



Tile Mountain



ESSENTIAL TILING TOOLS CHECKLIST

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Embarking upon a tiling project requires a lot of planning – not only have you got to measure up your space, choose some suitable tiles, and make sure you have the correct grout and adhesive, you must also ensure you have the right tools for the job. If deciding on what equipment you need to complete a large or small tiling project is a daunting prospect then don't worry as help is at hand in the form of this handy tiling tools guide...

A lot of tiling tools are quite versatile and can be used whether tiling a wall, floor, splashback, wetroom or whatever. These lists however aim to provide you with a checklist of all the things you can't start a job without.



Tape Measure

Measuring up accurately is perhaps the most important task when tackling a tiling project – after all, once those tiles have been cut and adhered to your substrate there's no going back. Make sure you have a good quality tape measure (with no obscured markings) before you start and measure both the surfaces you intend to tile on to and the tiles themselves before moving on to the next task. Once you've done that, measure the lot again to ensure that you don't end up with a nasty surprise when you begin to dry lay your tiles.



Pencil

People are always saying that it's important to make your mark on the wall, well it's important to make your mark on the tiles too as you could wind up with a load of shonky cuts, inaccurate guide lines, and off-centre holes for pipes if you don't measure and mark up accurately. Make sure you have a couple of pencils lying about when in the midst of your tiling project so there's always one within reach. We recommend investing in a [pack of chinagraph pencils](#) – they're great for marking on hard, glossy surfaces such as ceramic and porcelain.



Tile Cutters (Rail)

Unless you have perfectly equal walls or floors, at some point you're going to have to cut a few tiles. Some of the more hardy tiles such as Quartz tiles may need to be cut using a wet wheel cutter, but most can be cut with precision using a [Rail Cutter](#). These simple devices are very easy to use – most variants incorporate a scribe wheel; a wheel construed from hard material such as tungsten carbide which is dragged over the tile to 'score' it. The 'breaking arm' is then pushed down after scribing to break the tile along the straight mark. Rail tile cutters available in a variety of sizes too, so no matter how big or small your tiles, you will be able to cut them to whatever dimensions you require. For smaller, more fiddly cuts though, you'll definitely need the next item in the list...



Tile Nippers

You're likely to require almost as many irregular cuts as you are straight ones throughout the course of your project, and that's where Tile Nippers come into their own. These pliers-like handheld tools are perfect for gripping and nipping small chunks of tile in a controlled fashion, meaning you can snip away and create the cut that you require in order to tile around pipes, sanitary ware, and light fittings etc.



Tile Spacers

There's nothing worse than selecting some aesthetically pleasing tiles and expertly cutting and laying them only to find that your spacing is all off-kilter when it comes to grouting. Such DIY disasters are avoidable though with the help of just a few small bits of plastic. Yes, [Tile Spacers](#) are incredibly handy little things that, as their name suggests, help you equally space tile during installation. Spacers are generally cross-shaped and come in a variety of sizes from 1mm to 6mm, and are used by either pushing between four corners of adjoining tiles or turned on edge and positioned where the edge of one tile sits atop of another.



Bucket

If you think you're going to complete a tiling project without getting at least a little bit messy then think again. Mixing both adhesive and grout involves a bit of water but you can minimise the amount of mess you make by ensuring you have a respectable receptacle to mix it in. Don't be tempted to cut corners and use an old washing up bowl – it'll do the job but you will get stuff EVERYWHERE. Save yourself from a huge post-job clean-up operation by investing in a sturdy bucket in which to do your mixing. We stock a couple from Mapei, [a 10L variant](#) for 'everyday' projects and [a massive 25L version](#) for bigger jobs. Both feature a handy measuring gauge, so you can get your quantities spot on



Mixing Paddle

Although not strictly essential a mixing paddle is always a good tool to have in your arsenal as it'll save you a lot of effort when mixing grout and adhesives. Sure, you can do that manually with a trowel or an improvised stirrer but a proper, designed-for-the-task-in-hand mixing paddle will ensure that materials are mixed effectively and shave quite a bit off the time it takes to complete your project. Mixing paddles are usually constructed from high-grade steel and are designed to fit most power drills.



Grout Float

Not to be confused with a truck carrying a steel drum band during a carnival or the preposterous American beverage that combines ice cream and soft drinks, this type of float is for use exclusively with tile grout. Consisting of a flat rubber base topped off with a handle, a grout float is a sort of trowel that is used to press the grout in to the gaps in between your freshly laid tiles. The rubber part acts almost like a squeegee and is constructed from that particular material to prevent damage to the tiles when applying grout. They can become quite worn over time and will need replacing, however, they're quite inexpensive so you won't have to break the bank should you need another when the next tiling job comes around.



Notched Trowel

The daddy of the tiling tool world, a Notched Trowel is the only way to spread adhesive on to your substrate. Believe us, nothing else will do (unless you want tiles falling off all over the place). Used for spreading thinset mortar on floors or thicker mastic on to floors, these sturdy trowels are made from steel and feature notches set into one end and the leading edge. Different trowels feature different sized and shaped notches; square notched trowels give a thicker bed would usually be used for floors whereas trowels with curved notches are better for walls. Make sure you choose the right trowel for the job in hand.



Sponge

So you've let the adhesive cure, expertly applied your grout, removed the spacers, and now everything looks great, right? Wrong. There's a good chance that the surfaces of your lovely tiles are covered in grout. That's where a heavy duty sponge comes in handy as you will be able to clean up as you go along. Make sure you buy a proper, dense-celled, [dual-purpose sponge](#) though as those little scourers you have under the sink or the floppy old thing your wash the car with will be no use at removing lingering grout.

So there you have it – these are the basic tools you need to do an adequate tiling job on either walls or floors. Of course, there's other 'nice to have's' such as [Knee Pads](#), [Silicone Guns](#), [Mosaic Backers](#) and, for those tackling large format tiles, [Levelling Clip Systems](#), but the tools listed above should see you right. If you need any further help with your tiling project then check out our [How-To videos](#) or give our friendly customer services team a call on 01782 223822.



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