

Your 8-step painting checklist

1 Pick tiles that take paint well

PVC and faux tin panels paint beautifully. Raw styrofoam needs a water-based paint only, never solvent-based.

2 Clean and de-grease every tile

Wipe with mild soap and water, then let them dry fully. Kitchen tiles need extra de-greasing.

3 Prime with a bonding primer

A plastic-friendly bonding primer gives the paint something to grip. Skip it and the color peels at the edges.

4 Choose a water-based acrylic or latex

Matte hides seams, satin adds a soft sheen. Avoid oil-based paint on foam tiles.

5 Apply two thin coats, not one thick one

Thin coats keep the embossed pattern crisp. A heavy coat pools in the detail and looks muddy.

6 Try a metallic or two-tone finish

A dark base coat with gold or silver rubbed onto the raised pattern reads as real aged metal.

7 Let each coat cure fully

Follow the recoat time on the can. Rushing the second coat lifts the first.

8 Paint before you install when you can

Painting tiles flat on a table beats working overhead and gives a cleaner finish.

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