

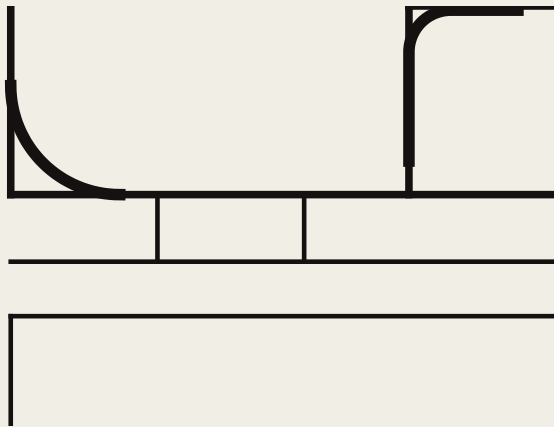
GROUT & TRIM

Grout closes the floor. Trim closes its edges. Both are chosen after the tile and both are visible from anywhere in the room. This guide draws every edge a floor produces, explains what the joint is doing, and lets you change the grout on a live floor and watch it happen.

A-H • EIGHT EDGES • NOT TO SCALE

EVERY EDGE IN ONE DRAWING

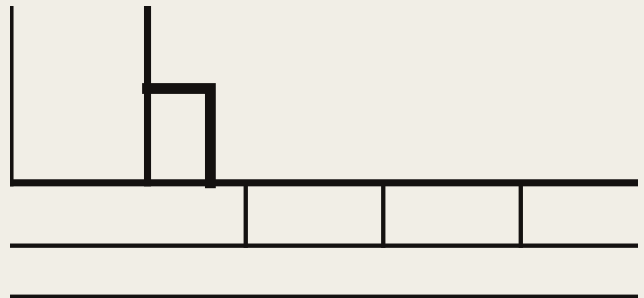
The cut runs left to right through a bathroom, a hall, a bedroom, a living room and a sliding door. Below the tile, **2** is the mortar bed that carries the load and **1** is the substrate under it. **3** is the tile and **4** is the joint between two tiles, drawn in crimson because it is the only one of the four you can still see once the floor is finished. Letters **A to H** mark the eight places a floor produces an edge, and the key below names each one.



A

COVE BASE

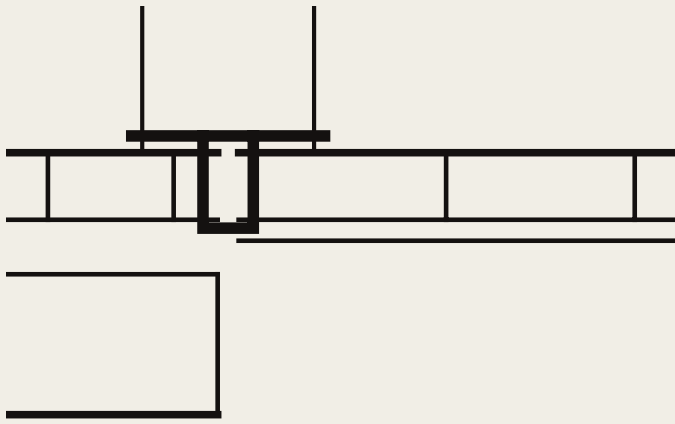
Curves the floor up into the wall so washing water cannot sit in the corner. The base to ask for in bathrooms and laundry rooms.



B

WALL BASE

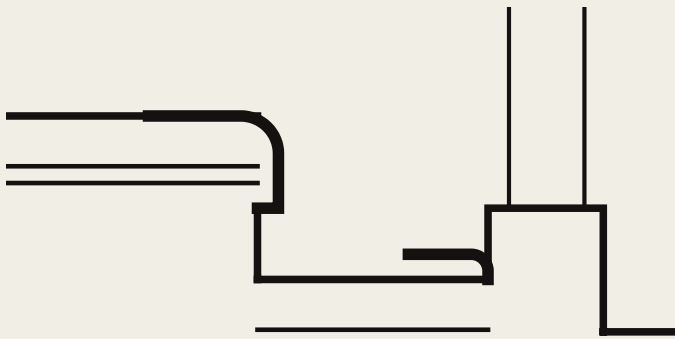
Closes the joint between the floor and the wall with a square top. The base most rooms use.



C

T-MOLDING

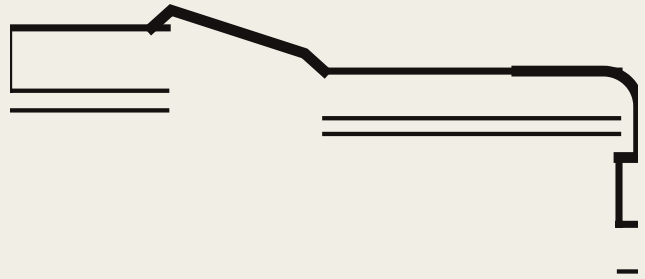
Bridges two floors of the same height where they meet in a doorway.



E

STAIR NOSE

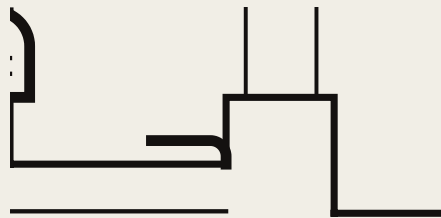
Wraps the front edge of a step. It gives the edge a rounded profile and protects the piece behind it.



D

REDUCER

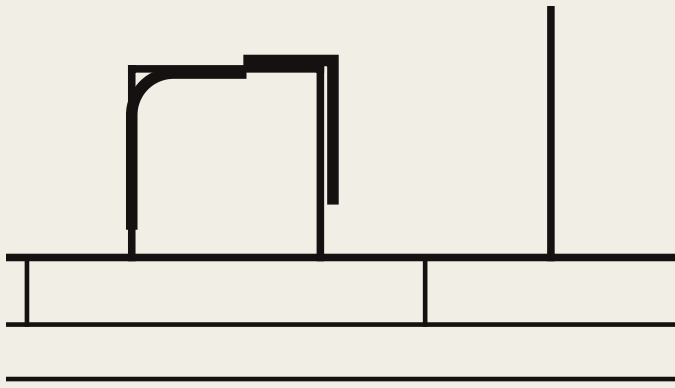
Slopes from the floor down to a lower one when the two are different thicknesses. It removes the step the change would otherwise leave.



F

END CAP

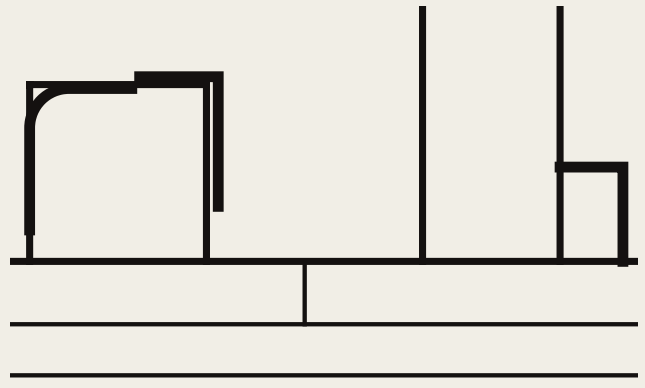
Ends the floor where it stops against something that is not a wall. Sliding door sills, fireplaces and exterior thresholds.



G

BULLNOSE

A tile with one rounded, glazed edge. It finishes an exposed tile edge with no metal, which is why it is used on curbs, steps and niches.



H

METAL EDGE PROFILE

A metal L set under the tile so its leg covers the cut edge. It does the same job as a bullnose on tile that has no bullnose piece.

Vinyl and laminate lines carry color matched trim sets, so C, D, E and F arrive in the floor's own color. Tile edges are finished with G or H.

WHAT THE JOINT DOES

Four layers, built from the bottom up. Only the last one stays visible.

Grout closes the floor. It carries none of it.

1

SUBSTRATE

The slab or the subfloor. It has to be flat and sound before anything is set on it.

2

MORTAR BED

The mortar under the tile carries the load.
Everything that stands on the floor stands on this layer.

3

TILE

The surface. It takes the wear and it moves a little with heat and with the building.

4

THE JOINT

Grout fills the space between the tiles. It absorbs those small movements, holds the edges apart and seals the floor against water and dirt.

CEMENT GROUT

The standard. It is porous, so it is sealed after it cures and resealed over the life of the floor.

EPOXY GROUT

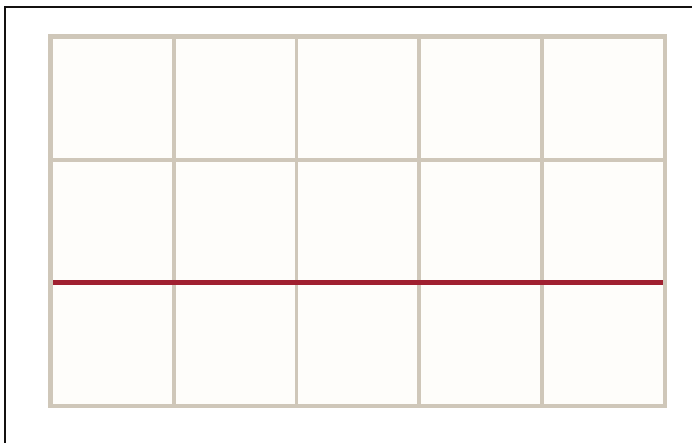
Resists stains on its own with no sealer. It costs more to buy and more to install.

HOW WIDE THE JOINT IS

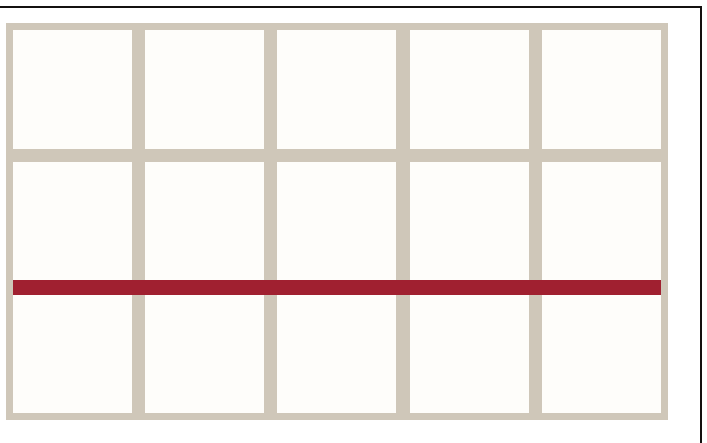
PLAN VIEW • THE SAME FLOOR FROM ABOVE

A rectified tile is cut to its exact size after firing, so its edges are straight and it takes a narrow joint. A pressed tile leaves the press slightly different piece to piece, and a wider joint absorbs that difference. The two floors below are the same tile at the same size. Only the joint changes.

RECTIFIED • NARROW JOINT



PRESSED • WIDER JOINT



Your installer sets the final width against the tile's own sheet and against the pattern being laid. The width also decides the grout: narrow joints take unsanded grout, wider joints need sand for strength.

CHANGE THE GROUT, WATCH THE FLOOR

Grout color changes a finished floor more than any other decision made on grouting day. The floor below is live. Change the tile, the grout and the joint, and the same floor changes with you.



Marble look, 12" square • Linen • Medium joint • Up close

TILE

Marble look

12" square

Stone look

24" x 12"

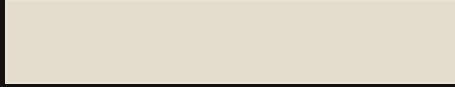
Wood look plank

48" × 12"

GROUT COLOR



BRIGHT WHITE



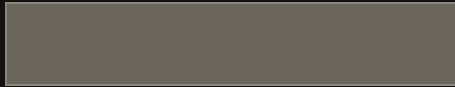
ALMOND



LINEN



WARM GRAY



SLATE



CHARCOAL

JOINT WIDTH



VIEW

Up close

Whole floor

Screen color is a guide. Confirm the grout against a physical grout card in daylight. Switch to WHOLE FLOOR and the joint drops to a hairline, which is what a matched grout looks like from across a room.

THREE WAYS TO CHOOSE

Each one sets the floor above. Pick one and scroll back up to it.

MATCHED

The joint disappears into the tile and the floor reads as one surface. The usual choice for large formats.

SET THE FLOOR ABOVE

CONTRAST

Every tile is outlined and the grid becomes part of the design. It also shows every crooked line, so the layout has to be right.

SET THE FLOOR ABOVE

A SHADE DARKER

One step darker than the tile keeps tracked in traffic from showing and still marks the edge of each piece.

SET THE FLOOR ABOVE

QUESTIONS, ANSWERED

Do I have to use trim pieces?

Every exposed edge needs one: a trim piece, a bullnose or a metal profile. An open cut edge chips and reads unfinished.

Sanded or unsanded grout?

The joint width decides. Narrow joints take unsanded grout, wider joints need sand for strength. Your installer matches it to the spacing.

What grout color should I pick?

Matched calms, contrast outlines, darker hides traffic. Hold a grout card against the tile in daylight, and confirm before grouting day.

Why did my grout change color?

Uneven curing, cleaner residue or dirt held in the pores. A deep alkaline clean restores most joints, and sealing keeps the color even.

Can grout be replaced without redoing the floor?

Yes. Old grout can be raked out and the floor regROUTED. It is a common refresh for a floor whose tile is still perfect.

KEEP READING



INSTALLATION BASICS

The steps of a tile installation and what each one requires.

CARE & MAINTENANCE

How to clean porcelain tile and which products to keep off it.

SETTLE THESE BEFORE GROUTING DAY

The grout type, the joint width and the grout color are all decided before the tile goes down, not after. Confirm all three with your installer, and call us with anything the tile's data sheet does not answer.

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