

# HOW TO TILE SKIRTING BOARDS

There are two ways in which you can use tiles to create a skirting at the bottom of your wall. You can either use border tiles or make cuts to standard tiles to enable them to fit within this space.

Any wooden skirting, wallpaper, paint or tiles should be removed from the bottom of the wall before you apply the skirting. The base of the wall should be levelled with gypsum or cement plaster.

Skirting boards are usually there to provide a decorative interface between walls and floors as well as providing a protective boundary to prevent marks on painted and papered walls or damage to soft plaster.

They also allow the edges of floor finishes such as carpets, vinyl and laminates to be neatly finished and accommodate some movement without exposing bare floor.

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## TILE SKIRTING BOARDS



Before you jump in and use leftover tiles or buy expensive border tiles it's worth considering your flooring material.



Carpet, for instance are sometimes folded or tucked under the skirting edge so can exert significant upwards pressure on occasions.



A continuous wooden board will be able to flex and accommodate some of the pressure but tiles won't flex and may crack or pop as the adhesive bond fails.



Providing you allow an expansion gap for carpet, laminate or vinyl and seal a tile-to-tile interface correctly; a tiled skirting should provide a decorative and long-lasting finish to your room.

## PREPARING THE WALLS

1

The bottom edges of most walls that have been finished with wooden skirting will probably need cleaning and preparing to accept your tiles.

2

Leaving a gap behind the base of the tiles will create a fulcrum where tiles may be levered off or crack if kicked or knocked.

3

It will be OK to leave a gap of 2 or 3mm to help accommodate movement but the base of the wall should be levelled using suitable gypsum or cement plaster.

4

Floors in bathrooms or areas likely to get wet may also need to be treated with a suitable tanking or waterproofing compound.

5

This is beyond the scope of this guide but you could check our guide on wet rooms for more information on waterproofing.

## SKIRTING WITH BORDER TILES

Make sure the line is horizontal and adjust accordingly.

Measure the centre of each wall and check the size of part tiles that will be needed for corners and around obstacles.



When you use specially made tiles with decorative edges then you can simply draw a line the width of the tile up from the floor; allowing a 2 to 3mm gap for movement and sealing.

Make sure to draw a line right round the room so that you know your skirting will line up.

Adjust the arrangement for either a symmetrical tile pattern or a part tile to one side; preferably behind a door or where it is least noticeable.

## FINISHING 3D PROFILE TILES FOR INTERNAL CORNERS

A profile guide that uses strips of metal to create a profile template is a useful purchase for this and usually inexpensive.



Profiled tiles that create a lip or have a 3d shape will not fit together easily in a corner.

45°

It may be possible to cut the tiles at 45 degrees so that they meet or one tile can be fitted and the meeting tile is then cut using an electric tile saw to match the profile.

## SKIRTING WITH STANDARD CERAMIC OR STONE TILES



If you are using large tiles to match the floor then it may be worth experimenting with a tile height that looks visually correct such as a third, half, two thirds or full tile height. If you use cut tiles; use the cut side nearest the floor for a better finish. The upper edge and corners can be concealed using decorative trim. Stone tiles look best with a 1 to 2 mm 45 degree chamfer on exposed corners.

## DOOR ARCHITRAVES



You may still wish to use a door architrave and simply butt-joint the tiles with a 2-3mm gap to allow movement. This can be finished with flexible silicone sealant.