

START WITH THE ROOM

Before you buy your tiles

A practical guide to the choices that shape a good tiling job.

A tile can look lovely in a showroom and still need careful planning to work in your home. Its size, the position of the joints and the finish around the edges all matter.

Use this guide while you are choosing materials. Take your notes to the tile supplier and installer before you place the order.

- 01 Choose for your room**
Size, material, finish and day to day use.
- 02 Picture the finished layout**
Cuts, joints, grout and patterns.
- 03 Agree the smaller details**
Corners, niches and changes of surface.
- 04 Know what the work includes**
Preparation, waterproofing and the quotation.
- 05 Make a clear project brief**
A checklist to bring your decisions together.

For bathrooms, kitchens and tiled floors.

01 / CHOOSING THE TILE

Choose for your room

Start with how the space will be used, then decide how you want it to look.

Take a sample home

Look at it in daylight and with your room lighting on. Put it beside the other finishes you have chosen. A small sample will not show every variation, so ask to see more than one tile or an image of the complete range.

Confirm where the tile can be used

Tell the supplier whether it is for a wall, floor, shower or outdoor area. Ask them to confirm suitability for that exact use, including wet floor slip performance where relevant. Do not assume the same finish works everywhere.

Check the size against the room

Put the tile dimensions on a simple wall or floor drawing. Mark doors, windows and sanitaryware. Larger tiles can give a calm result in a small room, but their cuts and junctions still need to work.

Ask about care before deciding

For natural stone or a textured finish, ask about sealing, suitable cleaners and routine maintenance. Decide whether that care suits the way you want to use the room.

Before placing the order

Give the installer the exact product link, dimensions and thickness. Ask them to check the layout, quantity and cutting allowance.

My tile shortlist: _____

Where it will be used: _____

02 / LAYOUT AND JOINTS

Look beyond the middle

The edges of the room are part of the design too.

Choose the important sightlines

From the doorway, what do you see first? Mark the bath, basin, shower controls, window and any feature wall. Ask to see how the tile joints sit against these features before the first tile is fixed.

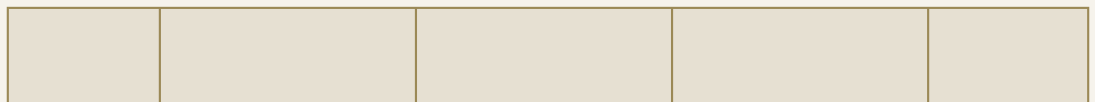
Agree the starting position

A small change to the start of a row changes the cuts at both ends. Ask to see the proposed setting out, including awkward corners. A balanced layout is a decision to agree, rather than something to leave to chance.

Layout 1



Layout 2



Illustrative only. Neither arrangement is a recommendation for a particular room.

Choose the grout with the tile

A similar colour can soften the grid; contrast can make the pattern more visible. Compare a sample and agree the joint width for the chosen tile and installation system. The colour name on the bag is not the same as seeing it beside your tile.

Check patterns and veining

For herringbone, bookmatched effects or tiles with strong variation, agree the direction and arrangement. Ask how many different faces are in the range and where the pattern will finish around openings.

03 / EDGES AND DETAILS

Decide the finishing details

These choices are easier to agree before materials are ordered and walls are prepared.

Trim or mitred edge?

A trim gives the exposed edge a defined finish. A mitre brings two angled tile edges together at a corner. Ask what suits the actual tile, location and use of the room, then agree the appearance, joint finish and price. Neither option is automatically right for every project.

Plan niches with the tile layout

Confirm the position, size and number of shelves. Check that your bottles fit and discuss how joints meet the opening. The installer also needs to check the wall construction and waterproofing details before the recess is formed.

Look at every change of surface

How will the tiles meet paint, a doorway, the shower screen or the next room? Ask where movement joints and flexible seals need to sit. Include floor build up and threshold heights in the discussion.

Ask to see the detail

A sample corner or a photograph of comparable work can make a finish easier to understand. Agree what you are asking for in writing, including any extra labour or materials.

Put the detail on the quotation

List niches, mitred edges, trims and special patterns separately where needed. It should be clear which details are included and which are optional.

Details I want to discuss: _____

04 / PREPARATION AND PRICING

Understand what sits underneath

A useful quotation explains the preparation as well as the visible finish.

Ask how the background will be checked

The installer should assess the existing wall or floor and explain any preparation it needs. Ask about flatness, movement, moisture and the planned height of the finished surface. An inspection may change the preparation scope.

Make waterproofing explicit

For a shower or wet room, ask which waterproofing system is included and how it connects around drains, corners and penetrations. Tiles, adhesive and grout alone are not a substitute for a properly waterproofed installation.

Ask whether decoupling is appropriate

An uncoupling membrane can help manage movement between a suitable background and the tiled finish. Its use depends on the background, tile and system. It does not replace the assessment or all other preparation.

Compare the same scope

Preparation	Removal, repairs, levelling or boarding
Protection	Waterproofing and any specified membrane
Installation	Tile size, pattern and areas to be tiled
Finishing	Grout, trims, mitres, niches and seals
Supply and practicalities	Who buys what, waste removal and access

Also confirm the total, VAT position, payment terms and how changes will be agreed. The lowest headline price is difficult to compare if it leaves out work that another quotation includes.

05 / YOUR PROJECT CHECKLIST

Ready to speak to an installer?

You do not need every answer. A few useful details make the first conversation much easier.

- ☐ Room dimensions or a plan, with the areas to be tiled marked.
- ☐ A few clear photographs of the existing room and background.
- ☐ Tile links, dimensions, thickness and preferred finish.
- ☐ Your preferred layout, grout colour and edge details.
- ☐ Niches, floor heating and any changes to the bathroom layout.
- ☐ The project town or postcode and your preferred timing.
- ☐ Who is supplying the tiles, fittings and other materials.

The three things that matter most to me

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Tell us about your project

Send your plans, photographs or tile ideas to oskar@onyxtiling.co.uk, or enquire at onyxtiling.co.uk/contact/. Call 07511 269 881.

This is a planning guide. The final installation specification should follow the selected manufacturers' instructions and an assessment of your project.

Technical reading: BAL, Waterproofing Wet Areas Before Tiling; Schlüter, DITRA product guidance. October 2026 edition.