

Pro Bathtub Tile Cheat Sheet

Your layout and materials guide for a flawless, watertight surround.

Plan a symmetrical design and install watertight details with confidence. Use these pro techniques to achieve a professional, lasting finish.

● Essential Measurements

2° pitch

Niche sill (1/4-in drop per foot)

Every 8 in

Backer board screws along studs

1 tile height

Ledger above tub's lowest point

3/8 or 1/2 in

Metal edge profile depth

10 minutes

Slake time for mixed thinset

1/16 to 1/8 in

Spacers for uniform grout joints

~48 inches

Standard niche height from floor

Fill tub before caulk

Fill the bathtub with water before applying 100% silicone to the horizontal seam. The weight expands the joint so the seal won't tear during future baths.



● Installation Sequence

- 1 Center the back wall** Measure total width and divide by two to establish your starting center mark.
- 2 Trowel and back-butter** Hold trowel at a forty-five degree angle and apply mortar to the back of every tile.
- 3 Cure and prep** Wait twenty-four hours for thinset to cure completely before pulling every spacer with pliers.
- 4 Grout and buff** Sponge off excess after fifteen minutes, then buff the dusty haze away after two hours.

● Select Your Grout

Find your row: **Your moisture zone**

Your moisture zone	Your pick	Why
Standard dry areas	Standard cement grout	Requires annual sealing
Wet tub surrounds	High-performance grout	Actively resists daily soap staining
Heavy moisture zones	Epoxy grout	Provides maximum waterproof durability

● Site Checks & Prep

- ☐ Verify wall studs are perfectly vertical using a long level.
- ☐ Mock up a dry-lay row to avoid tiny, awkward tile slivers.
- ☐ Locate existing studs to determine the widest possible niche opening.
- ☐ Check tile thickness to choose the correct metal edge profile depth.

● Project Notes & Measurements

Take your time with the prep work, and enjoy your beautiful new bathroom!