

Working with Large Porcelain Slabs



Thin Porcelain Slabs, also known as Gauged Porcelain Panels, are large format porcelain panels that can be installed on walls, floors, countertops, shower walls, backsplashes, fireplaces, and more, both indoors and outdoors.

From delivery to cleanup, working with Thin Porcelain Slabs will usually require the use of slab-specific equipment such as a specialized cart, appropriate suction cups, cutting table, and more. Because of the size and fragility of the panels, lifting and installation should be a team effort and be performed by a professional installer with previous experience and the right tools for working with large slabs.

tb Resources

All TileBar installation instructions are suggestions. Specific installation questions should be brought to a local tile professional. Find Certified Tile Installers at ceramictilefoundation.org.

All installations should refer to the most current guidelines given by the Tile Council of North America. You can visit online at tcnatile.com, or call 864.464.8453.

1 Prepare the Substrate

The most important goal when preparing your substrate for thin porcelain slabs is to create an extremely flat surface so that you can achieve full coverage of your mortar on both substrate and tile. To get technical, The maximum variation of the substrate should not to exceed 1/8" in 10' (3mm in 3m) from the required plane, and no more than 1/16" in 24" (1.6mm in 60cm) when measured from high points. If the surface does not meet these flatness requirements, then further preparation is needed.

2 Layout Tile

Take all measurements of the space or room and develop a layout for your slabs. Locate all cuts and adjust layout as necessary to meet design intent and maximize slab usage. These tile slabs often have veining or other distinct characteristics, so plan accordingly. Large panels have a high waste factor and we recommend that all pieces be carefully placed and cuts are noted.

3 Cut Tile



Cutting the panels can require special equipment. If a hole is required, then a standard diamond core bit can be used. If a full-length straight cut is required, then a special cutting table and snap cutter is suggested. Using the correct equipment will ensure clean, straight edges and a quality installation.

THIN PORCELAIN SLAB INSTALLATION GUIDE

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4 Install Tile



Mix the appropriate amount of setting materials per the manufacturer's instructions. Trowel mortar material on the floor or wall with a Euro 1/2" notched trowel in a consistent direction, leaving a ridged setting bed. Also trowel mortar on the tile slab in the same direction as the substrate using a Euro 1/4" notched trowel. Lay tile in the mortar, using appropriate handling rack and suction cups. Use a beating block or vibrating machine to flatten the mortar ridges and achieve appropriate mortar coverage. Mortar should cover 100% of the slab. Install spacers or leveling system as needed. Allow the newly installed tile to cure for the time suggested by the setting material manufacturer.

5 Grout Joints

Mix the appropriate amount of grout per the manufacturer's instructions, keeping in mind that large-format slabs will often need less grout than a typical installation due to less joints. Using a grout float at 45-degree angle, press in and fill all of the joints with grout. Once filled, smooth the grout off the top of the tile using the grout float dragging it at 90 degrees angle diagonally across the tile, as you would a squeegee. Now that the joints are full, dress them with a sponge or scrub pad. Make sure to remove any excess grout from the surrounding tile before allowing the grout to cure. Also remember to include movement joints where necessary, and use the appropriate joint sealants.

6 Cure & Clean

After the grout has fully cured, implement regular cleaning of the entire installation with a pH-neutral cleaner. Traffic will depend on how often the installation will need to be cleaned. The slab materials are porcelain and should not stain, but the grout you choose could need future attention. See your grout manufacturer's instructions for cleaning and maintenance recommendations.

tb TileBar Tips for Success

Follow directions on all materials, especially when mixing setting materials and grout systems.

Inspect all materials before using to make sure there are no defects. Installation is acceptance, material claims will not be entertained after install.

The industry standard for minimum floor thickness is 5.6mm.

Count the full pieces – Waste is critical, so count full pieces and then see how many cuts you have. Compare all cut dimension to equal a full pieces dimension. Order accordingly.

Always be mindful of safety for both you and your surroundings when performing any installation.

tb Have Questions?

Our tile experts are here to help at every step along your tile journey, from selecting the right tile to knowing how much to order. Call, text, or email us today!



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888.541.3840



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