

TILING OVER EXISTING CONCRETE



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Some people may think that tiling floors will be a huge headache if you already have existing concrete flooring. You may think that you'll need to go through all that effort of breaking up concrete and transporting it for disposal before you can start your job - but the thing is, it's actually a really easy job that requires very little technical skill!

How do we go about tiling over concrete?

- **Prepare concrete:** start off by cleaning and drying your concrete. You may choose to use TSP (tri sodium phosphate), a high strength cleaner. This will remove excess dirt and grime from your concrete. Look out for any cracks that need patching, or any uneven surfaces that will cause your tiles to rock back and forth. It's important to prime and level out your concrete to prevent cracking of unevenly laid tiles.
- **Seal concrete:** While this isn't a critical step - sealing the concrete will prevent moisture from settling under your tiles and allow your mortar to stick tightly to the concrete.
- **Plan your layout in advance:** Knowing your start and finish points is important so that your tiles will look neat. This is important, as it's likely that you'll have to cut your tiles to fit. Ideally, you'd want to cut them in areas that aren't as visible, such as against the house. Mark your starting point with a chalk line along the length of the room. This will ensure that your tiles will line up squarely.
- **Mixing mortar:** before mixing mortar - keep in mind that different mortars work best with different types of tiles. After selecting a compatible mortar, follow the instructions. Ensure that you don't mix too far in advance, or it will begin to set before you use it.
- **Applying mortar:** when applying mortar, it's best to use a grooved trowel. As a rule, never spread out more than 3-4 tiles worth of mortar at a time. If something unexpected comes up or you begin to slow down you risk having the mortar set before you can reach those areas.
- **Installation:** Lay the tiles into the spacers, making sure you're staying square with the chalk lines. Be careful with doing it right the first time, as you'll find that a small adjustment to one usually means an adjustment to all the other tiles. Wipe off the tiles as you go as dried mortar is a lot harder to clean up!
- **Grouting the tiles:** Mix the grout as specified by the manufacturer and liberally spread it over the tiles with the grout float. Once it has set, repeat the process.
- Once the grout is completely dry, take a wet rag and run it over the surface of the floor. You may notice a hazy appearance. Once dried, wipe it again until it looks polished. At this point, you may want to use a grout sealer to prevent mildew or mold from forming.

If you're in need of supplies or expert advice to help you recreate your outdoor space - there's no better place to start than with friendly professionals at your local APC store!