

# WALL-2-WALL NEWS

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Editor: Rob Covert

## Top 10 Carpet Installs for 6/14

RANK	STORE #
1	6204
2	4127
3	3409
4	901
5	951
6	2560
7	4159
8	4135
9	943
10	939



Great job!

Who will be in the Top 10 SQ YD report next month?

**Thank you for all the hard work.**

## Sanded vs. Unsanded Grout

Grout is the binding element that holds man-made and natural stone tile installations in place. It is a cement-based product that can range in types depending on whether it is for indoor or outdoor installations, for tight joints or wide joints and in color.

The size of the joints is a primary factor in choosing between sanded or unsanded grout. Unsanded grout is for joints 1/8 inch or smaller while sanded grout is used for joints from 1/8 inch up to 1/2 inch. Saltillo grout is a special blend of anti-crack polymers and cement that is used for joints up to 1 1/4 inch in width for wide-bodied installations, such as with natural stone and saltillo (clay) tiles.

The type of material plays a role in the type of grout you use. Polished marble, granite and travertine tiles have a smooth, finished surface that sanded grout will scratch while natural stones, ceramics and other types of material have surfaces that sanded grout affect less. Most polished materials are manufactured to be installed tighter to each other to keep the joints at a minimum for unsanded applications.

Shrinking or cracking are concerns in the use of unsanded grout versus sanded. For example, using unsanded grout in a joint larger than 1/8 inch will result in the grout shrinking within the joint as it dries, leaving a dipped or sunken joint. Sand is added not only to give strength to the grout but also to counteract the shrinkage for wider joints, keeping the grout in a solid, stable form while it dries. Unsanded grout is specifically meant to be used for polished tiles with tight joints, and applying it in larger-than-recommended joints will lead to eventual cracks in the grout. Sand helps avoid shrinking in wide joints and also strengthens the mixture to avoid cracking over time.

## Determining Grout Joint Size

When laying tile, whether on a floor or on the wall, there are no set rules for how thick the grout lines has to be. In most cases it is more of a design choice than a requirement. That being said, there are a few important facts and some guidelines you should know when trying to decide how thick your grout lines should be.

In some cases you may have seen floors or walls where the tiles are laid so close to each other that it almost looks like there are no grout lines. The only way to achieve this look is to use what they call rectified tiles. Rectified tiles are evenly cut and uniform on all sides. The average tile make look the same in terms of color, but are almost never exactly the same shape and size throughout (hence the need for grout lines). Rectified tiles have been put through the extra step in the process to ensure they are even, but they also will cost more.

As a general rule, floor tiles should have grout lines of 1/8 inch or larger, depending on the type and size of tile; most floor tiles are 12 inches by 12 inches, but larger versions are available. Special types, such as slate or quarry tiles, often do not have edges uniform enough to look good with tight spacing. These tiles usually are spaced with grout lines 3/16 inch or wider. Plastic spacers are usually used at tile corners to form even grout spaces. Some really large-format tiles, 18 by 18 inches square or larger, look good with very narrow grout lines that are filled with a grout colored to match the tile. This technique produces a floor that looks like a single slab.

Small tiles, such as the 4-inch by 4-inch style commonly used on bathroom and kitchen walls, often are self-spacing. They have small protrusions called lugs that fit against adjoining tiles and create an automatic space for grout, normally 1/32 to 1/16 inch wide. Grout lines on walls usually do not exceed 1/16 inch because the tiles need to be stacked to help support them during installation.

### CHOOSING A GROUT WIDTH

#### Small Grout Joints

A small grout line width, about 1/16 inch, is possible if the flooring tile is consistent in size (also called a rectified tile as mentioned above). Installing rectified tile flooring with small grout lines decreases maintenance requirements and looks great; however, it may be more difficult to achieve as there is little "wobble room" during installation. Unsanded grout is recommended for small joints up to 1/8 inch wide

#### Medium Grout Joints

Medium-sized grout line widths — 1/8 to 1/4 inch — require the use of sanded grout and are typically featured when moderate size variation occurs among the tiles or when tiles with lugs are used. Because a medium size grout line is easier to work with, and in most cases can hide some slight imperfections, it is often the choice of both experts and the average DIY homeowner.

#### Large Grout Joints

Tiles that vary in size and shape need large grout joint widths — 3/8 to 1/2 inch. Large grout joints will require the use of sanded grout. Marble flooring installed in different-sized, repeating patterns, such as the Versailles pattern, require large grout line widths