

ORGANIZE YOUR LIFE!



IN THIS ISSUE, WE WILL DISCUSS:

TIPS FOR TILING YOUR BATHROOM

HARD CHOICES WHEN GRIEVING A
LOVED ONE

ARE YOU A HOARDER?
WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS?



Happy
St. Patrick's
Day!

TIPS FOR TILING YOUR BATHROOM

Are you planning to retile your bathroom floor? Make sure you take the Tiling 101 class at Home Depot first. There are so many ways to tile incorrectly—believe me, I know. Once, I ended up with bi-level tiles at the base of my toilet; another time, I couldn't open the closet door because the tiles were too tall.

Before sauntering off to the hardware store to purchase tools, I recommend measuring the room so you know how much tile you'll need. My bathroom was 90 square inches, so I purchased 100 tiles. (Every bunch has cracked or broken tiles, no matter where you purchase them.) It also helps to know how much space you want between each tile.

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TIPS FOR TILING YOUR BATHROOM

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HERE IS A LIST OF EVERYTHING YOU WILL NEED TO TILE YOUR FLOOR:

- tiles
- tile adhesive
- bin for mixing grout and tile adhesive
- gloves
- dust mask (to wear when mixing the adhesive and grout)
- kneepads (very important, or your knees will suffer!)
- grout (Make sure to bring your sample tile and paint chip to match the color)
- caulk for the base of the toilet and wall edges (You can also use grout)
- caulk gun
- tile spacers, depending on how much space you want between each tile
- plum line with chalk (to draw a line grid so your tiles will go in straight)
- carpenter's square (to assure that the tiles are at a 45-degree angle)
- a board with a towel on it to press the tile down
- rubber mallet (for gently tapping the board to level the tiles)
- level
- trowel for the tile adhesive
- grout float (to apply the grout)
- sealant to protect the grout (I prefer the spray version)
- mixing tool for drill (similar to the one used to mix paint)
- wax pencil and ruler for cutting tile
- tile cutter for round or curved cuts, such as around a toilet
- sponge to smooth the grout into the spaces between the tiles and wash away residue
- dry towel to wipe away the white haze leftover from the grout
- wet saw for straight cuts

When you get home, do a trial tile placement. If you prefer the cut tile to be at the threshold instead of the far wall, now is the time to determine that. After you have laid out the tile, remove it and lay the grid with the plum line tool. Now comes the messy part: mixing the tile adhesive. Make sure you read all of the directions. Don't mix it all at once; tiling is exhausting and tedious, and you probably won't have the stamina to finish the whole floor. Start with only half of the bag. If you have enough energy after that, then mix up the other half. Assemble gloves, water, the bin for the adhesive, your mixing and measuring tools, the bag of tile adhesive, the dust mask and the charged-up drill. Before you lay the tile, assemble the trowel, kneepads, sponge, tile spacer and tiles.

Make sure you don't tile yourself into a corner! Start from the back and end at the doorway. Don't add the grout until the next day—tile adhesive needs at least 24 hours to dry. Keep a damp sponge nearby to clean up any accidental splotches from spilled tile adhesive—trust me, it is hard to remove once it dries!

After 24 hours, you are ready to mix up and begin applying grout. Gather your drill, mixing tool, mask, glove and grout bin. Mix up enough grout to allow for mistakes (This will take some math on your part). After you mix it up, let the grout stand for 10 minutes. Assemble wet and dry sponges, kneepads, the grout float, grout, bins for grout and tile spacers and a dry towel. After another 24-48 hours, apply the tile adhesive, and voila! You are done!



HARD CHOICES WHEN GRIEVING A LOVED ONE

Unfortunately, I have worked with many clients who have gained bewildering belongings when they lost a loved one. This can be a great hardship; not only do they have to sift through items that remind them of their loved one, but they also may feel guilty if they don't keep everything. If the grief-stricken don't have the heart to dispose of what they don't really want or need, those items end up abandoned in a storage unit.

At my grandmother's memorial service, we had to sort through several items that had not been bequeathed. Some were silly; others, quite valuable—an engagement ring, old lamps, a wicker bag from a Mexico trip, a broken pocket watch, a liquor set and framed photos of some unknown relative. It was hard to see remnants of our grandmother's time on earth, but it was also fun to experience what a rich life she led. But as I pawed through the last of her belongings, I started to feel like a vulture. I thought of her other grandchildren. I wanted to make sure that they got first "dibs." So I decided that whatever they didn't want, I would take—and it worked out quite well.

Sometimes, senior loved ones will take the time to sort through objects with their families before they go, leaving only mementos behind. Here are some more suggestions that can save you additional grief after your loved ones are gone:

- Speak to friends or family members about their intentions for their stuff. As uncomfortable as this is, it's also realistic. You can politely hint that you don't need anything else in your small home, or that you really love the setup you have. If you are left with

something that you don't want or need, perform a good-bye ceremony with the furniture, and then sell it or give it to someone you love. Storing it in your basement does the giver a disservice. Sometimes people give their belongings away in their will because they don't know what else to do with them. That passes on their clutter and guilt, too. Remember this when you receive an item you know you don't want and can't store.

- If you really like a certain piece of furniture that also has meaning to others in the family, make sure they know how much that item means to you.

- My good friend's grandmother photographed and catalogued all of her belongings. She numbered them and put the numbers into a hat. Her two grandchildren took turns picking until all the numbers were gone. As a result, no one argued about what went to whom. This method left a difficult task to chance, rather than to the grandmother or her survivors. All she had to do was diligently write down every single item in her house! *

- Go through items together as a family and write down who will get which item. This should help neutralize any fighting. I cannot tell you how many families have broken up over money and material objects. By planning ahead, you can trim this drama from your grieving process.

*This is a great thing to do for homeowner's insurance



LESLIE STRAKA
Cell: 425-922-3760
Fax: 928-223-8938
leslie@personworks.com

ARE YOU A HOARDER? WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS?

My clients often ask me, fearfully, if they are hoarders. Most are not. When I describe a hoarder's tendencies, they cringe. People who hoard are unjustly judged and misunderstood. "Hoarding" has become a dirty word. To say it is a misunderstood symptom of deeper disorders is an understatement.

Before I try to simplify the varying degrees of hoarding performed by different personality types, I ask that you not judge these brilliant and sensitive individuals. Hoarding is a psychological problem that cannot be cured; it can, however, benefit from love, nurturing, medication, support and therapy.

There are many reasons people hoard, so I will provide just a brief list:

- ❖ Their parents were hoarders
- ❖ Their parents didn't allow them to keep or become sentimentally attached to anything
- ❖ They suffer from severe depression
- ❖ They suffer from obsessive compulsive disorder
- ❖ They suffer from obsessive compulsive personality disorder
- ❖ They suffer from ADD/ADHD
- ❖ They have filled their lives with so many things, there is no room for household upkeep
- ❖ They don't want to allow anyone into their home, so they create a home that is not welcoming to strangers
- ❖ The hoarding starts slowly, but then creeps up, takes control and becomes so overwhelming that they don't know where to begin. As a result, they can't see the mess anymore. Only after something disastrous occurs—or they tire of not having a "normal" healthy life—do they make a change.
- ❖ They were once organized but became ill, and to comfort themselves, they buy things. The hoarding becomes a compulsive act they cannot control.

To further study the psychological reasons for hoarding, read the following books: Messy No More

by Sandra Felton, or Conquering Chronic Disorganization by one of my personal heroes, Judith Kolberg, founder of the national study group on chronic disorganization.

The characteristics of a hoarder are the following:

- ❖ They have extreme difficulty throwing anything away
- ❖ Piles are strewn everywhere, making it difficult to move through the space
- ❖ Rooms are so full of "stuff" that they are sometimes uninhabitable or hard to enter
- ❖ Hoarders have favorites, such as newspapers, magazines, clothes, books, tin foil, shoes, trash (such as soda cans, wine bottles, unopened mail), intact parcels, an overabundance of crafting supplies, sporting goods, food, etc.
- ❖ Sometimes hoarders have more than five animals in their homes
- ❖ Sometimes they arrange items obsessively in rows and other times, they pile everything pell-mell so there is no way of knowing what is there.
- ❖ They haven't had anyone over in years for fear of being judged. Hoarding is also a way to withdraw from society. I compare it to creating a protective cocoon from the outside world.
- ❖ Burnt-out light bulbs have not been changed
- ❖ Unwashed dishes remain in the sink for weeks at a time
- ❖ Clutter has amassed at the entrance to the home. (Often there are plenty of bins and tools leftover from past organizational attempts)
- ❖ Boxes piled to the ceiling haven't been touched in years.

Remember this list the next time you wonder if you are a hoarder. If more than five items apply to you, seek help from a professional organizer who works with hoarders. And please, if hoarding is not your issue, have compassion for those who suffer from it.

