

9 Adhesives

- The type of adhesive you'll need depends on where your tiles are going. You should use waterproof adhesives around showers and baths, and a flexible adhesive for surfaces that might move a bit, like plywood panelling around a bath.
- Make sure you spread the adhesive over an area of about 1m² at a time, using a small-ridged spreader to create small ridges (**fig.9**).

10 Your first tile

- So, when you're ready, fix the first tile against the horizontal batten at the bottom, lining up its side with the vertical mark you made earlier as your starting point (**fig.10**). You might also find it easier to fix a vertical batten for the first column of tiles.
- Press the tile down against the adhesive, keeping it flat and fixed down firmly. Take the next tile and fix it alongside the first, allowing a gap for your grouting. You should use plastic spacers to maintain the gap if the tiles don't have lugs.
- When you've finished the first row, fix a second row above the first, making sure you place them nice and carefully, and even with the rest.
- Make sure each tile is flat in relation to the wall and the previous tile. The ridges in your adhesive will let you move the tiles around to get to the same level.

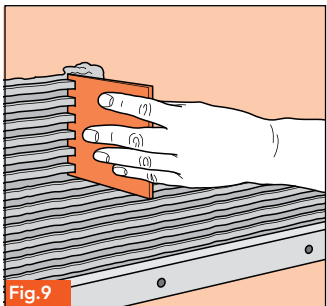


Fig.9

Use a small ridged spreader to spread the adhesive.

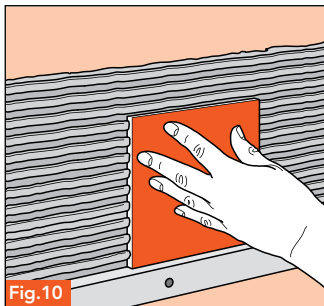


Fig.10

Fix the first tile against your bottom batten.

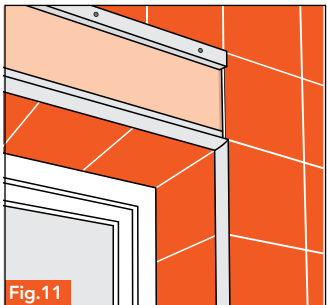


Fig.11

Use a temporary batten to support the first row.

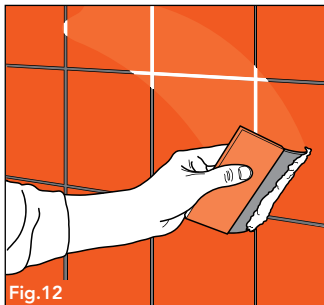


Fig.12

Use a squeegee to spread out the grout.

11 Tiling the rest of the room

- Now you have a good foundation from which you can carry on tiling right around your room. Just make sure that the vertical lines between the tiles are staying vertical.
- You can leave the batten at the bottom in its place until your adhesive has fully set, otherwise your tiles might slide out of place.

12 Dealing with windows/basins

- If you're tiling above something like a window or basin, place a temporary batten to support the first whole row above the item rather than fixing the cut tiles first. This makes it much easier to cut these tiles into place when the surrounding whole tiles have been fixed and are set (**fig.11**).
- Cut tiles won't have anything underneath to stop them slipping above a window. By using masking tape to attach them to a fixed tile you can hold them in place until the adhesive dries.

13 Great grouting

- Before you fill the gaps between tiles with grout, you should let the adhesive set.
- Like adhesives, there are quite a few different types of grout. Make sure you use the right one for the job.
- Using a squeegee, spread the grout and work small areas at a time to avoid it drying before it's in place (**fig.12**). Spread it in several directions in all of the joins, and to smooth it, run a small piece of dowel over each join. Be sure to remove any excess grout from the tile surface before it sets.
- When you're done, remove the thin film of grout by buffing the tiles with a rag.

Just the job

Get the right tools at the right price.

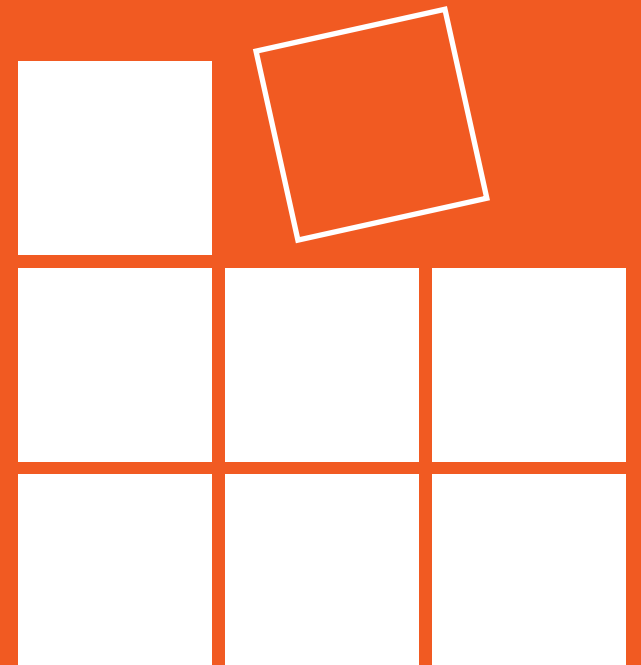


Any products not available in store can be ordered via customer services

wilkinson

Your guide to... fitting wall tiles

Skill rating:
difficult
Should take:
1-2 days,
depending on
the size



HANDY ADVICE

Getting it right



Terry, the DIY genius

Tiling a wall is a fairly tricky task. But with a little bit of practice and patience, it's very do-able. This guide will show you how to get the job done successfully.

Remember! When undertaking DIY tasks you must always take your own ability into account and you must also read and follow any packaging and manufacturers' instructions. This leaflet is intended to be a basic guide only and is not a substitute for any professional advice.

1 The best way to measure up

- To work out how many tiles you need in total, multiply the number for the height by the number for the width. You should do this for the other walls you're tiling too, and remember to make allowances for doors and windows. Always check the pack for the square metre coverage to make sure you buy enough.
- Just to make sure you have enough tiles to work with, multiply the total number by 1.05. This'll give you 5% more than you need, just in case any break while you're working.

2 Make yourself a tile gauge or rod

- You can use a tile gauge or rod to mark out the vertical guidelines when laying your tiles. You should make it fairly long, using something like an old 2" x 1" wood cut-off (**fig.1**).
- Next, lay out a few tiles on the floor, spaced as if they were being fixed vertically, including spacers between each of your tiles. You should then place the rod next to these and mark the line of each join carefully. You're now ready to start marking out tile positions.

3 Mark out your walls

- Measure the height of the area or wall you're about to tile and divide by two. Then mark this height on the wall. Using your gauge, gently mark tile joins from this line all the way down to the bottom. If this means the last tile will be less than half a tile, move the original starting point up or down by half a tile and do it again (**fig.2**).
- Once you've done this, take a spirit level and draw a horizontal line across the wall for the bottom of the lowest row of whole tiles. Then take a batten and secure it to the wall along this line (**fig.3**). This can act as your base to start tiling. Repeat the process for your vertical guides.

- You can make sure your vertical lines of tiles stay vertical as you go along by using the gauge rod to measure and mark guide lines at 1m intervals.

4 Part-tiled walls

- If you only want to tile part of your wall, you'll need to think about the position and size of the 'edge' tiles. For example, if you're only tiling the bottom half of a wall, you'd ideally have a whole tile at the top (**fig.4**).

5 Dealing with doors and windows

- It's important to bear in mind the effect that different starting points will have on the layout of tiles around your windows and doors. More often than not, it's better to have evenly sized tiles at either side of the window, but you'll have to work out the need for evenly sized tiles at either end of the wall as well (**fig.5**).

6 Start by planning your tile layout

- When you're tiling a whole room, the first thing to remember is to work out the layout before you fix any tiles in place. Just mark up one wall at a time, keeping the base line identical on every wall in the room.
- It's vital that when you're working out the base line, think about the levels of windowsills, door heads and other odds and ends like the bath top and worktop levels.

7 How to measure and mark your tiles

- Safety always comes first when you're working, so remember to wear safety goggles and gloves when cutting tiles.
- As you go along, allow for the grout line between each tile. And where your walls are quite square, a handy way of measuring them is to hold the tile back to front, one edge against the wall, and mark it a grout-line-width from the adjacent whole tile (**fig.6**).

8 Tile cutting

- Take a tile cutter and score the surface along the cut line. Hold a straight edge on the cut line and run your cutter along this. Then, holding the tile over a small wooden batten, snap the tile along the line (**fig.7**).
- You might find the snapping difficult where the off-cut is narrow. To make things easier, use a pair of pliers to gradually nibble away the off-cut, working slowly towards your scored line.
- If you're cutting a curved or L-shaped tile, score the surface along the trim line, then chip away the excess in small pieces using pliers.
- To make cutting awkward shapes a whole lot easier, you might be able to get blades for cutting ceramics for your electric jigsaw (**fig.8**).

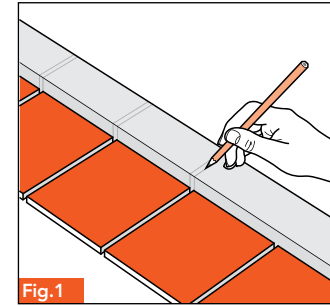


Fig.1 Make a gauge rod from an old bit of 2" x 1" wood.

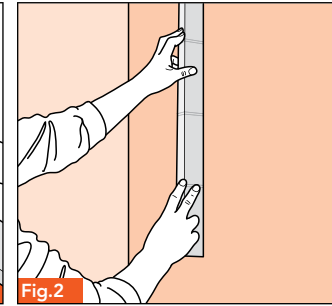


Fig.2 Measure the height of the area and divide it by two.

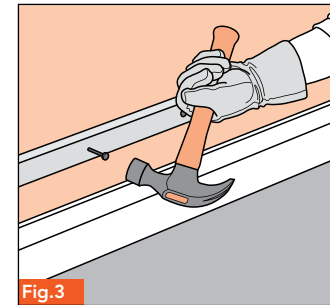


Fig.3 Secure a batten at the bottom of your wall.

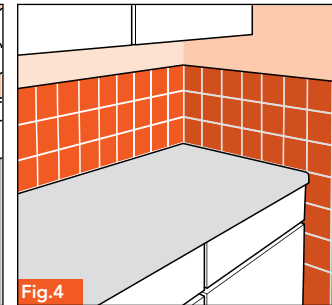


Fig.4 Think about the position of the 'edge' tiles if you're only tiling part of your wall.

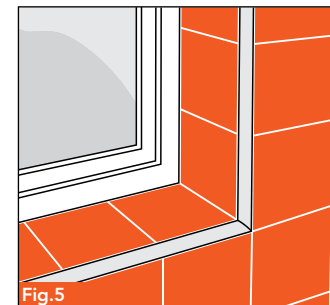


Fig.5 Tiling around a window sill needs planning.

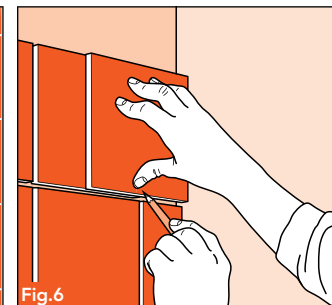


Fig.6 Allow for the grout line between each tile.

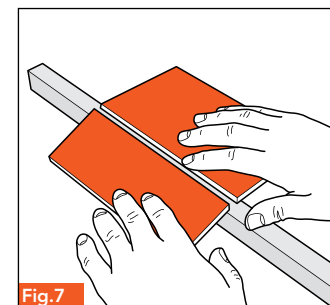


Fig.7 Use a tile cutter.

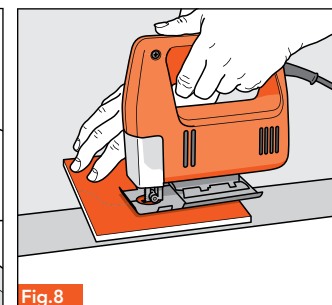


Fig.8 Special ceramic cutting blades for your jigsaw will help with awkward shapes.