

Preparation - The Surface

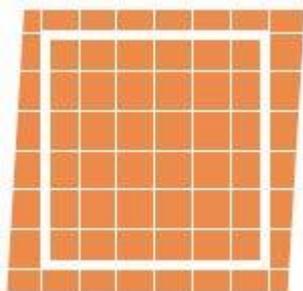
For a good result, it's critical that the floor is flat, clean, dry and rigid. The ideal surface to install your floor tiles on is a smooth concrete floor that has had at least a month to dry out, but with a little bit of work most floors can be tiled successfully.

For all timber floors it's recommended that you screw and glue fibre cement board (eg Tile and Slate underlay) to provide a suitable surface for tiling. In wet areas (eg bathrooms and kitchens) you'll need to waterproof by applying a damp-proof membrane before installing your floor tiles. The actual specifications will depend on local council requirements.

It is important to remove any flex in a floor before tiling as any movement will lead to possible grout and floor tile fractures. It may be that more floor joists or further strengthening of the existing joints by noggins are needed. A floor that has any movement in it should not be tiled.

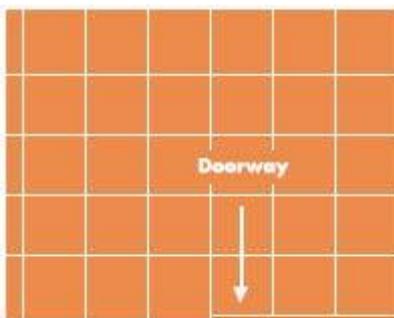
Principles – Floor Tile Layout

Unless the length and width of your floor are an exact multiple of the size of your floor tile (which is very rare), normally the look you're trying to achieve is to have a set of full floor tiles in a rectangle in the centre of the floor with cut tiles around the edges (see Figure 1). As walls are often not square, cuts at both ends, rather than a full tile at one end and a cut one at the other, normally look best as changes in the width of the cut floor tile are less visible.



Exaggerated view of whole tiles in centre: Cuts all around

There are some instances where it is more attractive to start with full floor tiles at a very visible line (eg where tiles and carpet meet, or in an entrance way) or when the cut tiles on the opposite wall will be covered (eg by furniture).



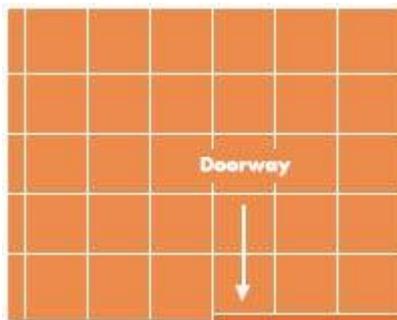
Full floor tiles starting from a wide doorway

Preparation – Laying out

For a square or rectangular room 1. You need to establish a horizontal and vertical tiling guide to tile up to by stretching a chalk line just above the floor between the centres of two facing walls. Flick the line, then repeat for the other two walls. This will create the guides which must cross the centre of the room at an exact 90 angle (you can check with a builder's square and readjust as necessary).

2. Starting at one end along either the horizontal or vertical line, test-lay the floor tiles side by side along the floor, with appropriate spacing. If less than the width of half a tile remains between the last full tile and the wall or end, move the centre point half a tile width in the other direction. This will give a more attractive finish by setting a larger piece of the tile at each end.

3. Repeat along the other line.



Move line half a tile width for larger wall cut

Installation – Laying the Floor Tiles

1. Choose a starting point, either one edge or the centre, and using an appropriately sized notched trowel spread tile adhesive evenly over a small area at a time. We can advise you of the correct sized trowel.

2. Working in one quadrant, and constantly checking that the lines of the floor tiles are straight and square, lay all full tiles before moving onto the next quadrant. If needed, place tile spacers in order to achieve consistent gaps between tiles.

3. Once all full floor tiles have been laid, do not allow excess adhesive to dry, instead wipe it away immediately.

4. It is recommended that you leave the full tiles to dry for several hours before laying cut tiles so they do not move when you walk on them. Important things to note are to allow for the width of grout lines when measuring, to support the floor tile while making the cuts, and to expect that floor tiles will be more difficult to cut than wall tiles as they are normally stronger, denser and thicker. If you need to cut irregular shapes, you may need to use a contour gauge or make cardboard patterns to transfer onto a tile. If you need to cut curves

or notches, refer to step 4 in the [wall tiles installation section](#).

5. If you choose to have the cuts made for you, call your Heritage Tiles store to find out about getting them professionally cut.

Installation - Grouting and Sealing

1. Grout must only be applied once the adhesive has dried completely, usually after 24 hours. If used, tile spacers should be removed wherever possible before grouting.

2. Grout must be mixed according to the manufacturer's instructions. It is advisable to add a latex grout additive to the mix instead of water when tiling over timber floors and areas where extra resilience, stain resistance and mould resistance is needed. For porous terracotta floor tiles and unglazed floor tiles it is also important to check both the way you grout, and the tile and grout compatibility, as grout can stain these tiles. If you are unsure, just ask Heritage Tiles staff for advice.

3. Spread grout diagonally over gaps using a squeegee (See Figure 4). You may need to force grout into the gaps.



4. Once you have filled the gaps, wipe off all excess grout with a clean damp sponge. When grout is touch-dry, clean again with wet sponge to ensure tiles are clean.

5. You will need to remove grout from the joint where the wall and floor meet, and fill with silicone to minimize cracking caused by movement. A range of silicones that match grout colours are available.

6. After the grout has completely dried on the floor tiles, clean them with a dry cloth. Once thoroughly dry, we advise you apply a silicone sealer to the grout to minimize discolouration on lighter coloured grout.