Chicago Bathroom Remodeling Pros

Educational Resources for Chicago Homeowners
www.chicagobathroomremodelingpros.com

Bathroom Tile Buyer’s Guide

Everything You Need to Know Before Choosing Bathroom Tile

Choosing the right tile is one of the most important decisions you’ll make during a bathroom remodel. The tile you select affects the appearance, durability, maintenance requirements, and long-term value of your bathroom. This guide will help you compare materials, understand installation options, and confidently choose tile that fits your style, budget, and lifestyle.

Why Your Tile Selection Matters

Bathroom tile isn’t just decorative—it’s a hardworking surface that must withstand moisture, temperature changes, heavy foot traffic, and daily cleaning. The right choice can enhance your home’s beauty while providing decades of dependable performance.

When selecting tile, consider:

✔Durability

✔Water Resistance

✔Slip Resistance

✔Ease of Cleaning

✔Maintenance Requirements

✔Installation Cost

✔Overall Style

✔Long-Term Value

Understanding Bathroom Tile Types

Porcelain Tile

Best For: Floors, showers, and walls

Advantages

✔Extremely durable

✔Highly water resistant

✔Low maintenance

✔Excellent for high-moisture areas

✔Available in countless colors and styles

✔Can imitate marble, wood, concrete, and stone

Considerations

• Usually costs more than ceramic

• Harder material requires specialized cutting tools

Ceramic Tile

Best For: Walls, backsplashes, and light-use floors

Advantages

✔Budget friendly

✔Easy to maintain

✔Large selection of colors

✔Easier to cut and install

Considerations

• Slightly less durable than porcelain

• Not always ideal for heavy-use floors

Natural Stone

Examples include:

• Marble

• Slate

• Travertine

• Granite

Advantages

✔One-of-a-kind appearance

✔Luxury aesthetic

✔Adds character and value

Considerations

• Higher initial investment

• Requires periodic sealing

• More maintenance than porcelain

Glass Tile

Ideal for:

• Accent walls

• Decorative borders

• Shower niches

• Mosaic features

Advantages

✔Brightens the room

✔Reflects natural light

✔Beautiful decorative accents

Considerations

• Generally not used as primary floor tile

• Installation may require additional care

Mosaic Tile

Commonly used for:

✔Shower floors

✔Decorative accents

✔Niches

✔Borders

Advantages

• Excellent slip resistance

• Flexible design options

• Great for curved surfaces

Choosing Floor Tile

Bathroom floors should balance beauty with safety.

Look for tile that offers:

✔Water resistance

✔Slip resistance

✔Easy maintenance

✔Long-term durability

Large-format porcelain tile remains a popular choice because it creates a clean, modern appearance while reducing the number of grout joints.

Choosing Shower Tile

A shower is exposed to water every day, making proper material selection especially important.

Popular choices include:

✔Porcelain

✔Ceramic

✔Mosaic flooring

✔Marble-look porcelain

Many homeowners combine large-format wall tile with smaller mosaic tile on the shower floor for improved traction.

Wall Tile Options

Popular choices include:

• Subway Tile

• Vertical Subway Tile

• Large Format Tile

• Marble-Look Porcelain

• Decorative Accent Walls

• Full Height Tile

• Half Height Wainscoting

Choosing Tile Size

Tile Size	Best For
2” x 2”	Shower Floors
3” x 6”	Subway Walls
12” x 24”	Bathroom Floors
24” x 24”	Modern Bathrooms
Large Format Panels	Luxury Bathrooms

Larger tiles generally create fewer grout joints, giving bathrooms a more open appearance and making routine cleaning easier.

Popular Tile Patterns

Consider these timeless installation patterns:

✔Running Bond (Subway)

✔Stacked

✔Herringbone

✔Chevron

✔Basket Weave

✔Hexagon

✔Pinwheel

✔Versailles

Choose a pattern that complements your home’s style and remember that more intricate layouts may require additional installation time.

Grout Selection

Grout plays an important role in both appearance and maintenance.

Light Grout

✔Bright appearance

✔Works well with white tile

Dark Grout

✔Hides dirt better

✔Creates visual contrast

Epoxy Grout

✔Excellent stain resistance

✔Highly durable

✔Great for showers

Slip Resistance

Safety should always be part of your decision.

Look for:

✔Matte finishes

✔Textured surfaces

✔Smaller shower floor tile for better traction

Consider additional safety features if your bathroom will be used by children, older adults, or individuals with mobility concerns.

Bathroom Tile Maintenance

To keep your tile looking its best:

✔Clean regularly with manufacturer-approved products.

✔Wipe down shower walls after use when possible.

✔Inspect grout and caulking periodically.

✔Reseal natural stone when recommended.

✔Address damaged grout promptly to help prevent moisture intrusion.

Current Bathroom Tile Trends

Today’s homeowners often choose:

• Warm neutral colors

• Large-format porcelain

• Marble-look porcelain

• Wood-look tile

• Vertical subway tile

• Minimal grout lines

• Spa-inspired designs

• Earth-tone finishes

While trends can provide inspiration, selecting timeless materials often offers broader appeal and long-term satisfaction.

Questions to Ask Before Buying Tile

□ What is my overall budget?

□ Which areas need the greatest durability?

□ Is low maintenance a priority?

□ Do I prefer a timeless or contemporary look?

□ Will the tile coordinate with my vanity and countertops?

□ Is slip resistance important?

□ How much natural light does the room receive?

□ Have I ordered 10–15% extra tile for cuts, waste, and future repairs?

Tile Comparison

Feature	Porcelain	Ceramic	Natural Stone	Glass
Water Resistance	★★★★★	★★★★☆	★★★☆☆	★★★★★
Durability	★★★★★	★★★☆☆	★★★★☆	★★★☆☆
Maintenance	Easy	Easy	Moderate	Easy
Cost	$$	$	$$	$
Best Uses	Floors, Showers, Walls	Walls, Light-Use Floors	Luxury Bathrooms	Decorative Accents

---

Frequently Asked Questions

Which tile is easiest to maintain?

Porcelain tile is widely regarded as one of the easiest materials to maintain because it is dense, durable, and highly resistant to moisture.

Can I use the same tile on the floor and walls?

Yes. Many homeowners choose matching or coordinating tile to create a clean, cohesive appearance.

How much extra tile should I purchase?

Most professionals recommend ordering approximately 10–15% extra to account for cuts, breakage, waste, and future repairs.

Does larger tile make a bathroom look bigger?

Large-format tile with minimal grout lines can create a more open, spacious appearance, especially in smaller bathrooms.

Final Buying Tips

✔Don’t choose tile based solely on appearance.

✔Consider long-term maintenance.

✔Think about resale value.

✔Invest in quality installation.

✔Order extra material before production lots change.

✔Ask your contractor about the best tile for your family’s lifestyle.

Chicago Bathroom Remodeling Pros

We proudly help homeowners throughout Chicago transform outdated bathrooms into beautiful, functional spaces. Whether you’re planning a simple refresh or a complete renovation, our experienced team is here to guide you through every step—from planning and design to expert craftsmanship and the final walkthrough.

Chicago Bathroom Remodeling Pros | www.chicagobathroomremodelingpros.com