

## DESIGN FILES “Let’s Talk Tile”

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Have you looked at tile lately? If you haven’t you are in for a surprise and a treat. The array of choices and price ranges in the marketplace make shopping for tile an adventure.

To make sure your adventure doesn’t devolve into a nightmare, here are some tips and tricks right from the designer’s notebook to help you find the perfect pieces without going to pieces.

### TIP #1 Don’t be afraid to ask for help

We are firm supporters of stand-alone tile businesses. This way you are dealing with a company that lives, breathes and sleeps tile – not just a department within a big-box store. This is your best opportunity to receive professional advice. Plus your material choices are infinitely greater.

### TIP #2 Determine your scope of work

If you race out to the tile store without a clear idea of your needs, chances are you will be easily overwhelmed. Instead, make a list identifying the room, the areas to be tiled and if you can, the style you prefer. This will help you when discussing your project with the staff at the tile store, and they can better help you narrow your choices down.

### TIP #3 Find your style

What if you aren’t sure what you are looking for? Time to do some research. A great resource are design and remodeling magazines that are stuffed with examples of work for all kinds of rooms. We find magazines to be the best place to start because they are edited to be the best representation of work in the market and you don’t have to slog through a lot of unnecessary images.

### TIP #4 Find your tile store

What should you expect from your tile store? We have had the best experiences with locally owned tile-specific businesses. They often provide measuring and installation services, or can refer you to a reputable installer whose work they are familiar with.

### TIP #5 You do NOT want to do your own measuring!

Ideally, the person installing the tile should measure for it; not only will they be able to plan the most efficient way to use the tile (saving you from over-buying), but they can troubleshoot on-the-spot any issues that may arise. Better to know everything ahead of any installation challenges.

### TIP #6 Be aware of the initial “wow” factor

It is easy to be lured by all the gorgeous designs, colors and styles. We want to remind you that tile is a long-term investment, so be careful of the latest and greatest looks – ask yourself, will they be so great in five years? While tile trends are relatively long-lived in the design world, make sure you are committing to a look you can live with in the long-term. It is easier and cheaper to repaint than to retile.

#### TIP #7 Installation should enhance the look of the room, not distract from it

You have found the perfect tile – your job is done, right? Not quite. One of the choices you face now is how the tile will be installed. You may be better served by manipulating shapes and directions of a more conservative tile design to add visual interest. However, when push comes to shove, a quality installation makes all the difference to a successful overall look. You can have the most beautiful tile in the world, but if it is installed poorly, the job is ruined.

As you can see there are many layers to a tile project. We hope these guidelines help you get started on the right foot. Even the simplest tile job has an involved back story – we want your adventures in design to be an enjoyable process, and being equipped with the proper information will keep you on track.

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