



## DIY BASIC GUIDE

# HOW TO INSTALL HANDMADE TILE

### TOOLS & MATERIALS CHECKLIST

- Mortar  
**ProLite**  
by Custom Building Products
- Grout  
**PRISM Ultimate Performance**  
by Custom Building Products  
or **Power Grout** by TEC
- Sealer (optional)  
**511 Porus Plus**
- Grout Release (optional)  
by Custom Building Products
- Wet Saw (for clean cuts)
- 3/8" Notched Trowel
- Rubber Float
- Mixing Bucket
- Fresh Water Bucket
- Sponge
- Toothbrush
- Old Towel
- Blue Painters Tape
- Rubber Gloves
- Apron

### NEED HELP?

Please contact us.  
612-781-6409

11-5 CST Monday - Saturday  
josh@claysquared.com

### 1. VERIFY YOUR ORDER



Please verify that your order is correct and complete as soon as it arrives. Make sure no tiles have broken in transport or that any tiles are missing. Contact us if there are any issues.

### 2. SELECT A SURFACE

The best surface to put tile on is poured concrete or concrete board (Durock or Hardibacker).



**KITCHENS:** Use Denseshield or Hardibacker concrete board.

**FIREPLACES:** Use concrete board for the walls. For the hearth use self leveling concrete or concrete board, 3/8"-5/8" thickness minimum.

**FLOORS:** Use poured concrete, self leveling concrete or concrete board, 3/8"-5/8" thickness minimum. Make sure there is no sealer on the concrete.

**BATHROOMS:** Use concrete board for the walls. For the floors use self leveling concrete or concrete board, 3/8"-5/8" thickness minimum. Make sure there is no sealer on the concrete.

### 3. LAYOUT YOUR PROJECT

Please do not pull directly from the box and set tiles. For better results and less confusion consider making a cardboard or wood template of your space.



Lay out the tiles for your project. Make sure they fit your measurements, and arrange them to enhance the variation. Making guildleing on the wall using a laser guide or chalk line will help you keep the tiles straight and level.

### 4. LOCATE CUTS

Cutting tile is a common part of any tile job. Find a the tiles you need to cut and mark them on the back with a pencil.



We recommend using a wet saw with the glazed side down. If any chips occur it will be on the back not the glazed side.

### 5. PREPARE YOUR SURFACE

To sucessfully apply tile the surface needs to be clean of oil, grease, dust, paint, sealers, and loose or peeling paint.

### 6. MIX MORTAR

We recommend a thinsset Mortar. Wear rubber gloves, and follow manufacturer instructions on box. Only mix as much mortar as you can use in 20-30 minutes. After mixing it should have a peanut-butter consistency. We do not recommend premixes.

## 7. SPREAD MORTAR



Use a notched trowel to spread mortar mixture across the prepared surface, creating combed rows. To guarantee full coverage “back butter” the tiles (thinly apply mortar to the tile back). When pressed into the combed rows it will suction to the wall or floor making it very secure from movement or sliding.



**Handmade Tile:** All our tile is nominal (sized to accommodate grout line) in size and is meant to be used with a 1/4” grout

**Mid-Century Tile:** These tiles are meant to be used with a 1/8” grout line. They have built in spacers on the edges of each field tile.

**Flat Edge Tile:** They are made to have very tight grout joints between 1/16 - 1/8. You will need a rubber float to push the grout deep into the joints.

## LET TILES SET FOR 48 HOURS.

## 9. MATTE/DIMENSIONAL TILE

Apply masking tape to face of dimensional or matte tiles prior to grouting. This speeds cleanup, preventing grout from sticking to unglazed and dimensional groves. Remove tape after grout has been cleaned.

## 10. CHOOSE GROUT

Grout is the concrete filler between the joints. It is not an adhesive. It is the finishing product to make your installation look great. We recommend Prism Grout by Custom Building Products or Power Grout by TEC.

**Color:** You also want to consider if your tile is warm or cool and choose grout with the same tone. For Prism Grout we recommend Natural Grey #09 for cool colors and Deloran Grey #165 for warm ones. For Power Grout we recommend Standard Grey for cool colors and Deloran Grey for warm ones.

**Sanded:** Used for joints 1/8” and larger. It should be used with our Handmade Tile.

**Unsanded:** Used for joints 1/8” and smaller. It should be used with our Mid-Century Tile and Flat Edge Tile.

**Epoxy:** A special case. It is used for wet surfaces and where two different surfaces meet up so there is flexibility as they expand and contract with weather.

## 11. FILL GROUT JOINTS



Wear rubber gloves. Force grout diagonally into joints with a rubber grout float. Ensure joints are completely filled. Wipe clean with a towel until grout haze is entirely gone. **Use very minimal or no water to clean grout.**

## 12. CURE GROUT

Many grouts already have sealers built in and do not require sealing. If you do want to apply sealer allow Grout to cure for 24 hours before using tiled surface or applying additional sealers.

## CLEAN-UP

Always clean your hands, tools, and buckets with a separate bucket of clean water.

**DO NOT DUMP any mortar or grout water in the sink-it destroys the plumbing.**

## 13. EMAIL US PHOTOS



We would love to see how your project turned out! You can email [josh@claysquared.com](mailto:josh@claysquared.com) with any images.

Disclaimer: We are not tile setters. We do follow and recommend the TCNA ([www.tcnatile.com](http://www.tcnatile.com)) standards for installation.

## 8. SPACERS



For spacing out tiles we recommend wedge spacers. They come in many different sizes to accommodate both historic and handmade tile. They also help prevent tile slippage on vertical surfaces.