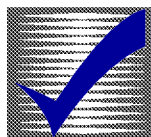




## HOW-TO BOOKLET #3115

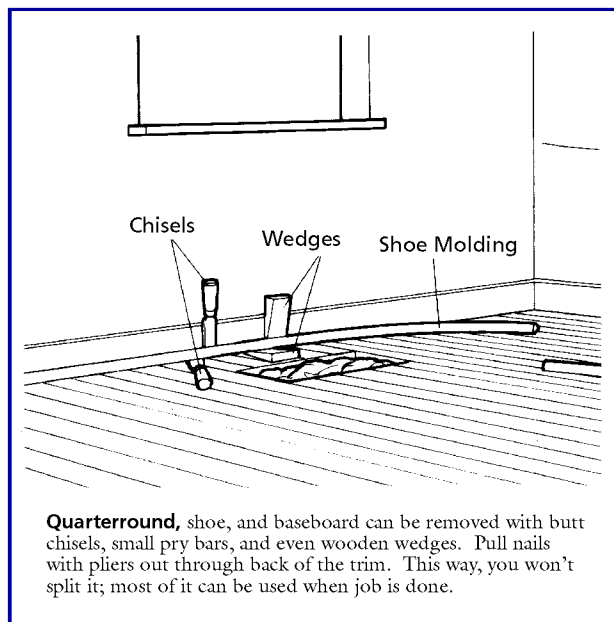
# PARQUET SQUARES



### TOOL & MATERIAL CHECKLIST

- Flooring
- Block Plane
- Back Saw
- Hammer
- Tape Measure
- Nails
- Adhesive (Bulk Liquid Nails)
- Chalkline and Chalk
- Nail Set
- Carpenter's Saw
- Carpenter's Square
- Notched Trowel or Caulking Gun Shell
- Primer
- Wire Cutters
- Level
- Broom
- Pliers

*Read This Entire How-To Booklet for Specific Tools and Materials Not Noted in the Basics Listed Above.*

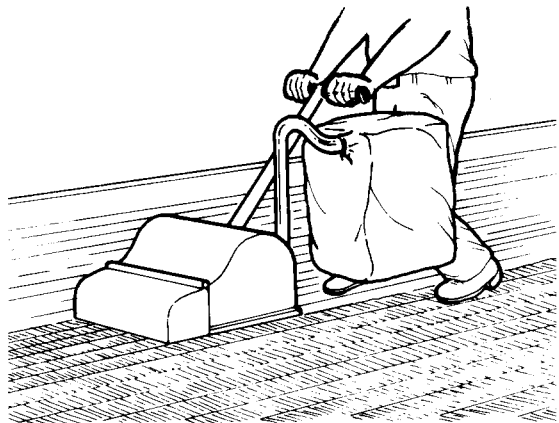


Parquet (pronounced par-kay) tile flooring is the easy way to have hardwood flooring in your home without the work and expense of hardwood strip flooring. The tiles come in a range of patterns and wood species, (many oak) and, best of all, some tiles are pre-finished so you don't have to go to the bother of stain, sealers, varnishes, and polishing waxes. The floor goes down just about as easily as a regular vinyl tile floor. The only hard part—although it isn't all that tough—is trimming, and if you plan the job properly there should be very little trimming involved.

As an overview, parquet tile is arranged and laid very much like vinyl tiles—except parquet usually has two adjacent tongued edges and two grooved edges which dovetail together to make an integral unit. Or, it may have straight edges that are simply butted together. The tiles are “solid” wood laminated and wired together so when adjustments have to be made, a saw and pliers and plane are needed instead of scissors or a knife. The tiles are laid in adhesive such as Liquid Nails in bulk form – not caulking tube cartridges – although you can use caulking tubes for the project. Do not use a water-based adhesive.

### SMOOTH, EVEN SUB-SURFACE

It is important to have a smooth and level sub-surface on which to lay parquet tiles. Unlike resilient tiles that will adapt to slight bumps, humps, and indentations in the underlayment, parquet is hard and inflexible and tends to rock on uneven surfaces, making for a very unsteady floor condition.



**Drum sander**, with vacuum, is the very best way to remove old finish from wood floors and even out humps and bumps. Sanders can be rented; buy coarse, medium, and fine abrasives for sander.

Parquet tiles may be set on old wood floors if the floor is smooth and even. All old paint, lacquer, wax, and shellac must be removed, and the best way to do this is with a rented floor sander with a vacuum bag attachment. You can remove just wax with a liquid wax remover. Buy the good stuff. It works best.

You should not install parquet tiles over an old resilient tile or sheet vinyl floor. The resilient tile or sheet vinyl must be removed and the subfloor cleaned and smoothed for the parquet. If the floor is resilient tile, we recommend a flat ice scraper with a handle or a flat tiling spade to remove the old resilient tile. Dried adhesive can be removed with both of these tools to a certain degree, and then final sanded with coarse and then medium-grit abrasive paper.

It is not a good idea to set parquet onto a concrete

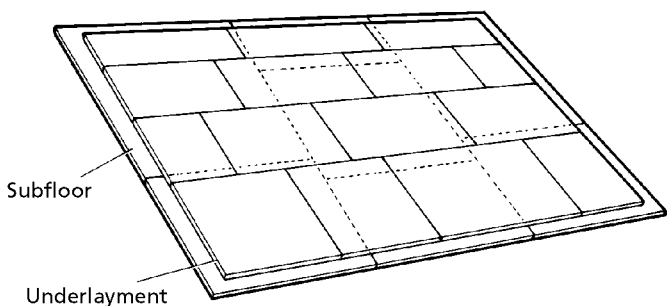
subfloor since the concrete is prone to moisture. We recommend an underlayment over the concrete, unless you know from experience that the concrete slab remains completely dry throughout the year. Underlayment is really a job for a professional; sleeper blocks have to be set to support the underlayment and this often takes specialized equipment too expensive for a 1-time job that you do.

An underlayment also can be used over wood floors that are too uneven to sand smooth. Use 1/8-inch A-C fir plywood with an exterior glue bond, setting the plywood with the A face pointing toward the ceiling of the room. Fasten the underlayment with 8d coated nails spaced approximately 4 inches apart at the joints and 6 inches apart throughout the face. Since there is so much nailing involved, you may want to rent an automatic nail gun for this project. If the subfloor is concrete, and it is not subject to moisture, you can fill any holes with latex concrete patch and smooth down any humps and bumps with a cold or brick chisel and a baby sledge hammer. **Be sure to wear safety glasses and gloves** when working with these tools.

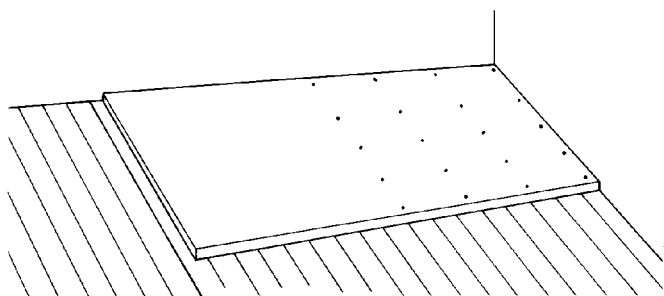
After you prepare the floor surface and before you set the tiles, we recommend that you remove the tiles from packing boxes and let them set in the room in which they will be used for at least 48 hours. This procedure will adjust the tiles to the room's humidity.

### LAY OUT THE PROJECT FIRST

After all nail heads are set below the surface, humps and bumps removed, and the floor is cleaned, layout the room with working lines. Measure the center points on two opposite walls. Drive a small nail into each wall and stretch a chalkline between them, and then do the same on the other walls. Do not snap the chalklines at this time. Instead, with a carpenter's square, determine if the lines form a true 90-degree angle. If this is done correctly, the tiles will form a grid perfectly centered in the room.

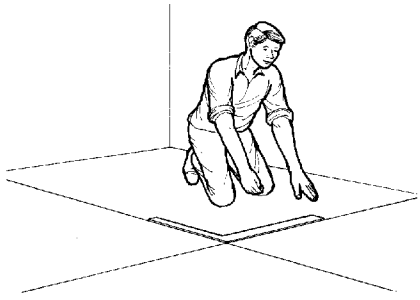


**Underlayment**, which can be A-C plywood or tempered hardboard, is nailed to wooden floors that can't be sanded smooth to accept parquet tile. If plywood, put the good face up; if hardboard, put the smooth face up and nail with coated nails. As a rule of thumb, nail spacing is 3 to 4 inches along joints and about 6-inch on-centers throughout the panel. Keep the nails about 3/8-inch inside the edges; don't butt panels too tight; leave matchbook cover thickness for expansion/contraction.



**As an overpaneled subfloor**, underlayment on a strip wooden floor should be arranged so that its ends do not fall directly over the seams in the strip floor. Locate the joists underneath by finding nails in the strip floor and nail the underlayment to the joists at 4- to 6-inch intervals. Have a helper stand on the panels as you nail them. Since there is lots of nailing to do in this phase of a flooring job, you may want to rent a power nailer; the rental cost is not prohibitive.

**Stretch chalklines,** then check the lines for perfect square where they cross. This junction is key to a tile project that looks professional. When square is reached, snap chalkline; re-check.



If the room is irregularly shaped, or the walls are curved or bowed, or the room has various entrances, you may want to adjust the working lines to minimize whatever visual effects the shape of the room will have on the grid pattern. If one wall is usually hidden by furniture, make the adjustment here. If the room entrance is via an archway, you might want to center the tiles so the flooring will be visually pleasing from this entrance-way. In short, jockey the chalklines around until you have the visual effect that you want.

When the chalklines are set and you have squared the lines (see illustration), snap the chalklines. Then remove the chalklines and check for square once again. If not square, reset the lines and snap them again. The lines must be **perfectly square** where they cross. If they are just a tiny tad off, this error will be compounded as tiles are set to the line away from the center point. This is the prime key to the project.

Next, lay a test row of tiles along the line in one quarter section of the marked-off floor. Do not set the tiles in adhesive. What you're doing here is checking the lines—one more time—for accuracy. Then work along the other line of the quadrant. Get used to the tongue-and-groove construction (if not butt-joined) of the tiles. There will be two adjacent edges with tongues and two adjacent edges with grooves. If you place them correctly, tongue into groove, you will create the basket

weave pattern of a parquet floor. Alternate the grains from wood tile to wood tile, placing the tongues into the grooves and vice versa. Leave a 1/2-inch gap at the baseboard for expansion and contraction of the wood tiles. The shoe or quarter-round will cover this gap when it is reinstalled.

If your flooring has straight sides for butt joints, do exactly the same thing as detailed above—except, of course, you don't have to fit tongues into grooves.

When you're finished with the dry run and satisfied with the layout and pattern, you're ready to lay and set the blocks for real. Remove the dry-set tiles and check the chalklines for visibility.

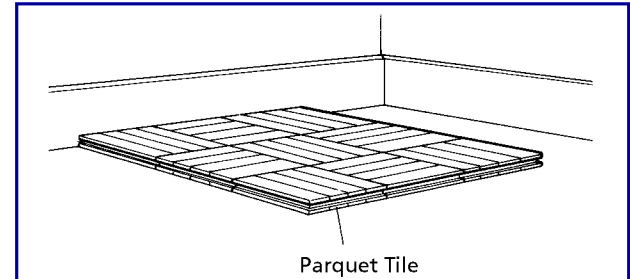
#### 4-STEPS TO LAY-DOWN

Getting the floor ready for parquet tile is about 90 percent of the total job. Once this is completed, the rest is fairly easy, and it involves 4 basic steps.

- 1 Prime the floor with primer to avoid adhesive failure at a later date.
- 2 Before you start to spread the adhesive, read the instructions and note how much time you will have to work before the adhesive sets or dries.

With a notched adhesive trowel angled at about 45-degrees, spread out the adhesive along one chalkline. Start at the intersection of both lines and work toward a wall, leaving part of the chalkline for a guide. At this point, check square once again, using the carpenter's square. If you are even just a tad out of alignment, scoot the first tile into the square position. All other tiles in the entire room will be set from this key point.

Align the edges of the tiles, not the tongues, with the lines, if tongue-and-groove. If not butt the edges squarely together. Try to avoid sliding the tiles. Meet the edges and simply "drop" the tile down into the adhesive layer. After you have laid four or five tiles, tap them



**Make trial run** in one quadrant of the room. Lay tiles tight, without adhesive, and then make any necessary adjustments for less cutting and fitting, and the appearance of the tile project.

with a rubber mallet (or a regular hammer with a block of wood as a buffer block between the hammer and the tile) to bed the tiles. The first 10 or 12 tiles will determine the alignment for the rest of the floor.

- 3 To make border cuts, align a tile over the last one that you set. Then place a third tile over those two, pushing it about 1/2-inch away from the baseboard or wall surface. It helps to put a wood spacer of that width between the top tile and the wall. This space is needed for expansion and contraction, and the tiles you purchased may have a cork spacer that fills the gap. If not, the gap is covered with base shoe molding.

Mark the middle tile using the top one as a guide. Then, with a backsaw, saw along the mark. The top tile will be the piece to place in the border. Always cut through the top of the tile.

If the tile laminations come at this point, you can break the tile by scoring the joint with a utility knife and bending the pieces over. Usually, you will find several pieces of wire holding the tile unit together. Just cut it.

If the fill gap is small, you can disassemble a tile and use just pieces of the lamination. The pieces can be further fitted with a block plane.

**4** Using a tile for a guide, mark how much of the doorjamb must be removed to allow the tile to fit under it, when you come to this point. Then trim the bottom of the jamb with a saw accordingly.

Set one quarter of the room at a time, cutting and fitting as you go. Once the tiles are in place and tapped to assure a good bond, the job is essentially completed.

## FINISHING THE PROJECT

Let the adhesive dry overnight and then replace the shoe molding and/or baseboard if you removed it.

If a cork expansion strip is involved, it should go in place before the shoe is nailed into position.

If an inward swinging door will not clear the raised floor, remove the door and trim off part of the bottom edge. You can use a crosscut saw for this.

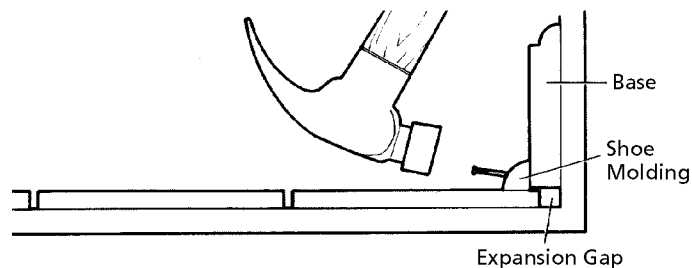
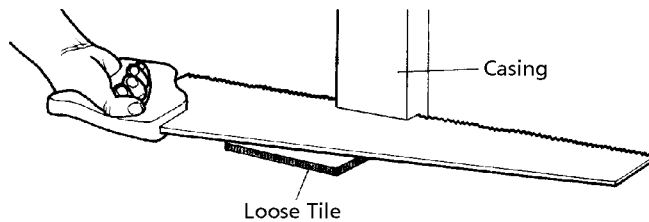
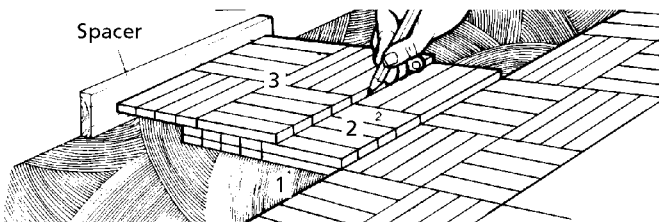
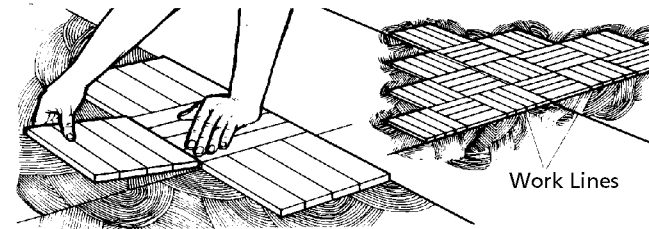
Stay off the floor for a day or so, then finish the surface with wood floor dressing if the wood has a prefinished urethane surface and a quality paste wax if the surface is not prefinished. Don't mop with water.

## SOME SPECIAL GIMMICKS

Adhesive, such as Liquid Nails, gives you an open setting time of about 15 minutes. This time is long enough to complete a small section of flooring, but usually not long enough for a full quarter of the room. Therefore, work slowly in small areas. Easy does it.

As hard as you try not to, some adhesive is bound to ooze up from the subfloor and onto the face of the tiles. This adhesive should be removed immediately and you can buy a commercial parquet block adhesive remover for this.

Some parquet tiles are self-sticking, i.e., the backs of tiles are covered with sticky substance covered with paper "keeper." The tiles go down the very same way as tiles that are not self-sticking. If you use the self-sticking products, use a rubber hammer and tap over the entire pre-finished surface of the tiles as each tile is laid into place.



**Keep work lines** as visible as you can. After several tiles are in place, the job will almost "square" itself. Fit tongue into groove (or put straight joint against straight joint) and just drop the tile down into the adhesive. Try not to slide the tiles; adhesive is picked up and it oozes up through the joints. Remove any from faces.

**Measure, cut tiles** next to vertical obstructions this way: Tile No. 2 goes over tile No. 1 and matches its edges perfectly. Then tile No. 3 goes over tile No. 2 and is butted against a spacer (for expansion gap) as illustrated. Mark tile No. 2 and cut it. It will fit perfectly. Always cut the tile from face.

**At doorways**, cut notch for tile with crosscut saw. The tile slips into this notch. You can use a piece of scrap tile, as illustrated, to guide the saw while the cut is being made. Be careful with wall surface.

**Anatomy of finished floor.** The quarter-round or base shoe is nailed to the base board, not to the tile. Let the job set a couple of days before walking on the floor—or follow the manufacturer's directions for use. Clean and wax the floor with commercial cleaner and quality wax. Never use water on a wooden floor.

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