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YOUR COMPLETE  
GUIDE TO **tiles**



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**INSIDE:**  
**INSPIRATION FOR YOUR HOME**  
**A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO TILES**  
**TACKLE YOUR OWN TILING**  
– A STEP BY STEP GUIDE ON HOW TO TILE

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## WHAT IS TTA?

The Tile Association represents all aspects of the wall and floor tile industry in the UK, from manufacture to installation. It is dedicated to the advancement of all sectors of the tile industry and delivers real advantages to its members and their customers.

The Tile Association is committed to raising standards of product, installation, sales, training and promotion across the industry. Because the TTA will not accept just any company as a member and because each company wishing to join is carefully checked for financial, technical and service standards, the TTA logo sets members apart from "the cowboys".

For everything you need to know about tiles and tiling contact TTA on **0300 365 8453** or go to **[www.tiles.org.uk](http://www.tiles.org.uk)**

The Tile Association  
The Mount, 43 Stafford Road,  
Stone, Staffordshire ST15 0HG.

Email: [info@tile.org.uk](mailto:info@tile.org.uk)



To find more tile  
inspiration go to the  
TTA website at  
**[www.tiles.org.uk](http://www.tiles.org.uk)**

# BEAUTIFUL, STYLISH TILES

Ceramic tiles have been valued for their beauty and durability for centuries. In the ancient civilisations of Egypt, Greece and Rome tiles were used as a functional material and as decoration in the houses of the most important citizens as well as in public buildings such as baths and temples.



## LOVE TILES, CHOOSE TILES

- Smooth wall and floor surfaces are better than soft furnishings for people who suffer from asthma and allergies
- Tiled floors last much longer than carpet
- Tiled floors are ideal for conservatories. They will not fade and heat will not damage their surface or curl them
- Smooth flooring is hygienic and easy to clean
- Tiled walls are very hygienic and safe near cookers and hobs
- Tiled floors are more robust and withstand hard knocks and even large spills
- Some insurance companies are insisting on tiled floors when paying out for flood damage



## USING TILES

Where are we using tiles? Well almost anywhere. Floor tiles, in particular, are being used in every room in the house – and on patios and decks (there are many frost resistant tiles on the market – your TTA supplier will be able to help with all the technical information you need to know about tiles). A porcelain floor tile in a natural stone colour will last a lifetime in a domestic lounge.



# SELECTING YOUR TILES

There are several different types of tile available and they vary in their technical properties. It is essential that you select the correct tile for your situation. If in doubt consult a TTA member.

**GLAZED CERAMIC** - Glazed tiles are the obvious choice for walls in bathrooms, kitchens and laundry areas. Glazed wall tiles come in a wide variety of sizes from tiny mosaics and decorative borders to tiles as large as a metre square. Large tiles will make your room look bigger as there are fewer grout lines. High quality white glazed tiles can be an inexpensive option and look dramatic teamed with vibrant patterned borders.

Glazed floor tiles are beautiful in conservatory floors and in reception rooms but are not suitable for outdoor use or heavy traffic floor areas. They need protecting from the grit brought in on shoes with entry matting if they are anywhere near an external door.

**UNGLAZED CERAMIC** – These are normally used in commercial and industrial settings and are available with slip resistant profiles for wet areas. They are wear, stain and frost resistant. Because they are so robust they are ideal for laundry and utility rooms, bathrooms, playrooms and garages. They will withstand heavy foot and light wheeled traffic. The slip resistant tiles have different profiles for bare feet or shoes; and the more slip resistant they are, the more difficult they are to clean.

**PORCELAIN** – These are the most popular tiles as they are beautiful and extremely hard wearing and often have good anti-slip qualities. They are similar to unglazed ceramic but extremely attractive often produced to look like natural slate stone or even wood laminate. There are both porcelain wall and floor tiles and many ranges that are suitable for either. They are available glazed or even polished. Many ranges have the same colours in matt and gloss effects to let you create subtle pattern effects. They are fired at such high temperature that in the main they are frost resistant and can be used inside or out.

**QUARRY TILE** – The traditional cottage kitchen tile quarry tiles are made from natural clay, some are frost resistant and can be used for floors internally or externally. Their natural clay surface gives good slip resistance and they are extremely hard wearing. Expect to find them in rich warm shades of red and brown with a great deal of natural variation in colour. They do not need sealing and over time will develop their own rich patina.

**TERRACOTTA** - These are made from natural clay in the same way as quarry tiles but they are fired at lower temperatures and vary in water absorbency. Generally they are unsuitable for exterior use in the UK's climate, as they are not frost resistant. Most terracotta tiles need sealing prior to and after laying and your supplier will advise on the products to use. These are much lighter than quarry tiles varying from the terracotta colour of a plant pot to almost white.

## SUSTAINABILITY

Ceramic tile is one of the world's oldest building materials. Tiles are natural clay baked at very high temperatures. Generally considered a sustainable material, ceramic tiles are inert and usually odourless. Tiles in a domestic environment can last a very long time; in fact the lifetime of a tile can extend to hundreds of years as is shown by the number of Roman tiles that have been found. Tiles in themselves are recyclable and some manufacturers are using recycled ceramics in their production. You can also find plenty of second hand tiles in architectural salvage outlets and can use these on their own or team them with new tiles as a feature.



**MOSAIC** - Small pieces of ceramic tile or glass usually sold in sheets on a mesh backing for ease of fixing. You can use these all over a wall or as border tiles. They are very useful for fitting to non square shapes such as purposely curved walls or just an uneven surface.

**NATURAL STONE PRODUCTS, LIMESTONE, MARBLE, GRANITE, SLATE** - These products vary enormously in wearability. Some are extremely hard and others quite soft; some may need sealing and they can vary a great deal in thickness. Your TTA Member can advise on suitability.



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The majority of domestic kitchens feature a tiled splash back between the wall and floor units and behind the hob and sink. If tiles are so practical in these, the hardest working areas of the kitchen, then they are ideal for all other surfaces - by the door where everyone leaves and behind the bin and of course on the floor where tiles are not only hygienic but hard wearing and practical. The newest kitchens are tiled from floor to ceiling making the whole kitchen hygienic, maintenance free and stylish.

The kitchen is the heart of the house and with all those comings and goings; children coming in from the garden, pets sleeping in the corner, tiled floors are so practical. For extra hygiene you may want to choose grout with antibacterial additives for food preparation areas. Tiles will not catch fire and can withstand extremely high temperatures so they are ideal behind hobs and near cookers.

For kitchen floors, choose porcelain tiles which will withstand knocks and spills and be easy to clean or, in an older house, particularly a cottage, choose traditional quarry tiles with rich warm tones.



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ABOVE RIGHT: Minoli Estampa Series 25x40 white body glazed wall tiles with co-ordinating floor tiles and mosaic pre-cut wall tiles. Tel: 01865 77 82 25 [www.minoli.co.uk](http://www.minoli.co.uk)

# MAKE A SPLASH

Nothing looks more luxurious than a bathroom tiled wall to floor. Gone are the days when only the shower area and behind the sink were tiled.

For floors it has to be tiles; you don't have to worry about the shower curtain dripping and spills are so easy to clean up.



RIGHT: Stonedesign – wall format is 250x400mm combination colour Beige and Moka with pre-cut mosaic effect tiles and listellos. The floor is a colour co-ordinated, hardwearing glazed porcelain, all available from EMC Tiles Nottingham. Tel: 0115 977 0155

# SHOWERS & WET ROOMS

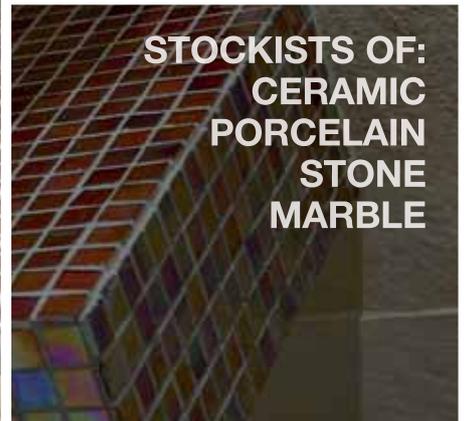


TOP RIGHT: Chic tiles, wetroom shower system, Finesse glass panel and Pure sanitaryware range all by N&C Group of Companies. [www.ncdirect.co.uk](http://www.ncdirect.co.uk)

Tiles are the obvious choice. Fixed to a water resistant background they provide a surface that is easy to clean and won't be harmed by water splashes. No need to worry if the shower curtain drips or you spill body lotion on the floor. Tiles can help you create walk in showers that are large enough not to need a shower curtain or door.

Or you can design your bathroom without a shower area at all by making it into a wetroom. This, the very latest trend, is where the whole of the bathroom is the shower and there is no shower screen or curtain. The water flows into a drain in the centre of the floor. To do this the whole room must be tanked (made waterproof) so do consult a competent tile fixer. In use this is extremely practical and very suited to minimalist high tech city apartments.

When fixing tiles in wet areas such as in showers and wetrooms it is *essential* to tile onto an already water resistant background. Sand/cement render, dense concrete or water resistant tile backer board are ideal backgrounds. Plaster, plasterboard, timber and timber-based products such as MDF or plywood are absorbent and should be made waterproof by the use of a waterproofing or tanking system. Failure to do this is currently the most common cause of tiling failures in domestic bathrooms.



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# THE ART OF LIVING

Tiling through from the kitchen into the dining room and living room with the same floor tile creates a sense of space and means you don't have to worry about spills. Tiles don't collect dust or trap animal hair, neither do they harbour smells from cigarettes or last night's curry. You can change the colour emphasis in individual rooms with rugs.

Tiled floors are ideal for conservatories. They will not fade and heat will not damage their surface or curl them.





# ALL ABOUT ADHESIVES & GROUTS



The choice and suitability of the correct tile adhesives and grout depends upon the size and type of tile, the nature of the substrate and the conditions to which the tile installation will be subjected. It is important to select the correct adhesive, so do consult your TTA tile supplier.

Why grout? Basically the majority of surfaces will move or expand and contract and as tiles are rigid, a space is needed to take up that movement. The space needs to be filled for aesthetic reasons and to stop ingress of water and dirt.



## TILE ON TIMBER FLOORS

Modern houses may present the challenge of having to bond tiles to a range of dry lining partition wall systems and composite joist and board overlay products for floors. In older properties timber joists and floor boards create a similar challenge. The majority of these floors can be tiled but do consult your tile and adhesive supplier.

In general the floor needs to be stable with normal humidity levels and needs to be physically capable of bearing the extra weight. The floor is then overlaid with a proprietary intermediate substrate to separate the tiles from the floor, eliminating cracking and crazing caused by movement and differential rates of expansion and contraction due to temperature changes.

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# STYLISH NEW PRODUCTS

Tiles are getting bigger and bigger, particularly floor tiles. Beiges and neutral colours are still popular especially for smaller rooms but there are some wonderfully vibrant tiles on the market with colours across the spectrum. The majority of ranges are plain tiles with pattered borders or panels but for those who want a bolder statement there are plenty of strong patterns, particularly florals, in bright colours. These can be used all over or to create feature panels or borders. Look, particularly, for metallic effects and vibrant glass mosaics.



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For something really different look for the stunning ranges available from the many artisan tile makers in the UK. These hand made products are truly unique and you can probably commission your own design.





Tile Fixer of the Year 2015 -  
Andy Oates from Stortford  
Tiling & Marble (Right)

Although The Tile Association publishes a guide to DIY tile fixing, it strongly advises consumers to have their tiles fixed professionally. Professional tiling will give the finishing touch to a well designed kitchen and make a beautiful bathroom really stunning.

When choosing a tile fixer, remember, a plumber isn't a tiler, a plasterer isn't a tiler and a kitchen fitter isn't a tiler. The Tile Association recommends that all tile fixing work is carried out in accordance with the British Standard code of practice for wall and floor tiling, BS5385. Do check that your tiler understands the standard and adheres to it.

The Tile Association doesn't just accept anyone into their ranks. Every business wishing to join has its financial health and company reputation checked out. Fixers and tiling contractors will need to provide customer references and some projects may be inspected.

Finish the job properly – choose a tile fixer who is a member of The Tile Association. You'll find a list at [www.tiles.org.uk](http://www.tiles.org.uk)



# CHOOSING A TILE FIXER





## CLEANING & MAINTENANCE KNOW-HOW

One of the significant advantages that ceramic tiles have over other wall and floor finishes, is that they can be readily maintained in a clean, hygienic condition. Dirt, particularly gritty dirt and corrosive chemicals, can damage tiles so all tiled floors should be cleaned on a regular basis.

### UNGLAZED FLOOR TILES OR QUARRIES

Use a Ph neutral cleaning agent. Excessively acidic or alkaline products can cause damage over time. The cleaning solution should be allowed to remain on the floor for sufficient time to allow it to penetrate and emulsify the dirt, after which it should be removed by rinsing thoroughly with clean water.

### GLAZED FLOOR AND WALL TILES

Any loose dirt or grit should first be removed from the surface with a dry cloth or brush followed by warm water to which a neutral, low sulphate detergent has been added. This should be followed by a final rinsing with clean water. Abrasive powders which may scratch the glaze must not be used.

*It is the rinsing process which removes the dirt.*



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# WEBSITE LISTINGS

# TILE IT RIGHT – YOUR GUIDE TO TILING

## HOW MANY TILES DO YOU NEED?

You will need to work out the area to be tiled. TTA stockists will be able to help you to calculate the number of tiles you will need for your project. You can also use our handy conversion chart.

Tiles are produced in batches, and it is important to make sure you have enough tiles from the same batch for your project, so order slightly more than you need. Any extras can be stored for future repairs.

Note: exact tile sizes can vary from manufacturer to manufacturer and some can include the joint width in their calculation of tiles/metre. Therefore the table must only be used as a guide and is not a definitive statement of fact.



TILE SIZE METRIC (mm)	TILES PER m <sup>2</sup>
100x100	100
150x50	134
150x150	44
150x200	33
200x100	50
200x200	25
200x250	20
200x285	18
225x150	29
250x150	27
250x250	16
250x330	12
300x150	22
300x200	17
300x300	11
333x333	9
400x400	7

**ADHESIVE** – 10 litres covers approximately 7m<sup>2</sup> of tiles. (This may vary depending on the key profile on the back of the tile)

**GROUT** – 3.5 kg covers approximately 8m<sup>2</sup> of tiles (based on using a 150x150x5.5mm tile fixed with a 2mm joint).

## WHAT DO YOU NEED?

At least:

- Spirit level
- Measuring tape
- 5x2.5cm (2"x1") battens for marking out tiles
- Tile cutter
- Pincers for nipping off the edges
- Adhesive spreader
- Grouting squeegee
- Sponge
- Spacer pegs

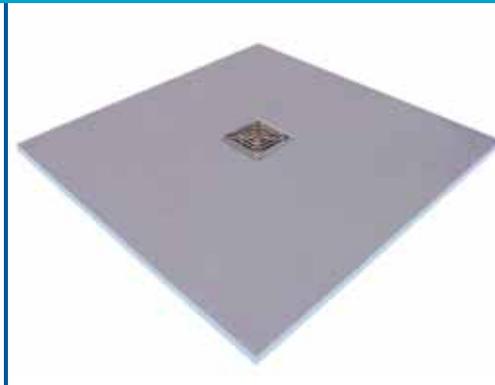
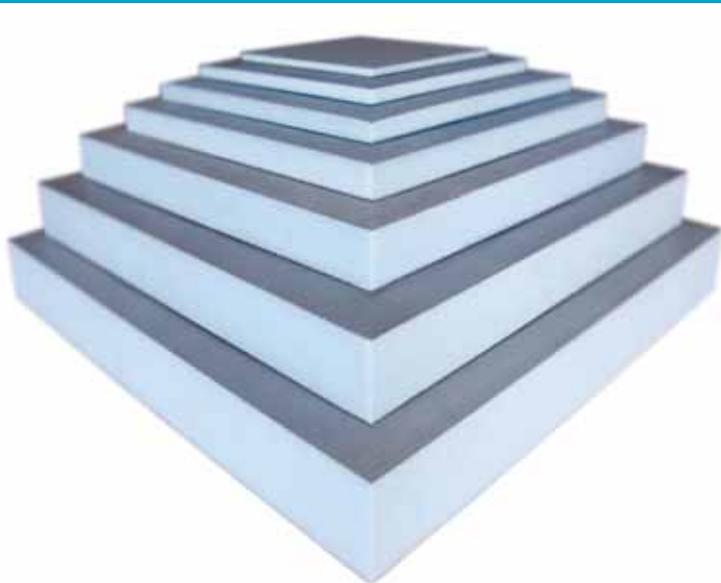
A tile saw may be required for natural stone products, limestone, marble, granite slate etc.

These accessories will make a more professional job:

- Tile edge profiles (available in coloured PVC and metals)
- Bath/workshop seal
- Pre-formed movement and control joint profiles



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# WALL TILES

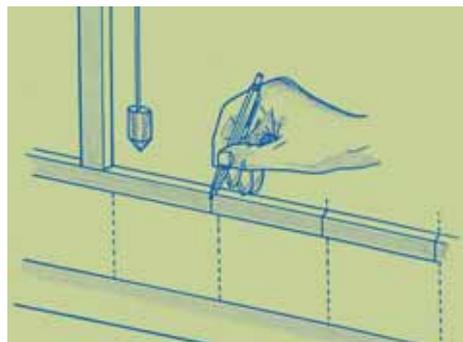
## PREPARATION

You will need a perfectly flat surface for tiling. Do not cut corners – preparing the surface is vital.

(a) New plaster should be left for 4 weeks and be thoroughly dry before tiling. Old plaster is suitable, provided it is sound.

(b) Plasterboard is suitable for walls provided it is well supported with the board being a minimum of 12.5 mm.

(c) Painted surfaces. It is very important to make a detailed examination of the surface, as the permanent success of the installation is dependent on good adhesion between the paint and the surface to which it has been applied and between any substrate and basic structure. Remove any old wall covering and flaking paint. Fill in old cracks and voids with filler. Ensure the surface to be tiled is smooth, clean and free from dust, dirt or grease.



## SETTING OUT

Planning ahead is essential for a good result. Along a length of timber, mark the tile widths to help you identify where the tile will start and finish, remembering to leave space for the joints, which must be at least 2mm wide. Set out horizontal position of the tiles so that the same size cuts are made either side of windows etc. Avoid small difficult cuts as they can spoil the appearance. Plan each wall carefully, remembering that any patterns/designs will need to be matched in the corners of the room. For plain tiles each wall should be centralised avoiding any small cuts.



## OFF YOU GO

1. Find the lowest point of the base you are working to (skirtings, bath top, work surface etc.) with a spirit level.
2. Place a tile against the lowest point and draw a line on the wall along the top of the tile. N.B. The start point of the line will depend on the setting out of the tiles, as the tile against the floor may be a cut tile.
3. Nail the batten along the wall to this line. Use the spirit level to ensure it is level. The first line of tiles will rest on this batten.
4. Draw a vertical (plumb) line at one end of the wall, one tile width away from the edge. Use this to check that the tiles are in line vertically.



## ADHESIVES

There are many different types of adhesive available on the market. As all conditions vary, it is most important that you seek advice so as to use the correct type. Always follow the manufacturers' instructions.

5. Spread the wall tile adhesive using a notched trowel or spreader onto the wall. Work in small areas of about 1 sq. metre at a time, so that tiles are fixed before the surface of the adhesive forms a skin. Press and twist the wall tiles into the adhesive starting at the bottom and working upwards, one row of whole tiles at a time, using spacers (if required) to ensure a uniform joint. Check the horizontal and vertical lines with the spirit level every few rows.

## ADHESIVES & GROUTING

6. Remove surplus adhesive from tile surfaces with a damp sponge and from joints to allow room for grout. When the adhesive has set, remove the batten and complete the tiling.
7. When tiles need to be cut, ask your TTA registered member for a demonstration of the various tools available. There are tile cutters and tile pincers that will help to achieve professional results.



8. In awkward locations it is often easier to apply the wall adhesive onto the back of the tile instead of the wall. For complicated shapes, use cardboard to make a template and transfer the design to the tile.
9. If the tile does not have a glazed edge, a neat finish on external edges and corners can be achieved with the use of tile edge trim incorporated at the time of tiling. To prevent the seepage of water around baths and basins, a plastic sealing strip or silicone sealant should be used.

## GROUTING

Do not begin grouting for at least 12 hours after fixing. There are many types of grout, so ask your TTA member for the correct grout for your application, especially when using highly glazed tiles. Force the grout into the joints using a flexible spreader or grouting sponge. Do not use steel or hard rigid spreaders as these can cause scratching to certain tile glazes. Remove surplus grout from the surface with a sponge and 'peg' the joints with a rounded stick to achieve an even finish. Polish with a dry cloth.



# FLOOR TILES

## PREPARATION

Time spent on proper preparation makes the fixing easier, quicker and ensures a better finish.

## TILING ONTO CONCRETE

New concrete must be at least six weeks old and thoroughly dry before fixing ceramic floor tiles. The surface must be smooth, flat and free from dirt and grease. Uneven surfaces can be improved with levelling compound.

## TILING ONTO WOODEN FLOORS

Existing wooden floors must be rigid, stable and capable of supporting additional load without flexing and have sufficient ventilation beneath them. There are two basic alternative methods to follow:

(a) Overlay the existing timber with 15mm exterior grade plywood, which has been sealed. Fully screw down the plywood at 300mm intervals ensuring all junctions are supported by noggings or joists. Use a flexible adhesive.

(b) Overlay the existing timber with special plastic sheeting and use a flexible adhesive.

A flexible grout is recommended with all of these methods. There are many factors to consider when deciding which method is best suited for your particular circumstances. It is important to seek professional advice.

## TILING ONTO VINYL TILES

Existing vinyl tiles must be free of grease, polish etc., and firmly adhered to the subfloor. The surface of the vinyl tile must be primed and allowed to dry before spreading the adhesive. Also an additive may be used with the adhesive.

## TILING ONTO EXISTING QUARRIES, GLAZED AND UNGLAZED TILES

Existing tiles must be clean, grease free and firmly adhered to the subfloor. An additive should be used with the adhesive and grout when tiling onto glazed tiles.

## SETTING OUT

Planning ahead pays dividends, so spend time on the following:- Laying ceramic floor tiles will raise the level of the finished floor, so if possible remove all fixtures before tiling. Mark a chalk line on the floor down the centre of the room parallel to the most suitable wall (normally this is achieved by viewing the room from the doorway). Lay the tiles down this line and then work towards the wall you think is best, leaving a joint between the tiles of at least 3mm. Tile spacers can be used to achieve a uniform size joint. Avoid small cuts, as they can be difficult to cut and do not look professional.

## CUTTING TILES

Floor tiles are generally harder to cut than wall tiles. Modern tools make the cutting of most types of ceramic tiles simple. Ask your TTA member for a demonstration of all the various aids available.

## ADHESIVES

Use Rapid or Normal setting adhesives. Always consult your TTA member for detailed advice and follow manufacturers' instructions. Mix the adhesive as per manufacturers instructions and spread with a solid bed trowel onto the surface to be tiled. Lay each tile into the adhesive firmly with a slight twisting motion to ensure a solid bed and prevent voids under the tile. Remove surplus adhesive from the tile surface with a damp sponge or cloth. Work in small areas of about 1 sq. metre at a time so that tiles are fixed before the surface forms a skin. Every so often use a spirit level or straight edge to check that the tiles fixed are flat. Remove and adjust the amount of adhesive to achieve a flat surface, but don't leave it too late or the adhesive will set. Leave floor to set before grouting (usually 24 hours unless using a rapid set adhesive). In bathrooms, special attention should be paid to sealing the gap between wall and base, particularly where the location is on a suspended floor. An additive should be used with the adhesive when fixing fully vitrified tiles such as porcelain. Consult your TTA member.

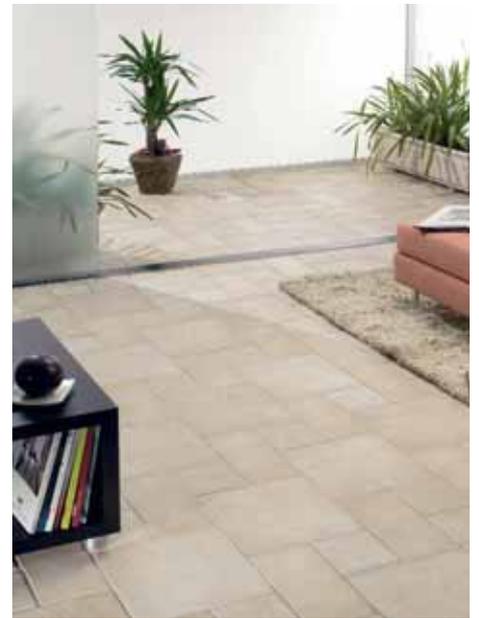
## GROUTING

Do not begin grouting or walk on the floor tiles for at least 24 hours (unless using a rapid set adhesive) to avoid the chance of disturbing the tiles before they have bonded completely with the adhesive. There are many types of grout so ask your TTA member for the correct grout for your application. Force the grout into the joints using a spreader. Remove surplus grout from the surface with a sponge and peg the joints with a rounded stick to achieve an even better finish.

Note:- when grouting tiles on a timber floor, use a water-based polymer admixture to improve flexibility.

## MOVEMENT JOINTS

These joints are 6/8mm wide and filled with a flexible filler, which allow for movement and prevent tile damage. They are normally installed where flooring abuts a wall, steps, columns etc., on large floor areas and over structural movement joints. Floors less than 4 metres between walls will not normally need movement joints.



## MAINTENANCE

With proper care and attention, a correctly installed, good quality ceramic floor tile should give many years trouble-free service. Grit is the biggest enemy of any floor material and a mat adjacent to external doors is strongly recommended. Ask your TTA member for details, as there are numerous maintenance products on the market. Some terracotta, natural stone and slate tiles may need re-sealing. Consult your TTA member. If you wish to engage a professional use a TTA registered tile fixer.

## SPECIAL NOTES

### Porcelain wall and floor tiles

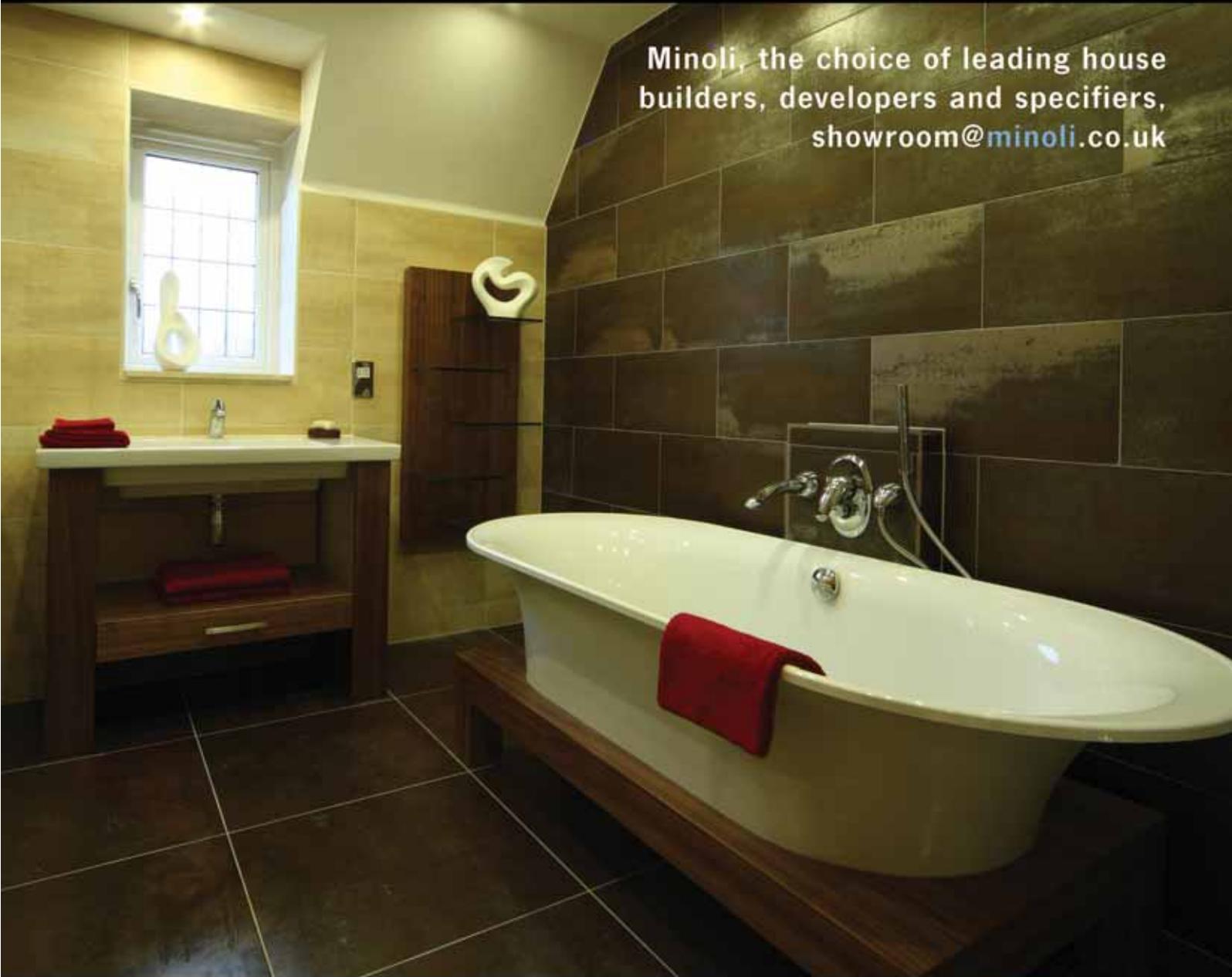
Use a polymer enhanced adhesive meeting the requirements for a cementitious Class C2 adhesive defined in BS EN 12004. Grout meeting the requirements of BS EN 13888 should be applied as defined in BS5385.

## SHOWERS AND WET ROOMS

When fixing tiles in wet areas such as in showers and wetrooms it is essential to tile onto an already water resistant background. Sand/cement render, dense concrete or water resistant tile backer board are ideal backgrounds. Plaster, plasterboard, timber and timber-based products such as MDF or plywood are absorbent and should be made waterproof by the use of a waterproofing or tanking system. Failure to do this is currently the most common cause of tiling failures in domestic bathrooms.

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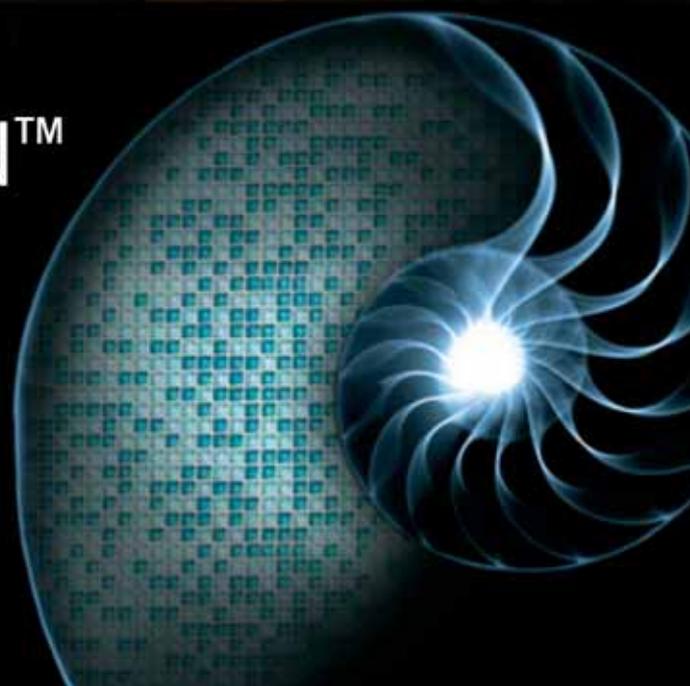


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