout. Hold at a 45-degree angle (**fig. 10**).

Have a damp sponge to hand as you go. Wipe any wet grout off the surface of the tiles, but take care not to remove the grout from the tile joints where you've applied it (**fig. 11**).

7 MAINTAINING YOUR GROUT

If your grout cracks you can't just grout over it, unfortunately! With a grout remover, take away at least two-thirds of the depth of the old grout first. Once you've done that, you can reapply your new grout.

If any excess grout remains on the tiles, this can easily be removed by using one of our many products combined with a nylon scrub pad. If your tiles are decorative, it's a good idea to test your cleaning product on a spare tile first. That way you can check whether the cleaner will damage the design.