

---

have the advantage of spanning multiple tiles, ensuring not just inter-tile alignment but also alignment across whole rows. If you use this method, use the long strips horizontally and plastic spacers for the vertical joints.



As you set the tile, keep your layout in mind. Even after tiling for years, I have managed to forget as I started to lay up tile that a particular layout called for the bottom row of tiles to sit above the hearth material, rather than behind it. If you do have to start the first row high, you may find it useful to have some scraps of the hearth material and grout spacers handy to hold that first row in position.

As you tile, you will likely have places like over the firebox where your tiles cannot be supported from the bottom – they cannot rest on a row of tiles that isn't there. If your tiles are particularly heavy, you may want to use a setup like the one drawn below to provide a shelf for the tiles to rest on and keep them from sliding down the wall. Another trick is to use 3M blue painters tape to "hang" tiles in place. Run the tape up the wall a foot or so for better holding (or use your ledger as in the picture below), then down across all the rows of new tile. It shouldn't take much to keep the tiles from slipping – the blue tape is usually sufficient.

