



William Morris Tile

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Ceramic Tile Installation Instructions

General

Tiles can be installed on walls in kitchens, bathrooms, any interior wall. They make excellent backsplashes and fireplace surrounds. The tile surface should be reasonably protected from scratches and should be cared for as you would care for granite countertops or the finish of your kitchen appliances such as your microwave or refrigerator. The finishes are tough and durable but they do need to be protected from scratching. A quick list of cautions during installation:

- *Do not apply any type of tape to the face of the tiles as the chemicals used for adhesive of the tape may have an effect on the glaze. This is rare but has happened.*
- *Do not lay tiles face down on any hard surface. If you need to lay tiles face down, lay them on a towel.*
- *Do not place one tile on top of another with the backside of one tile touching the face of another.*
- *Do not use abrasive products on your tile. Use only **unsanded** grout for your tile.*
- *Do not allow grout or adhesive to dry on your tile.*
- *Do not allow mastic, thinset, epoxy, or chemicals to remain in contact with the surface of your tiles. If such materials come in contact with the tile surface, clean it immediately with clear water.*

Sealer

Ceramic and porcelain tiles are non-porous and do not need sealer. The sealer will not penetrate the ceramic or porcelain tiles as they do stone tiles. Since the tile does not absorb sealer, it will wash off the first time you clean your tiles. To seal the grout, which you will want to do in kitchens and showers, apply the sealer to the grout lines only with a thin brush and immediately wipe off any sealer that gets on the tile before it dries. Use a soft cloth or sponge to wipe the sealer off the tile faces.

Installation Adhesive

You can use any *unsanded* tile adhesive to mount your tiles. Tile adhesive is available from your local hardware or home improvement store. **Do not allow the adhesive to dry on the face of the tiles.** Wipe the tile clean of all adhesive that gets on the face immediately after you adhere them to the tile to the wall.

Grouting

You must use *unsanded* grout to prevent scratching the surface of the tiles. This is not the default and bears repeating. The sand in sanded grout is very abrasive and will have a negative effect on your installed tiles. You can use any color grout. Use a rubber float when grouting the tiles with *unsanded* grout. After applying the grout, remove the excess grout from the tile faces *immediately* with a grout sponge or cellulose sponge and water.

Do not allow the grout to dry on the face of the tiles. Wipe the tiles clean of all grout residue immediately following the grouting of the tiles. This step will require several passes over a period of an hour or more. Use water only to mix dry powder grout – do not use a grout additive. Be sure to use a soft *rubber* float for applying the grout.

Grout Color

You have several color choices available to you for grout color. A darker color than the tile will make the color stand out pop. Black, however, will show every bit of dust that passes through. If you don't see a color you like, your installer can mix for you to get something more suitable. Grout doesn't keep as well as paint does, so ask to have the materials and proportions written down so you can match the color if you ever need to repair or replace a section of grout.

Light, Heat, and Weather

The tiles are intended for interior use. They probably won't hold up to outside weathering and temperatures. They will work in showers and for backsplashes, like any other stone, with the usual good sealing required for such environments. They are promised to be good to 400 degrees F. A reasonable amount of sunlight won't bother them, but in an area that receives several hours of direct sunlight, you may see some fading over time, especially reds. For example, all those pink flowers on the Talavera tile exterior tile stairs one sees in California – those were originally deep or bright red. Generally, if you are comfortable in the area where you install the tiles, the tiles will be comfortable, too, and last a good long time.

These tiles are not suitable for floors or countertops. They will not break but there will be little tiny scuff marks in the glaze, which will make it look dull. If installed in a kitchen or bathroom (even a shower), the grout will definitely need special sealing. A professional installer will know about this.

Cleaning Your Tiles

You can clean these tiles with any *non-abrasive* cleaners. Even an abrasive cleanser won't hurt them, but ceramic tiles won't be as shiny and a close inspection will show the scrub marks. I have used both a mixture of water and vinegar and water and diluted dish soap when they seemed greasy in my kitchen. I think I prefer the diluted vinegar solution, but both are fine.

Clean and treat your tiles just as you would the surface of any non-stainless steel appliance, such as your microwave or refrigerator surface.

Laying out your tile

It can be helpful to lay out your tiles on a flat surface near where you will be installing your tiles or mural.

On the Horizontal: This will allow you to adjust the grout width to accommodate the installation width of your tile. You will be using *unsanded* grout, which will accommodate grout spacing of about 1/8 inch, maybe a smidge more. You can use this grout spacing to your advantage if you do not want to fill in with field tile on the sides of your mural.



On the vertical: For murals, choose the height where you want your midline to be, much as you would when you are hanging a picture. Next, mark the bottom edge of the area to be tiled. Measure the distance from the bottom edge of the mural or tile rows to the floor. Divide that number by the size of your field tile plus your grout spacing. If the remainder on your division is small, it will be necessary to cut very small pieces of field tile to fill in, which is difficult and looks unplanned. By adjusting the vertical height of your mural an inch or two, you avoid having small shards of tile along the bottom border. The same process works for the space between the top of the mural and the top of your tile border. Adjust as necessary.