

How To Remove Tile Grout

Tools, Techniques and Tips Make Grout Removal Easy

by: Todd Fratzel



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Introduction

This eGuide was created to help you properly remove tile grout from floors, walls, and countertops that have a tiled surface. In order to repair loose or missing grout, the old grout must be completely removed. This is the most critical step in repairing damaged tile grout. Using this eGuide you'll be able to select one of several available tools and properly remove your old damaged tile grout.

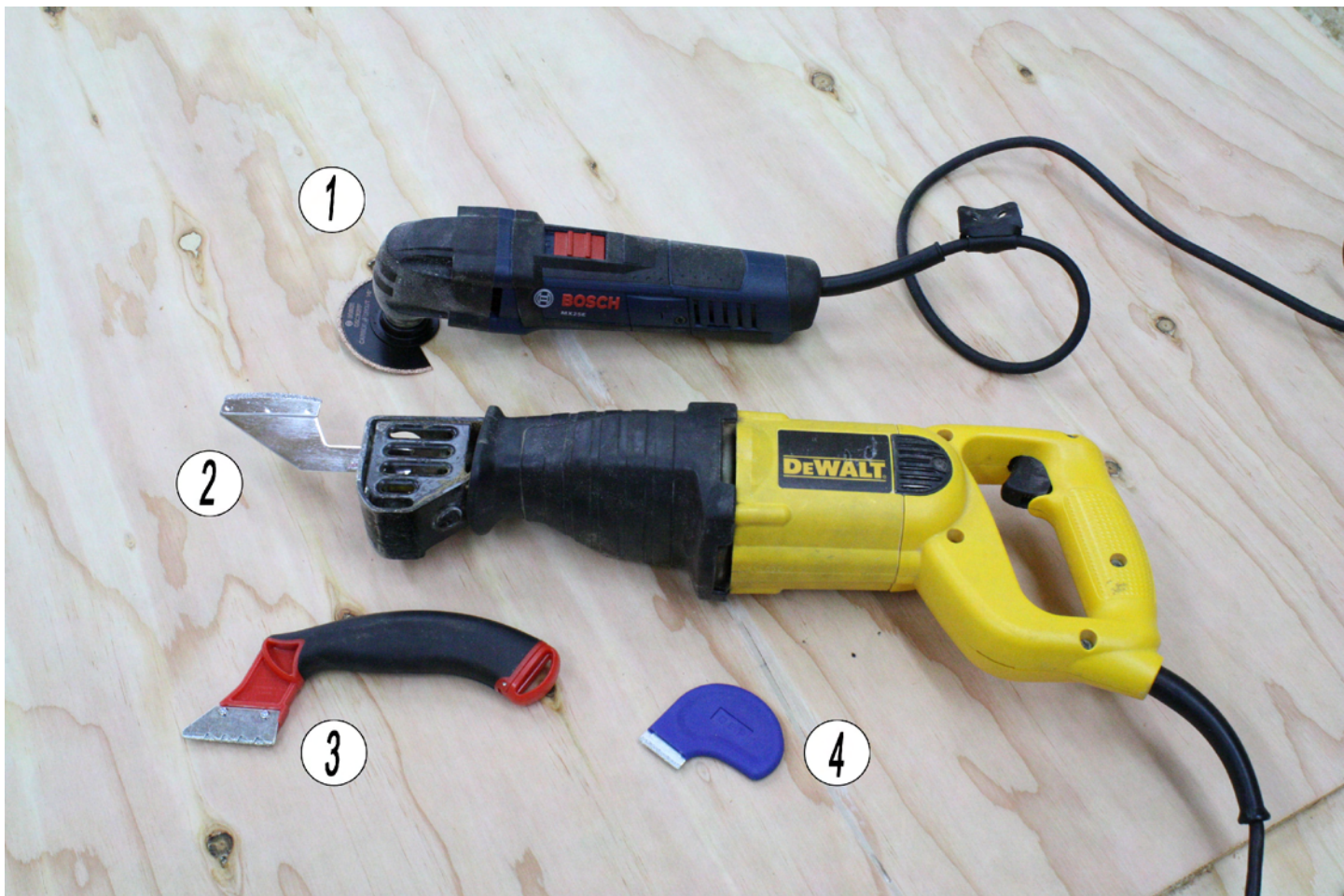
Safety Information

It's very likely that you'll choose to use power tools for this project. Power tools can cause serious injury or death so be VERY careful. Before you use any power tool it's very important that you carefully read all of the manufacturers operating instructions and safety guidelines. If you don't feel comfortable using power tools, it's imperative that you stop and find that confidence through practice. This eGuide does not offer advice on how to safely use the tools featured in it.

Lastly it's important to note that you should NEVER use a power tool if you're on medications, drugs, or alcohol. It's also important that you not use these tools if you're feeling angry, tired, or emotional.

Recommended Tools

For this project there are several different tools that you can use. Each of them has a slightly higher price tag. However, that higher price tag also comes with much better results and less wear and tear on your body. Check out this bonus [VIDEO](#) for additional information on these tools.



1. Oscillating Multi-Tool – Pictured above is the Bosch MX25E Oscillating Tool with a Carbide Grout Removal Blade.
2. Reciprocating Saw with Grout Removal Blade – Grout removal blades can be purchased for reciprocating saws. Pictured above is a Milwaukee Grout Removal blade attached to a DEWALT saw.
3. Hand Grout Saw – The hand grout saw offers an inexpensive solution for removing grout. Priced around \$6 to \$8 this tool can be used to effectively remove tile grout with some elbow grease.
4. Micro Grout Saw – Grout saws come in all different sizes as seen by this small “micro” grout saw. These are really useful for getting into tight locations where larger tools might not work as well.
5. Shop Vacuum – Not pictured above but certainly useful for this project is a shop vacuum. Removing the tile grout will create a lot of dust that will need to be sucked up before it spreads throughout your home.

Why We Remove Grout

Before I show you how to remove tile grout, it is worthwhile to explain why it's necessary. Tile floors are very durable, beautiful, and fairly maintenance free. While properly installed tiles will likely never need maintenance the same is not true for the grout. The grout can crack, loosen, and dislodge itself over time under normal use.

In order to properly repair loose or missing grout, the old grout must be entirely removed. You can't simply just spread some new grout over the old and wish upon a star for it to stay put. In order to successfully repair the damaged grout, you must remove the old grout and then install all new grout.



In the photo above you can see an area that has missing grout. In order to fix this damaged area properly we need to remove the grout along the entire length of the grout space back to an area that will look natural when the old and new grout meet.

For a more natural look, I prefer to remove the grout from an entire section of tile from wall to wall. This way when you re-grout the tile you'll have all the grout match up to a straight line so the change in color won't be as noticeable. If you try to do just a small area, it's likely that the repair will be quite visible.

Remove Grout Using Hand Tools

The cheapest way to remove tile grout is using hand grout saws. These inexpensive tools have hardened steel blades covered with an aggressive abrasive. To use these you simply push them back and forth along the grout joint applying pressure. Continue pushing the tool back and forth until all of the grout is removed from the joint.



To keep the joint clear of grout and help you determine when the joint is fully cleaned out, use a shop vacuum as you use the tool .

Remove Grout Using Power Tools

If you have a lot of grout to remove, I recommend using one of two power tool options. Trust me when I say removing a lot of grout with hand tools can be a daunting task both physically and emotionally! You'll wonder why on earth you tackled the job!

Option #1 – Reciprocating Saw with Grout Removal Blade



The key to making this work properly is how you install the blade on the reciprocating saw. If you look closely at the picture above I've got the saw upside down. In other words, the grout removal blade is pointing towards the top of the saw. This allows you to keep the saw parallel to the floor so that you don't gouge the tiles and cause damage.

Another important thing is to start in the middle of the joint **AWAY** from the tile corners. If you're not careful, you can break a tile very easily if the blade strikes the corner. I like to start in the middle and slowly work backwards towards the corner. You should use a slow to medium speed which allows you to have complete control of the saw and blade. **DO NOT** squeeze the trigger to full speed as you'll almost certainly break a tile.

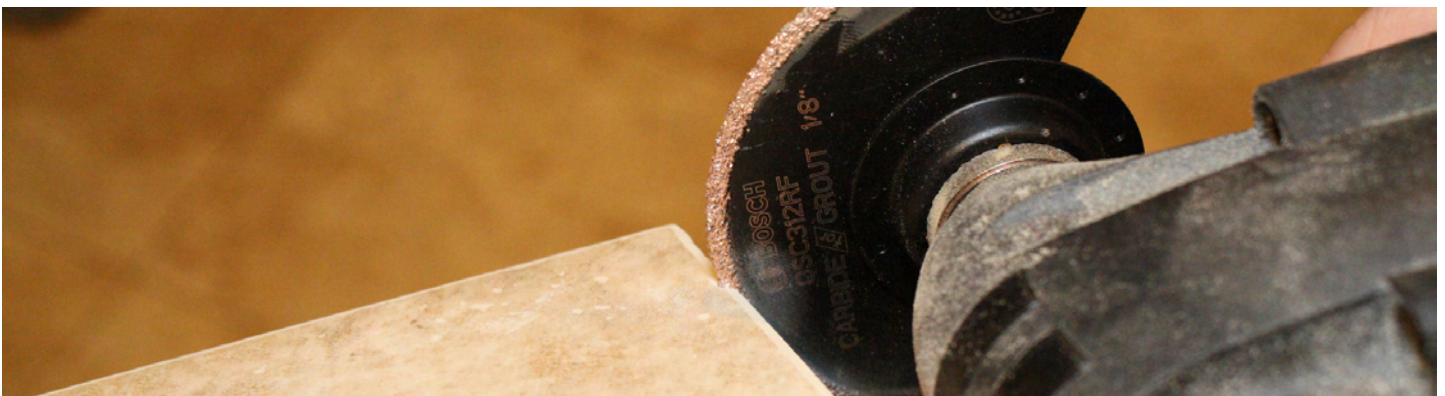


Option #2 – Oscillating Multi-Tool with Carbide Grout Blade



My favorite way to remove grout is using a oscillating multi-tool like the Bosch MX25E pictured above. Oscillating tools use high frequency vibrations to quickly and efficiently cut, scrape, and sand materials. In this application the tool quickly pulverizes the tile grout almost as quick as you can push the tool through the joints. Check out another [bonus video](#) where I show you all these methods.

You **MUST** be very careful with this tool. These tools are very powerful; if you're not paying attention, they will cut into a tile easily. Below is a picture of a sample tile. I cut into it to show you the danger that exists.





There you have it! Successful removal of grout. Now you're ready to re-grout your tiles!