



## Broken Tile Mosaic Counter

by [Thinkenstein](#) on August 29, 2012

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I'm a refugee from Los Angeles, living in backwoods Puerto Rico for about 35 years now and loving it. I built my own home from discarded nylon fishnet and cement.

### Intro: Broken Tile Mosaic Counter

This tile job improved the appearance and cleanliness of my old cement kitchen counter. It was made with free discarded tiles from friends and the local hardware store. The darker grout looks good with the lighter tiles, and the color helps camouflage the mold that invariably grows on damp surfaces around here.





### Step 1: Bust up some tiles

Tiles are made of fired clay with a thin layer of colored glass on the surface. You have to be a little careful of cuts when handling them. It is wise to sand the edges of all the pieces you are going to use. I did that after laying out the pieces on the counter, so I didn't end up sanding lots more pieces than needed.

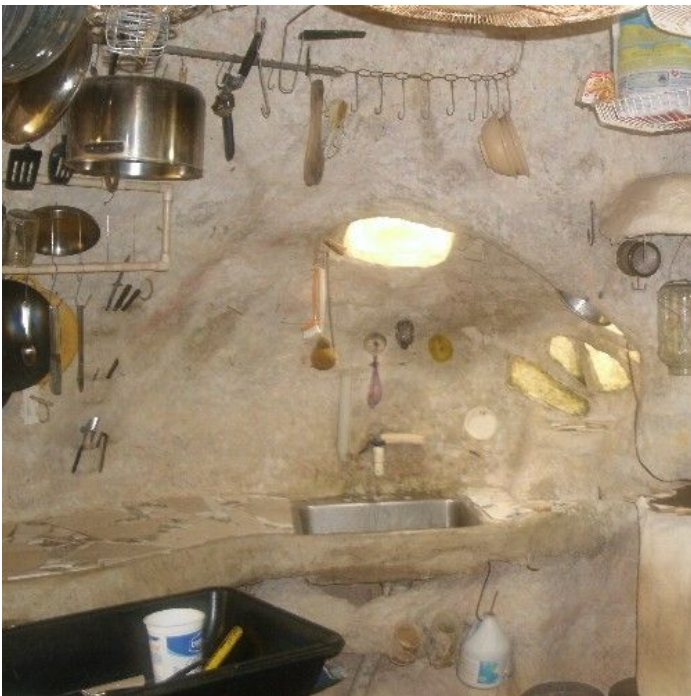
This is not rocket science. It's probably a good idea to wear eye protection, although I didn't notice many fragments flying around as I broke the pieces.





## Step 2: Lay out the tiles

I had a limited number of patterned tiles to work with, along with some white and cream colored tiles. To make sure I didn't run out of any of the tile types before reaching the end of the project, I spread them out in a random pattern over the whole surface before starting to glue things down.



## Step 3: Glue them down with grout

There is a non-shrinking, sticky grout that is used for sticking the tiles down. We call it "pega" here. Another grout, "lechada", which is colored with powdered pigments, is used later to fill in the lines. I used a painter's palette knife as a small putty knife to work the glue grout into place. I was generous with the amount of grout used, which gave me a thick enough layer to accommodate irregularities in the counter surface. Any that oozed up through the cracks was removed with the palette knife.

Since the plan was to have dark grout lines, I then used the pointed tip of the palette knife to dig out the grout some to make channels for the darker grout.

Clean off the top surfaces with a damp sponge. It usually takes several passes, as the grout hardens up. It's much easier to get the grout off before it hardens up, so don't let your gluing self get too far ahead of your cleaning self, or cleaning will be more difficult. .







#### **Step 4: Grout the lines.**

After the tiles are set in place, come back and fill the grout channels between the tiles with the colored grout. Again, use a damp sponge to keep the top tile surface cleaned up as you go along. Since these tiles have relatively sharp, angular edges, I brought the grout right up to the top surface, instead of making recessed grout lines. No sharp edges protrude from the counter surface.

After it has a few days to harden up and dry out, I plan to paint the grout lines with a watery silicone sealer, in hope that it will help prevent mold from growing on it as much, and facilitate cleaning in the future.



## Related Instructables



**How to make beautiful "tumbled" mosaic tiles inexpensively...**  
by DallasDeckard



**Make a tile replacement** by Mike73



**Use Field Tiles To Make A Zebra Mosaic Table** by Creativeman



**Sign Frame for a Mosaic Tile Sign being made for a Greenhouse (Photos)** by CuttingEdgeMetals



**Mosaic for Dummies** by sharong



**Tile Kitchen Back Splash from** by cobourgdave