

## EPISODE #2011 GROUT AND SHOUT

### Why tile?

Tile is attractive and can be extremely durable, and a great option for high traffic zones.

### Discussion Points

The floor must be strong and rigid. Even minor flexing can cause the grout between tiles to crack.

There are a variety of tile styles to choose from. When you order your tile, make sure you have accurate measurements of the space. A plan drawn out on graph paper can be very helpful.

Order 5 - 8% more tile than you need to allow for cuts and damage. Often the color of glazing will vary shipment to shipment, so if you have to go back later to get more tile you may find that the tile does not match exactly.

You'll also need to select the grout. Grout comes in different colors. If you decide to use a colored grout, be sure that it won't stain the particular tile you've selected. A practical consideration for kitchens or high traffic areas might be a darker grout that does not discolour as easily as a white grout.

### Tools & Supplies needed for the job:

- cement board base
- thin set mortar
- mortar mixer (looks like a giant blender)
- notched trowel, to apply mortar
- tile cutter
- nipper
- grout
- float, to apply the grout
- burlap, to clean up.

### Basic Steps to Consider:

- Remove existing flooring. In some instances you can install tile on top of vinyl flooring. (fig. A)
- Evaluate subfloor - If it's uneven, you'll need to patch or sand down. Make sure that the subfloor itself is in good shape. Reinforce the subfloor if needed.



A. Removing the existing flooring.



B. Layer of cement board.



C. Applying extra thin mortar.



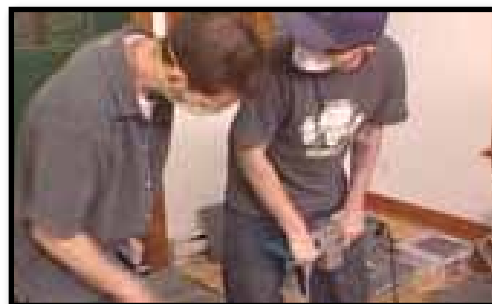
D. Large notched trowel for thick mortar.

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- Install underlayment - Cement board is one type of underlayment. A layer of cement board is attached to the subfloor with mortar (see mortar below); since the pine flooring at the Broken House is unusually thick, the lads needed to use a larger notched trowel to apply extra thick mortar. Another solution would be to install another layer of subfloor underneath the cement board to raise the level to the right height.(fig. B-D)
- Dry fit tile - Lay out the tile design before applying. Snap chalk lines to ensure straight lines (fig. E)
- Mortar - Mixing mortar by hand takes a very, very long time. We suggest renting a mixer instead. Don't apply more mortar than you can cover before it dries, work with small areas. George and Leigh worked in 4 tile grids. Use the notched trowel to spread the mortar. The consistency of the mortar should be like that of a wet sandy beach, or when the ridges stay firm. Then you're ready to start laying tile. (fig. F)
- Setting the tiles - Back buttering (mmm... butter) is when you apply mortar to the back of tile itself - you'll want to do this for larger tiles as it ensures a maximum bond. Gently twist the tile into place. Spacers can be used between the tiles to maintain consistent lines. (fig. G,H)
- Cut the tile - We suggest buying or borrowing a tile cutter. (see Tool of the Day)
- Grout - Tile needs to set for 24 - 48 hours before applying grout. The consistency of the grout should be fairly thick. You apply grout using a float. It can be done all at once as it goes on quickly. Do several passes over the area to ensure that the grout has fully compacted into the joints. Once the grout is applied, you remove the excess grout with burlap or a damp sponge. Be careful using a sponge, as it can put additional water into the grout and result in the grout changing color and also easily wash out the joint, which you don't want. (A washed out joint can hold stains and spills more easily). (fig. I,J)
- Grout sealer - Sealer prevents mildew and mold; there are various types of sealer, so check with your tile expert. You would apply sealer 21 days after laying the tile.



E. Dry-fit the tiles first.



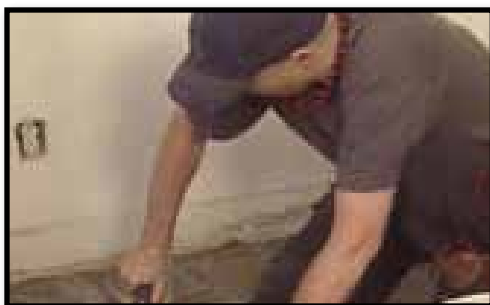
F. Hand mixing the mortar is a drag.



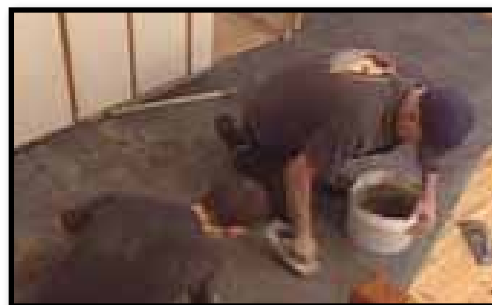
G. Back buttering the tile.



H. Gently twist the tile into place.



I. Making sure the grout is in the joints.



J. Removing excess grout.