



CHOOSING SHOWER TILE

A homeowner guide to selecting wall tile, shower-floor tile, finishes, grout, and layouts that look good and perform well.

A SAFE, DURABLE STARTING POINT

Walls: matte or satin porcelain, often 12 x 24 or similar **Floor:** coordinating 2 x 2 (or smaller) porcelain mosaic **Grout:** a medium-tone color that complements the tile.

1. Choose the tile by location - not just by appearance

SHOWER WALLS

Porcelain is the best all-around choice for most showers: dense, durable, and low-maintenance. Ceramic can also work well on walls when the manufacturer approves it for wet areas.

SHOWER FLOOR

Use tile specifically recommended for shower floors. Smaller mosaics conform to the drain slope more easily and create more grout joints for traction. Avoid highly polished, slippery surfaces underfoot.

NICHE / BENCH / ACCENT

These areas can use matching tile or an accent, but keep maintenance in mind. Very textured surfaces, tiny pieces, and lots of grout can look great while taking more effort to clean.

2. Finish matters as much as color

- **Matte / satin:** a strong choice for floors and low-maintenance walls. It usually hides water spots better than high-gloss tile.
- **Polished:** can look beautiful on shower walls, but it may show mineral deposits and water spotting more readily. Use extra care before choosing it for the shower floor.
- **Textured:** can provide grip and visual interest, but deep texture also holds soap residue and takes more scrubbing.

3. Tile size changes both the look and the installation

Large-format wall tile	Fewer grout joints and a cleaner look. It requires a flatter substrate and careful layout so cuts around corners, valves, and niches look intentional.
Small mosaic floor tile	Usually easiest around a standard center drain because it follows the shower slope. More grout joints can also improve traction.
Large floor tile	Possible in some shower designs, especially with certain linear-drain layouts, but it must work with the required slope and the tile must be approved for that use.

IMPORTANT: TILE IS NOT THE WATERPROOFING

Tile and grout are the finished surface. The shower pan, drain connection, backer system, waterproof membrane, corners, penetrations, and transitions are what protect the house from water. A beautiful tile choice cannot compensate for a poorly waterproofed shower.

SHOWER TILE SELECTION CHECKLIST

Take this list with you to the tile showroom. It will help you compare options beyond color and pattern.

- 1 Where will this tile be used?** Wall, shower floor, niche, bench, curb, or bathroom floor?
- 2 Is it specifically approved for that location?** Ask the manufacturer or retailer - especially for shower floors.
- 3 How does it feel when wet?** Do not rely on appearance alone. A glossy tile that looks perfect may not be the best choice underfoot.
- 4 How much variation is there from piece to piece?** Open multiple boxes or review the manufacturer's variation rating.
- 5 Is it rectified?** Rectified edges can support tighter-looking layouts, but grout-joint width still depends on tile consistency, warpage, and manufacturer guidance.
- 6 How flat is the tile?** Long plank and large-format tiles can have bowing. This affects layout, lippage, and pattern choices.
- 7 Are trim pieces available?** Check for bullnose, matching edge trim, mosaics, and inside/outside corner options - or plan on metal edge profiles.
- 8 Is enough material available now?** Buy from the same dye lot/caliber when possible and plan for waste, cuts, future repairs, and breakage. 10-15% extra is a common planning range, with more for complex layouts.

DESIGN DECISIONS THAT AFFECT COST

Choice	What it can change
Very large tile	More substrate preparation, handling, cutting, and layout planning.
Herringbone / diagonal / patterned layouts	More cuts, more waste, and more installation time than a simple stacked or running pattern.
Tiny mosaics everywhere	More grout, more detail work, and more long-term cleaning.
Natural stone	Possible sealing, specialized setting materials, color variation, and ongoing maintenance.
Multiple accents / borders / niches	More layout transitions and precise finishing - beautiful when planned, expensive when improvised.

TONY'S PRO TIP

Choose the shower floor first. It has the strictest performance requirements. Then build the wall tile, grout color, niche, and trim around that decision. This keeps the design coordinated without sacrificing safety or drainage.

A SIMPLE WAY TO NARROW YOUR FINAL CHOICE

- 1. Pick 2-3 wall tiles you genuinely like.
- 2. Pair each with a shower-floor mosaic that is manufacturer-approved for that application.
- 3. View the samples together in your bathroom lighting - not just under showroom lights.
- 4. Wet the samples and look at color, sheen, texture, and water spotting.
- 5. Confirm availability of enough tile, matching trim, and extra material before installation begins.

NEED A SECOND SET OF EYES?

Text us photos or links before ordering. We can help with wall tile, shower-floor tile, grout, trim, and layout. **(469) 267-0193** | myfnhandymen.com