

Green Home Improvement

With
Projected
Savings
& Costs!

65 projects that will:

- Cut Utility Bills
- Protect Your Health
- Help the Environment



Daniel D. Chiras, PhD

RSMeans

Project



Recycled-Content Tile

If you're remodeling a kitchen or bath, or simply replacing worn-out or outdated flooring, consider an environmentally friendly recycled-content tile. Made from a number of clean, nontoxic waste materials, recycled-content tile is a healthy flooring option.

Like other tile products, recycled-content tile is highly durable and will outlast most, if not all, other types of

flooring. Tile resists scratching and is fire-resistant, and because it's so durable, you will save money over the long haul by not having to replace it. (Consider installing a neutral color that will not become dated.)

Tile is easy to clean and, if glazed, won't absorb liquids or release unpleasant odors like carpeting can. Another advantage over carpet is that tile doesn't harbor potentially harmful mold spores, pollen, dust, or dust mites. In fact, tile doesn't contain toxic chemicals and won't give off fumes (a process known as outgassing) like many flooring products, even some green options. In fact, tile is arguably as healthy a flooring material as you can buy.

The use of recycled materials reduces waste shipped to landfills and cuts down on mining of clay and other minerals needed to make conventional tile. Recycling also reduces energy use because making a product from waste material typically requires less energy than fabricating one from raw materials. That, in turn, helps to slash fuel use in manufacturing and helps reduce environmental pollution.



Recycled glass tiles are often used for their decorative qualities, as in this colorful backsplash.

Courtesy of Sandhill Industries, Portland, OR. www.sandhillglass.com
Kitchen design by Paradise and Design.

Recycled Tile Options

Recycled-content tile can be used for floors, countertops, and walls and may be made from either recycled glass or nontoxic mine or factory wastes. Tiles come in two varieties—ceramic and glass. Ceramic tiles may be made from factory waste (known as post-industrial waste) generated by the production of conventional tiles. Some manufacturers, such as GeoStone Ecocycle, produce tiles that contain 50% to 100% in-house manufacturing waste—waste that would otherwise have ended up in landfills.

Other products, such as Fireclay Tile, combine post-industrial and post-consumer recycled wastes. Fireclay tile consists of up to 25% recycled granite dust (post-industrial waste) from a granite-cutting operation. It also contains recycled glass—20% of the tile is old windshield glass, and nearly 9% is recycled brown and green glass bottles (post-consumer waste). The glazes used by this company contain no lead, so they're safer for the workers who apply them.

Recycled-content glass floor tiles from UltraGlas, Inc., contain 15% to 30% recycled glass. Blazestone tiles produced by Bedrock Industries are made from 100% recycled glass, as are the tiles from Sandhill Industries. Although recycled-content glass tiles are good for the environment, they are also prized by many interior

designers because some types have special decorative qualities, such as translucent iridescence, not found in other tiles. Recycled tile for walls and countertops is produced by many of the companies mentioned here and listed on page 23.

Installing Floor Tile

Tile installation is a job best handled by professionals or experienced do-it-yourselfers. A considerable amount of knowledge and skill is required, especially if you're applying tile over uneven wood surfaces or have a complicated design in mind that requires a lot of tile-cutting.

If you plan to hire a professional installer, it's a good idea to hire one up before you purchase the tile. Many installers like to order materials themselves so they have enough for the job and can obtain a contractor discount.



GeoStone Ecocycle floor tiles

Courtesy of GeoStone, Inc.



Recycled glass tiles set in a decorative pattern add beauty and help green your home.

Courtesy of Sandhill Glass, Inc., Portland, OR