

The Inside Story: Secrets Of Installing A Floor Tile Labyrinth

We have designed pre-cut and carefully packaged floor labyrinth kits using virtually every commercially available flooring material. As an example, here is the procedure we recommend if you decide to install a labyrinth made with one common material, 1/8" commercial grade vinyl composition tile (VCT). This general outline will provide guidance for other flooring materials as well.



First, make sure you engage a competent flooring contractor, often through a local flooring supply company. You want to use a careful craftsman rather than a high volume, low bid installer (though with a competitive economy you may get lucky and find both). Installing a kit is a bit more work than putting in a standard tile floor. The installer needs to follow a detailed plan, measuring frequently between reference points to make sure everything is aligning properly.

Next, you and the contractor agree on the primary (field) and line colors. The contractor orders all of the tile for the room(s). The material (two colors) for your labyrinth is shipped directly to our fabrication plant, while the balance is shipped to your contractor. Having the contractor order all the material at one time means that it all comes from one color batch at the VCT plant. Your installer makes a small amount of profit from marking up the material. This keeps your contractor in the loop and on your side.

We cut grids of both tile colors with your chosen labyrinth pattern - we offer 46 designs in a range of sizes and we'll work with you to select just the right labyrinth for your space. We assemble each net tile from the

field and line color pieces, and tape each tile to an individual cardboard sheet. Each is numbered according to an installation drawing and packed in cases on a pallet. We ship the floor labyrinth kit pallet(s) to your flooring contractor.

The contractor prepares the floor and installs the labyrinth using the drawings we provide, then completes the balance of the room with plain tile. He should establish the main axis centerline and intersecting 90 degree angle centerline. Start laying tiles at the center and work out along the four axes. Finish by filling in the four wedges from the centerpoint outward. Be sure the contractor measures back frequently to the centerlines to assure that each tile is square and true, and also that it occupies its full 12" x 12" space within the grid. The installer should take care not to close the cut labyrinth pattern joints too tight. Even though the joints are very, very small, if they are closed tight your labyrinth pattern could be as much as 1/2" out of alignment by the time you reach the perimeter.

Once the tiles are installed, the contractor should seal the floor, preferably with multiple coats, filling the hairline gaps between the tiles and between the colors of the labyrinth. The sealant is your wear layer and a good quality sealant should last a very long time. You will maintain your labyrinth by applying polish and mopping just as you would with normal tile flooring.

For churches, schools, hospitals and other facilities, an indoor labyrinth made with VCT provides a year-round, all-weather option when an outdoor paver or garden labyrinth isn't the best solution.



David Tolzmann

Author
