

Planning the arrangement of floor tiles

Regardless of the type of tile you plan to lay, always start in the middle of the room. Therefore the first task is to find the room's centre point.

Finding the centre point

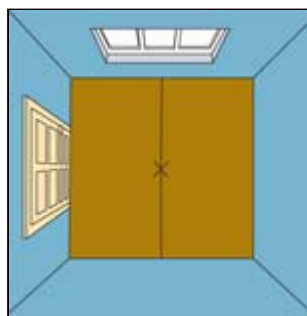
- To find the central point of a regular shaped room, measure half way along two opposite walls.
- Connect these points by snapping a line across the room.
- The halfway point of the line is the middle of the room.

Alternatively, if the room has an irregular shape featuring a chimney breast and/or bay windows, follow this method for finding the centre point of the room.

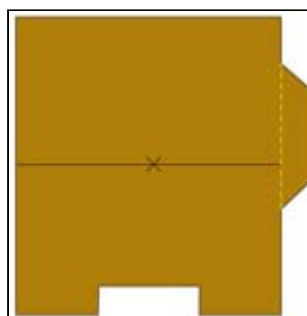
- Ignore any recesses such as a bay by squaring off the room with a line running between each end of the bay.
- With the bay excluded the centre of the wall can be located along with the centre of the opposite, using exactly the same method you would in a regular shaped room.

But if the room is very irregular in shape a more elaborate method of finding the middle of the room should be employed.

- Select one wall as the base wall, and snap a chalk line parallel and about 75mm (3in) away from it.
- Mark the centre point of the line.
- From the centre point of the line draw a short line at right angles to it.
- To ensure the right angle is accurate place a number of tiles against the string line and on either side of the short line you've marked on the floor.
- Where the tiles meet snap a chalk line across the room. Measure this line and mark its centre.
- You now need to run a second line across the room intersecting the first line. Place two tiles on the floor each with one side against the line and a corner on the centre point.
- Run a chalk line across the room passing through the centre point and following the edge of the tiles.



The central point in a regular shaped room.



Ignore recesses when finding the centre of a room.



Run a chalk line across the room passing through the centre point and following the edge of the tiles.

The key tile

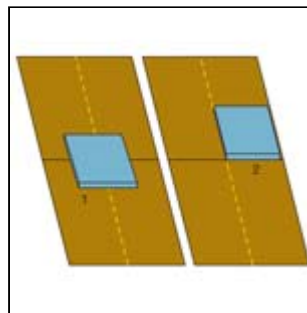
The first tile you lay is called the key tile and will decide the position of all the other tiles, so it is worth taking time to experiment with placing it in different positions. For example:

- Try placing the key tile with its centre over the centre point of the room
or
- In the angle formed by the intersecting lines
or
- With an edge of the tile against one line and the tile centred over the other line

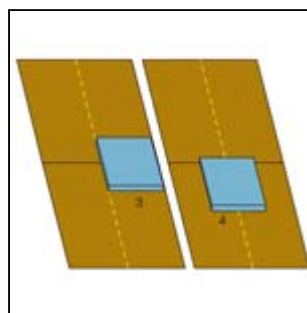
Ideally try to plan your arrangement so that all the tiles around the edge of the room will be the same size.

If the room contains a large attractive feature such as a fireplace, bay window or impressive door, from a design perspective it is important to centre the key tile with this feature. This is achieved by moving the base line so it is centred on the feature.

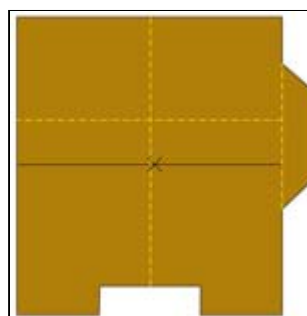
- From your original line, draw a new line parallel with it and centred on the feature.
- If you have two features situated on adjacent walls, draw new lines parallel with both existing lines to centre the tiles in the middle of the features. It is not possible to centre tiles on more than two features in a room.
- Once you are satisfied with the position of the key tile, to ensure your arrangement works, lay the tiles without adhesive, working your way out towards the walls.



Experiment with different options for your key tile.



Try to plan so the edging tiles are the same size.



Centre the key tile in rooms with features such as an attractive fireplace.

Making patterns

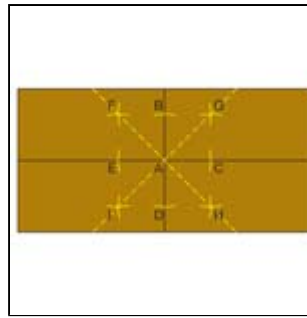
Using different coloured tiles laid in sequence can create attractive floor patterns. The most common pattern alternates two coloured tiles as on a chessboard. Planning your design before you begin is essential.

- Make a scale drawing of your chosen pattern on squared or graph paper before you buy any tiles. This will make calculating the number of each type of tile easy.

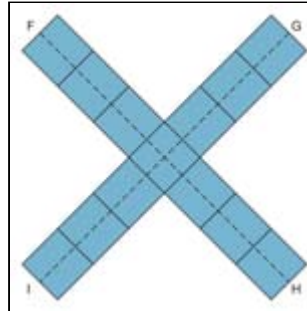
Laying tiles on the diagonal

Base lines for a diagonal pattern can be marked on the floor using an improvised compass. Use a length of batten about 1m (3ft 3in) long and hammer a nail into each end. To prevent the wood from splitting, drill two pilot holes a little smaller than the nails.

- Locate the centre of the room using the method described above.
- Put the point of one of the nails on the centre point, which we will call **A**.
- Carefully turn the batten on its centre and mark four points on the intersecting lines: **B**, **C**, **D** and **E**.
- Put the point of one of the nail on **B** and make an arc at **F** and **G**.
- Move the point of your improvised compass to **C** and make an arc at **G** and **H**.
- Move the point of your improvised compass to **D** and make an arc at **H** and **I**.
- Move the point of your improvised compass to **E** and make an arc at **I** and **F**.
- You will now have 4 sets of two arcs that intersect each other.
- To produce your diagonal guidelines, snap a chalk line through the intersecting arcs at **G** and **I** and through the intersecting arcs at **F** and **H**.
- Dry lay the tiles along the diagonal lines, moving their position to achieve getting the largest possible cut tiles around the border.



An improvised compass can be used to determine your base lines.



Dry lay the tiles along the diagonal lines, moving their position to achieve the largest possible cut tiles around the border.

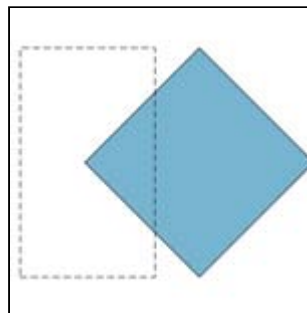
Border tile patterns

If the tiles do not reach the walls, you can create a border around the perimeter of the room to fill the gap. There are two ways to do this.

- Having laid all the whole tiles cut a piece of card that has both opposite edges parallel. The card must have the same width as the diagonal measurement of the tile.
- Lay the tile you want to cut on the whole tile nearest to the gap you want to fill.
- Re-lay the cross-shape to check the layout. Do not cut the border tiles until you have permanently stuck down the whole tiles.
- Push the wedge of your card squarely against the skirting board while overlapping the tile you want to cut.
- Run a pencil along the other straight edge of the card marking the tile underneath. The piece of card not covered by the card will fit exactly into the gap.
- Remove the tile and cut along the marked line.

Alternatively you can square off the diagonal pattern and fit rectangular cut tile pieces around the border.

- Cut enough tiles diagonally to square off the pattern.
- The border tiles can then be positioned squarely against the skirting, the cutting line marked on them and then



Your cut piece of card must have the same width as the diagonal measurement of the tile.



Push the wedge of your card squarely against the skirting board while overlapping the

cut to size. It is advisable to measure each border tile individually. tile you want to cut.