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The Design Experts at
Floor Décor Design Center
Orange, Connecticut



Introduction to the World of Backsplash Ideas & Possibilities

How to Create the Backsplash of your Dreams

What makes a backsplash special? Perhaps at the top of the list is that it's an ideal space to express yourself and your design sensibility in an area of your home where you spend a great deal of time. As such, you want it to bring you pleasure and you'd love for it to be a backdrop for comfortable living, conversation and entertaining. Oh, and maybe cooking.

That brings up an interesting point: you want to find tile that's easy to clean off (i.e., practical) yet also beautiful.

As you'll discover by exploring this page, there are lots of options for creating the backsplash of your dreams. We've organized these ideas and some tips into nine sections.

And, if you'd prefer a downloadable version of this information, you'll find that at the very bottom of the page.

Enjoy, and **let us know of any questions**. We hope you'll be inspired to visit us at our showroom in Orange, Connecticut. You'll find a **rich assortment of tile products** to choose from.

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Subway Tile & Brick Shapes



Perspective on Subway Tile

The original subway tile from the early 1900s consisted of a 3"x6" white glazed ceramic tile used on the wall of New York City subway stations. Since then, that rectangular brick shape has not only become classic, but we're seeing it interpreted in a variety of ways that make for fabulous backsplash designs.

>> [See Subway Tiles: A Love Story from HGTV](#)

These interpretations include the following:

- Size
- Material
- Installation

Let's explore each category.



Subway Tile Sizes

In addition to the traditional 3"x6" tile, you can purchase subway tile in the following sizes:

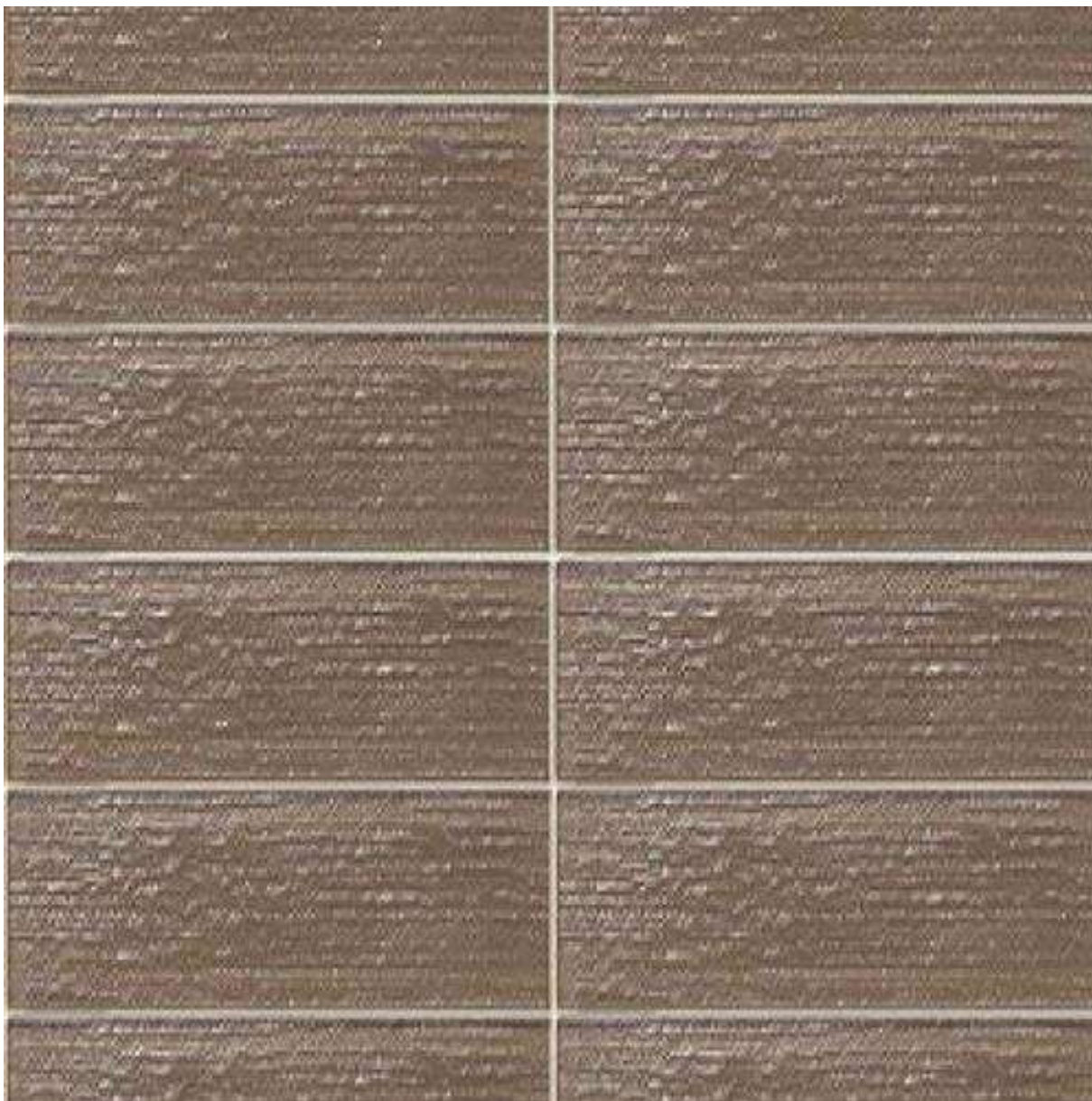
- 2"x4"
- 2"x5"
- 2"x8"
- 2"x10"
- 3"x9"
- 3"x12"
- 4"x8"
- 4"x16"

You can even find brick-shaped mosaics.

In the image below, you see **Medley Grey**, a 2"x5" high-gloss glazed porcelain subway tile.



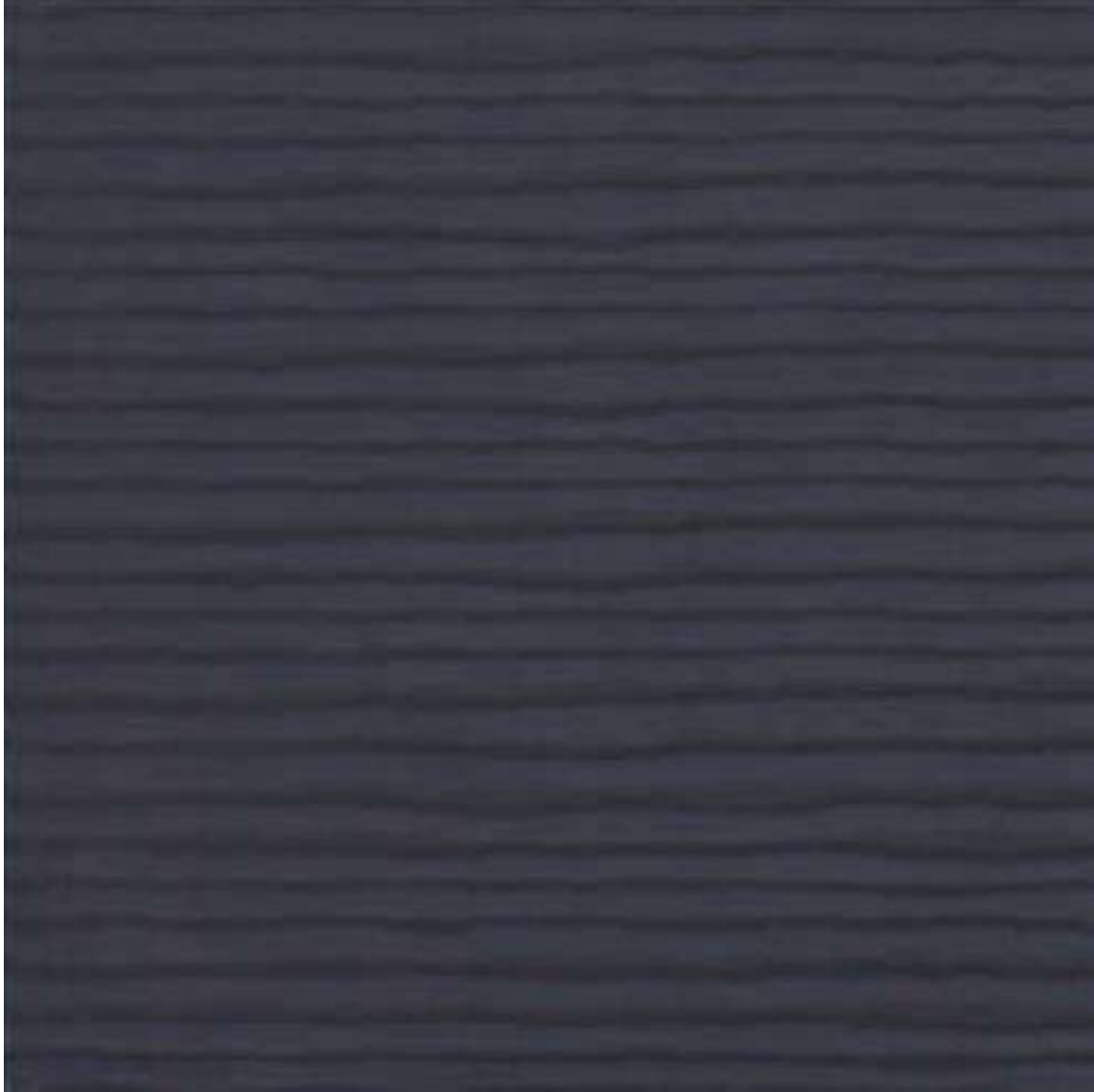
Next, you see [Linen Dusk Shadows](#), a 3x12 glass wall tile with strong surface texture that suggests linen.



Speaking of traditional bricks, here' s **Chicago in color Chicago**, a 4x8 glazed porcelain tile that brings to mind old brick installations from the South Side, State Street and Wrigley Field.



This next item is **Longitude** in color **Deep Midnight**, a **4x16 high-gloss tile** with considerable surface texture. That's quite a stretch from the traditional smooth 3x6 subway tile...



Subway Tile Materials

The **original subway tile was made from ceramic tile**. Nowadays, you'll find also glass subway tile, porcelain subway tile and subway tiles made from Marble, Travertine and other natural stones.

You'll find brick looks made from porcelain tile, in glossy and matte finishes, and a range of edge finishes - from smooth to beveled and everything in between.

The subway tile below, for example, features rough, rustic edges.



Ways for Installing Subway Tile

Just as you have a multitude of subway tile materials, you also have many different options for installing subway tile.

In this next image, you see an all-over pattern in a Travertine subway tile with a decorative band to break up the installation and tie in the countertop pattern.



Below, you see a glossy ceramic subway tile in a grey-blue color in a horizontal layout where the tiles are offset.



The example at the top of this page demonstrates a soldier-style installation. You'll see this in a horizontal format as well as a vertical one as you see below.



If it's a herringbone pattern you prefer, you can do that, too.

Or, perhaps you'd rather a diagonal installation such as what you see below. Notice the horizontal mosaic border and how it adds whimsy to the backsplash design.



As you can see from these examples, the backsplash design possibilities are endless! Just because you're working with a rectangular subway tile doesn't mean you are limited to a boring design.

Squares in Diamond Patterns



Perspective on the Humble Square Tile

As classic as the rectangular subway tile is, the square may be even more so. The most commonly used square size for a backsplash is 4x4 although you may come across 6x6.

In the example above, you see 4x4 squares installed side-by-side as a border along the base of the backsplash. Next comes a line of decorative mosaic and, then, the square becomes a diamond adding visual interest and contrast.

Classic Interpretations

Below, you see a simple yet classic interpretation of the 6x6 square.



That classic interpretation is particularly effective when your square tile features bold decorative graphic patterns as you see below.



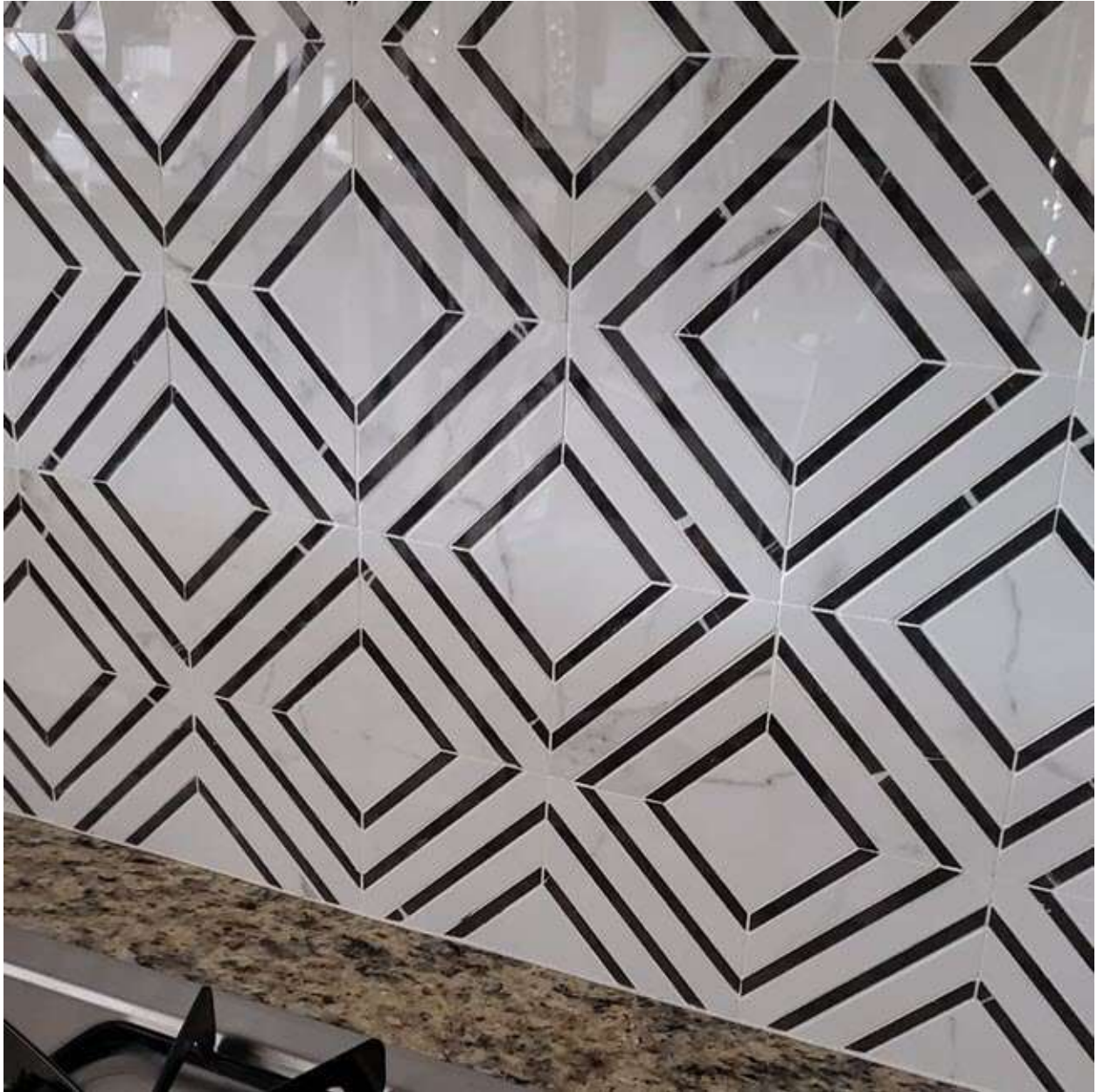
Diamond Patterns

The humble square works particularly well as a diamond in a black and white checkerboard patterns as you see below.



For a modified diamond pattern, try a marble-look graphic porcelain pattern such as what you see below.

Notice how four tiles create the diamond motif.



Porcelain is ideal given how much easier it is to maintain than marble is. It's not sensitive to stains or water and will be easy to keep clean.

>> See [Feast Your Eyes on Marble Look Porcelain Tile](#)

Notice how well this bold pattern works with dark cabinetry.

You can see this installation for yourself in the [Floor Decor Design Center showroom in Orange, Connecticut](#).



If you have your heart set on an installation with Travertine tile, here's an option for you.

This stunning backsplash consists of 4x4 tumbled yellow Travertine natural stone in a diamond motif. In between each square, you'll find 5/8 x 5/8 yellow Travertine polished mosaics.



The end result is warm, elegant, welcoming and coordinates well with the honey-colored cabinets and the rich warm tones of the countertop.

4x4 vs. 6x6 Square Tiles



Something to keep in mind when you are deciding between a 4x4 and a 6x6 square tile is design flexibility.

Using a smaller format tile gives you the ability to do more with your design. Ultimately, it makes the design more visually pleasing.

Even something as simple as turning the tile on an angle makes the space appear larger than it is.

One option if you are truly set on a mainly 6x6 backsplash is to combine a 4x4 as a focal point as you see in the design above on the right.

The one exception is with 6x6 encaustic tiles which feature bold decorative designs that are contemporary and modern in spirit. They pop beautifully!

As you can see, squares offer you plenty of backsplash options whether you're looking for a subtle, understated look or a bold contemporary one.

Decorative Bands



Add Spice to Your Backsplash with Decorative Bands

A terrific way to add color, texture, visual interest and a difference to your backsplash is with decorative touches.

You can create those with listellos - long individual, pencil-shaped tile pieces - or mosaic strips that you can cut into bands.

Above you see white subway tile with an elegant reddish glass tile band that runs parallel to the countertop.

You can work with a multi-colored glass mosaic such as this one called [Fusion Erosion](#).



Here's a mosaic with a variety of textures and materials including stainless steel. This is [Adara in the Specialty Shapes Tile Collection](#).



With a 12" x 12" sheet of square mosaics such as this, you can create a band across your backsplash.



You can mix decorative bands with Travertine tile as you see below.



Here's another combination with white subway tile.

The example below mixes glass tile with different types of natural stones.





Here's how that look translates to a focal wall installation behind the stove.

This particular mosaic tile consists of Glazzio glass and slate in Sag Harbor Grey. The effect is stunning! It's linear, dimensional and talk-worthy.



If a decorative band isn't enough wow! for you, you can choose to do your entire backsplash in a mosaic.

Here's a ceramic crackle mosaic with plenty of color, shape and character.



This next example consists of limestone mosaic that combines brushed, hammered and textured finishes in one backsplash. It creates an exciting visual counterpoint to the brushed granite countertop.



The installation below captures a fun glass tile filled with color and movement. The white cabinets and countertop would be boring without that colorful backsplash.

For a kitchen that is the entertainment center of a home, you can't imagine a more talk-worthy design feature.



If it's metals you prefer, consider tiling your backsplash in brushed stainless steel. Below you see an installation that one of our designers created.

>> Learn more in [Meet Randee Slotkin, Floor Decor's Designer in Orange, Connecticut](#)



Whether it's a decorative band you have in mind or a bigger design statement, you definitely have options!

Large Tile

Backsplashes & Large Tile Do Belong Together!

Traditionally, backsplashes have been the domain of small tile - mosaics, strips and 6x6 squares as you've seen earlier in this article.

What's new is **large tile**.

Below you see an installation with a 12x12 glass tile. Although not a true large format, in comparison to small squares and even smaller mosaics, this bold colorful statement is powerful given the tile size.



Photo by The Kitchen Collection - Search kitchen design ideas

Some of the newer large format tiles come in 18x36. Look how clean and contemporary this backsplash looks given the large rectangular size of the tile, not to mention the neutral striated tones.



Photo by The Kitchen Studio of Glen Ellyn - Discover kitchen design inspiration

Chances are that you're familiar with wood plank tile - long, narrow, rectangular tile pieces that look like wood. Did you know that many of those long tile pieces fall under the category of large tile? And, that they look fantastic on walls?

Imagine using those planks on a backsplash.

Here you see a white-washed wood plank with a distressed finish.



Here's another example with a slightly wider and shorter plank. Notice the variation from tile to tile.



If you like pattern and shade variation, you will love this next installation of wood planks in three contrasting tones.



As tile gets even larger, you'll see backsplashes done with even fewer tiles, creating a sleek, modern contemporary look.

Regardless of your design style, there's a tile type that's perfect for you.

Hexagon & Other Tile Shapes



It's Not All Squares and Rectangles!

Far from it! In fact, shapes are what make backsplash designs so much fun. Let's explore a few.

Arabesque Tile

The arabesque shape is all about curves. As you can see in the image above, it looks elegant, whimsical and contrasts well with the angles of the kitchen cabinets.

The product featured below is Traditions Denim, a high gloss satin finish ceramic wall tile.



Fishtail Shapes

Keeping to the shapely tile theme, here's a shape that looks terrific in a backsplash: The Fishtail which is also known as a fan or tulip shape.

Here, you see it combined with a subway tile installed vertically.



Hexagon Tile Shapes

A classic wall tile shape is the hexagon. You'll find it in a multitude of scales - from tiny to large, and even tiny hexagons that create a larger hexagon shape.

The shape works beautifully in stone as you see below where we're experimenting with a Travertine hexagon and 2x2 glass mosaic decorative band to dress up this elegant Cambria countertop.



Hexagons can get stretched out a bit as you see below with this [Contempo Graphite high gloss ceramic tile](#).



Curious about a large-scale hexagon? Here you see it accessorizing a fireplace.



Wondering about a mid-size scale, here's a clean look for a kitchen wall.



From Hexagons to...

You'll notice that the hexagon shape is being deconstructed into triangles, rhomboids, diamonds and other shapes as you see below from a recent Coverings show.



Organic Tile Shapes

Let's not forget that shapes don't have to be regular. They can also be organic as you see below in this stainless steel pebble installation.



By the way, did you notice how simple many of these installations look? The shape introduces enough visual interest that the final design doesn't require color contrast or different materials.

Interspersing Tile Products

Ready to Get Creative with Your Backsplash?

With a backsplash space, you have the opportunity to get truly creative. It's a contained space; it has the potential to be a design focal point as well as a conversation piece. So, why not get creative?

In this section, we'll share with you ideas for combining and interspersing different tile products for a truly unique statement.

Take the image below which Floor Decor Design Center recently completed. It combines a brick-look subway tile with a cement tile-inspired decorative pattern.



Or, what about combining natural goldgrey jerusalem stone in a brushed finish with stainless steel mosaics?



Or, consider building off of a horizontal theme with this glass subway tile and mixed glass horizontal strips mosaics in the installation below?



Backsplashes allow you to express your inner creativity so you wind up with the space of your dreams. Not only is it functional, but it delights you, too.

Dimensional Tile

Bored with Flat Tile? Add Some Dimension!

Tile manufacturing has come a long way recently. Not only will you find tile that is bigger than ever (you can now find very large and tall porcelain tile panels), but also tile with interesting textures and patterns, some of which can be quite pronounced.

Dimensional tile isn't for everyone. After all, in a kitchen backsplash around a busy and heavily used stove, dimension can make keeping that wall clean challenging.

That said, let's explore ideas and you can decide for yourself which look you prefer.

Regular Geometric Patterns

In the image below, you see a **3x6 subway tile in the Subway Lab series in color ice white.**

The pattern is subtle yet unmistakable, providing visual and textural interest.

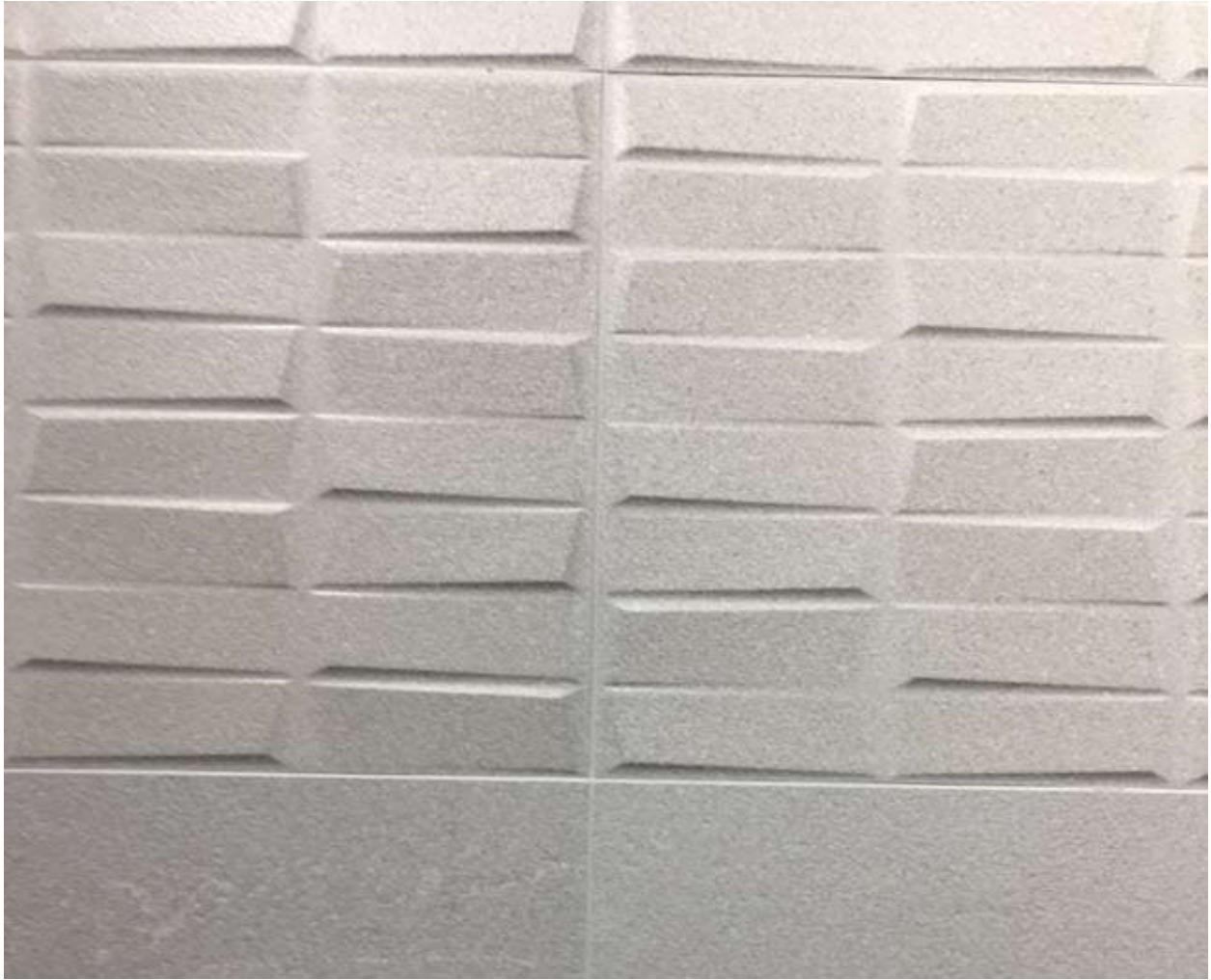


Take that a step further and add color as you see in these square tiles. What's particularly fun with this product is how the dimension alternates with a flat surface to accentuate the strong decorative pattern.



The examples below capture playful three-dimensional experimentation in tile.

Below you see a large size rectangular tile that suggests subway tile with plenty of movement and angular irregularity.



Here's that concept with square shapes and a dose of reflection.



You'll also find geometric versions that suggest playful layers of dimension. These tiles have 3-D qualities that in turn suggest cubes jutting out into space.



If it's the natural look you crave, consider ledger stone for a backsplash.

In the example below, the lighting does a beautiful job of highlighting the surface texture of the stone as well as the textural quality of the individual ledger pieces.



As mentioned earlier, dimensional tile isn't for everyone. However, in the right setting it can be quite a showstopper.

Frequently Asked Questions About Backsplashes

What Questions Do You Have?

In this section, we've assembled FAQs - frequently asked questions that customers ask us before getting started with their backsplash projects. If you don't see your question here, please let us know so we can address it.

Which is Better: Porcelain or Natural Stone?

Porcelain vs. natural stone – sealing vs. not

Seal porous materials

What is the Lowest Maintenance Option?

Maintenance – porcelain, no texture

What Options are There for Finishing Backsplash Edges?

Finishing edges – no bullnose edging, pencil liner instead or Schluter strip (vinyl, metal)

My Kitchen Already has a 4" splash. How do I Integrate That with a Backsplash?

Remove the granite 4" splash for a cleaner look

What Kind of Design is Better for a Backsplash?

It really depends on your preference and whether you prefer a simple design or one that acts as a focal point in your space.

You might even decide to do a combination where you have an understated area with a solid color tile and another - in a visual high-impact area - where you opt for a more decorative design that coordinates with the rest of the tile.

Oftentimes, a good place to play with pattern is behind the stove. That is often a larger area framed by strong lines and shapes. In fact, you'll often see medallions, framed mosaic inserts, and other decorative elements.

As you can see from the many examples on this page, you have endless possibilities.

Before/After Examples & Resources



From Drab to Dream

What dream do you have for your kitchen? Have you been inspired by the products and images above?

Here's one specific transformation to share with you. It started with an extremely drab kitchen.

The transformation included some demolition and plenty of beautiful tile.



Below you see that same kitchen transformed.



Here's the blog article we wrote about the kitchen in this remodel: [Transform a Backsplash or Fireplace with Tile.](#)

For ideas about countertops, check out [The Ultimate Guide to Quartz Countertops.](#)

Here's a short video about backsplash ideas, including some of those featured on this page.

>> [9 Kitchen Backsplash Ideas to Inspire Your Next Remodel \(Video\)](#):

Sometimes, a visualizer can help.

Here's [How to Visualize Your Kitchen and Bath Remodel](#).

Let us know of any unanswered questions!



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