



# Field Guide to Tile

## WHY TILE?

There's a reason professionals and homeowners alike have used ceramic, porcelain and glass tiles for centuries. Tiles turn floors, walls, countertops and patios from blank canvases to personalized masterpieces residing at the intersection of art and architecture.

So whether you're installing a backsplash to give your kitchen a touch of character, looking for a durable, slip-resistant solution for your bathroom, or considering a dramatic accent for any space at hand, tile is the perfect fit for every project. Use this guide to help with those important decisions you need to make before heading out to the store or consulting a designer or other professional.

## STEP 1: WHERE WILL YOU PUT THE TILE?

Are you giving your living room floors a style update or are you adding the finishing touches to your pool? How about a textured metallic wall in the dining room for extra drama? Tile can go virtually anywhere.



### On the Floor?

Easy to maintain, durable and moisture resistant, tile is an excellent flooring option for any room. Plus, the endless design options — and the fact that each piece is carefully hand laid — let you customize your look more than any other floor covering.



### On the Wall?

Add some flair to a room with a decorative wall or backsplash tile. These tiles don't have to be as durable because they don't see the same daily wear and tear as floor tiles — meaning the decorative options are absolutely eye-popping. Metallics. Linen finishes. 3-D tiles. Large formats. On the walls, the world is your oyster ... even mother-of-pearl is an option in tile!



### Inside?

Tiles can go anywhere under your roof. The kitchen and the bathroom are popular choices, but remember: tile adds intrigue to a living room, makes a bold statement in a bedroom and boosts durability to utility rooms like your laundry room or mudroom — and anywhere there are kids or pets!



### Outside?

Because of its slip and moisture resistance, tile also excels in all climates and conditions. Plus, whether it's a patio or a pool, tile gives the performance you need with the looks you want.



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## STEP 2: WHAT'S YOUR BUDGET?

With tile, advances in HD printing and other manufacturing technologies mean that many times you can get the look you really want for less than you may think! So, make an honest appraisal of your budget before heading out to the tile store and be prepared to share that information with your sales professional or designer. They'll be able to steer you to the materials that will meet both your décor and financial plans.

## STEP 3: WHAT'S YOUR STYLE?

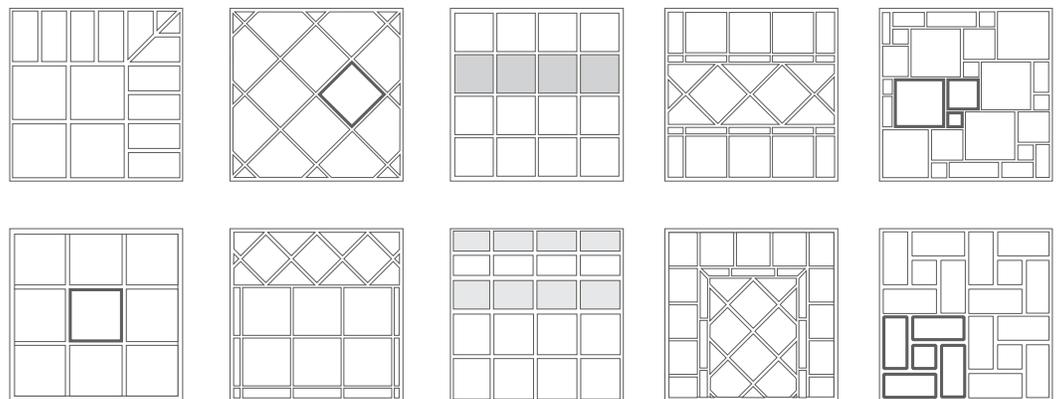
Tile gives you the look you want in any room. From rustic wood-look floors in the bedroom to a more industrial take on design with metal-look tile walls in the living room, tile allows your creative streak to run wild. Whatever look you're going for, there are tiles that will fit it perfectly.

Take a look at the [Inspiration Gallery](#) to get a feel for the styles you like and, just as importantly, what you don't like.

When you're actually selecting your tile, focus on its size, color and texture, as each affect how your space will look as well as how many tiles you'll need.

## STEP 4: PICK A PATTERN

After you've found just the right style and the right sizes, it's time to get creative with patterns — the layout of your tile. You can mix and match long tiles with short tiles, square tiles with rectangular ones, or just go for a classic design. Be sure to download our [Designing Minds Tile Schematic PDF](#) at for ideas.



## STEP 5: DON'T FORGET THE GROUT

Try several grout colors. You'll be amazed at how they can change the look of your space. Like a tie or scarf coordinates with your clothing ensemble, grout can tie together the other color elements in a room. But remember, contrasting colors also highlight every variation in tile size and position while colors coordinating with the tile create a more seamless surface.



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## STEP 6: HOW MUCH TILE WILL YOU NEED? A SIMPLE CALCULATOR

To find out how many boxes of tile you'll need, begin by calculating the square footage of the area you plan to cover. Then, divide this number by the coverage or square feet per box and add another 10 percent for cuts and breakage during installation. Talk with an installer or tile salesperson about your layout, room shape and design to fine-tune the amount of tile you will need.

### HOW TO CALCULATE THE SQUARE FOOTAGE

This part is simple: Just measure the width and length of the area to be covered in feet. Then, multiply those two numbers to get square feet.

$$\text{Length: } \boxed{\phantom{000}} \times \text{Width: } \boxed{\phantom{000}} = \boxed{\phantom{000}} \text{ sq ft}$$

### HOW TO CALCULATE THE AMOUNT OF TILE

$$\boxed{1.10} \times \boxed{\phantom{000}} = \boxed{\phantom{000}} / \boxed{\phantom{000}} = \boxed{\phantom{000}} \text{ Boxes of Tile including recommended 10\% extra}$$

**Total Square Footage**                      **Tile Box Square Footage**

Don't be afraid to purchase extra for the future. Tile dye lots and sizing vary from run to run, so having a little extra in the garage will make you look like a genius if you do any remodeling in the future.

## STEP 7: HOW TO FIND THE BEST INSTALLER

Tile floors and surfaces are an investment in your home. To realize all the wonderful benefits of tile, of course it needs to be installed correctly. While many projects are perfect for the weekend DIYer, if you plan to hire an installer, you want to be sure they are qualified for the work at hand. That alone goes a long way toward protecting your investment and ensuring your tile looks great for years to come. Here are qualities to consider when choosing the right installer.

- Operates a legitimate business, with reasonable business practices and a policy of standing behind their work
- Carries all required business licenses and insurance
- Has a traceable business location so customers can be sure post-installation questions and issues are addressed and resolved
- Has a track record for quality and service: ask for customer references and recommendations from suppliers and peers
- Has a portfolio of completed projects
- Participates in continuing education necessary to stay up to date on current building codes, regulations, standards, materials and methods
- (Extra credit) Participates in tile industry programs or associations known for their continuing education, examples include CTEF (Ceramic Tile Education Foundation), IMI (International Masonry Institute), IUBAC (International Union of Bricklayer and Allied Craftworkers), NTCA (National Tile Contractors Association) and TCAA (Tile Contractors' Association of America)



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## CHECKLIST

Take this checklist with you to the showroom or share it with your designer or contractor. Filling it out will help you think through your project and make sure you remember every detail.

**DESCRIBE THE SPACE BEING CONSIDERED FOR TILE** (e.g., kitchen, bathroom, living room, bedroom, entryway, mudroom/laundry room, hallway, patio, pool, walkway) and the adjoining spaces. As part of this description, consider exposure to water and/or dirt, entry/exit points if relevant and the substrate in the area being tiled.

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How many square feet (see page 3) \_\_\_\_\_ sq ft

Total budget \_\_\_\_\_

I'M INTERESTED IN THESE LOOKS:

I DISLIKE THESE LOOKS:

THINGS TO TAKE WITH YOU TO THE TILE STORE/SHOWROOM:

- Photos of your space
- Pictures from magazines or the internet that inspire you
- Paint color swatches
- Fabric swatches
- Hardware samples
- Cabinet color examples