

# TRIM

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EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW



it is a little known fact, but most countries do not use trim on tile. that's right, no trim! trim, for the most part, is an american invention created as a convenience in a country where the history of tile is relatively young.

we at clé follow the international model of no trim and urge our clients to do the same. below are some explanations on tile and trim and some instructions on how to install tile without trim. however, for those who would prefer the convenience of trim, we include information on that too.



PHOTO - [HTTPS://ELIC.KR/P/BVNLWA](https://ellic.kr/p/bvnlwa)

### TILE TRIM HISTORY

other countries throughout the world that have had a long (centuries-old) history and a rich culture of tile making and tile usage have not used tile trim. in fact, the rest of the world utilizes far more tiles than the U.S. per capita, all without the use of trim tiles. instead, these countries consider the craft of tile installation every bit as artistic as the craft of tile making. both require technical skill and a devotion to artistry. finishing a tile installation by crafting and forming the tiles to the surface's turns and other details is done completely without the use of these newer trim tile forms (such as bullnose, quarter rounds, etc).

as an example - imagine if a surface clad in wood was finished with bulky and contrived wood trim instead of mitred and crafted into a seamless finish.

## AVAILABLE TRIM



### TRIM FREE TILE AS A DESIGN FEATURE

tile looks best when cladding surfaces meet seamlessly and in a monolithic fashion. think of a tiled wall from floor to ceiling as opposed to half way up a wall. the floor to ceiling look, which forgoes the use of tile trim, is not only more affordable (as trim tiles are generally expensive), but it also offers a more custom finish. in addition, most tiles are made outside of the U.S. and therefore do not come with tile trim.

### CLÉ TRIM RECOMMENDATIONS

based on the historic tradition of setting tiles without trim, as well as the improved aesthetic presentation, clé prefers and recommends tiling without trim.

that said, clé does offer some of our tiles with a trim option primarily because they are a tile with a distinctive american-made aesthetic - such as our factory produced subway tiles and our artisan crafted glazed thin brick tiles. these trim tiles are available on our website, located on the product pages for these collections. however, it should be stated that for these two tile collections (subway tiles and glazed thin bricks) we offer the most minimal trim - not a full range, but enough trim to allow those clients in favor of trim to finish their projects with our select edge treatments.

TRIM  
DESCRIPTION  
& CLÉ  
ALTERNATIVES

## SURFACE BULLNOSE

also known as “edge trim”, surface bullnose is recognizable in the U.S. by the curved finished edge on one side of a square tile or on either a long or short side of a rectangular tile. this trim is the most common tile trim used for wall tiles at the top edge or the side edge of a tile project. in this same trim category, you can also find edge trim that isn’t “bullnosed” but is simply a finished, glazed edge.

## CORNER TRIM (AKA DOWN ANGLES)

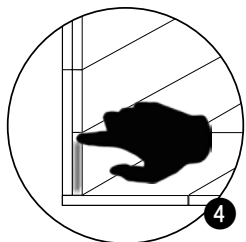
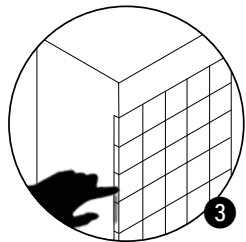
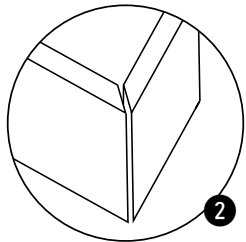
surface bullnose can also be available in corner pieces that allow the top edge and side edge of a project to be joined in a bullnosed manner at the “corner” of the installation.

## CLÉ SURFACE BULLNOSE ALTERNATIVE

most other countries do not require this trim as tile projects rarely occupy only a portion of the wall space. the practice of tiling only a portion of a wall or floor was a feature utilized by U.S. builders to reduce the cost of the tile finish. it is not appropriate to finish a project with the least amount of tiles, as this leaves the exposed spaces vulnerable to mold and moisture. go all in and consider tiling the whole surface from floor to ceiling. not only is it a design statement, but it allows the wall to be more sanitary as it is easily cleaned, and it will never need to be painted.

the following is the clé way to finish your project without using surface bullnose:

- 1) ensure your project is protected from floor to ceiling like photo.
- 2) if you have a project that needs to turn a corner, neatly miter that edge to give it the cleanest, crafted finish without using a trim tile.
- 3) have contractor build-out sheetrock surface to meet tile inset for one flush continuous surface
- 4) easiest of all, run a grout joint bead of caulk or grout along an exposed tile edge - just like they do in europe.





DESIGN - WWW.ELLISARCHITECTS.COM PHOTO - WWW.KATALVES.COM

## QUARTER ROUND TRIM

in certain parts of the U.S. the building code calls for shower installations and some backsplashes (both kitchen and bath) to be finished using a standard “mud-set” as the protective substrate. a mud-set installation is where the installer crafts a cement wall using a metal lathe and a build-up of cement to create a moisture-impervious substrate to protect underneath the tile surface that will be flooded with water.

## QUARTER ROUND CORNER

though quarter rounds can be easily mitered when an installation requires that the quarter round trim turn a corner (either horizontally or vertically), the U.S. tile industry makes a trim that enables the quarter round to easily turn this corner without requiring the tile contractor to miter the bead. this trim piece is called a quarter round corner, or “beak”. the unique shape of this trim piece resembles a bird’s beak.

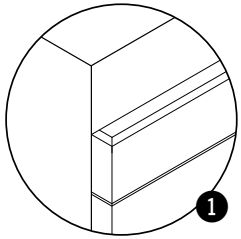
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## QUARTER ROUND CLÉ ALTERNATIVE

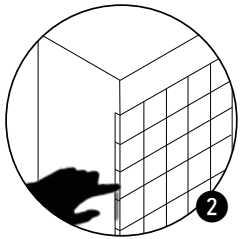
the same alternatives to edge trimming with surface bullnose trim applies to using quarter rounds.

clé never instructs that an installation take a cost-cutting effort that leaves adjacent walls exposed to moisture. clé instead recommends that the substrate used for a shower or other wet surface (mud-set) be applied to cover the entire wall surface in that area (floor to ceiling, and wall to wall), thus forgoing the need for quarter rounds.

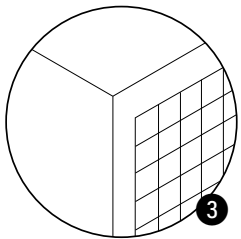
CONTINUED



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2



3

#### QUARTER ROUND CLÉ ALTERNATIVE ( CONT. )

1) however, if one of your shower or wet walls share a much larger wall of a given project, then clé recommends that the thicker mud-set be trimmed out by setting tile to the ceiling and mitering the edge tiles and finishing the other edge with another mitered edge tile strip that has been cut-to-size to cover the thickness of the mud set.

2) having your contractor build out the sheetrock so that the surface of the finished sheet rock is FLUSH with the surface of the tile. run a grout joint bead of caulk or grout along an exposed tile edge.

3) a clean alternative is to have your contractor build out the sheetrock so the tile is inset and the surface of the finished sheet rock is FLUSH with the surface of the tile.





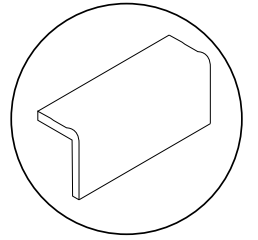


## COUNTER TRIM

this specific trim was developed to form a front edge around a kitchen or bath counter and is often found in installations such as older tract homes and apartment units. clé considers counter trim to be one of the more extreme types of tile trim developed. the shape of the profile is very rounded creating a visible and bulbous counter edge.

## COUNTER TRIM CORNER

this piece is used to form a corner for counter trim, but it can also be created by mitering two pieces of the counter trim itself.



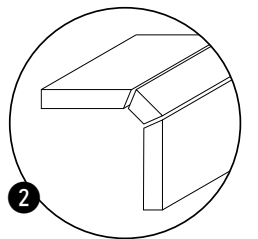
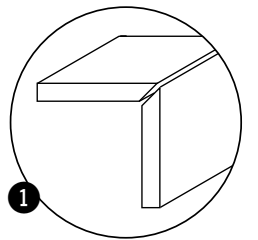
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## CLÉ COUNTER TRIM ALTERNATIVE

in general, clé will steer all clients away from tiling kitchen counters in favor of surfaces that can avoid the use of grout (such as stone and quartzite slabs, poured concrete, etc). grout can be an issue for cleaning tiled kitchen countertops due to the porosity of the grout and the indentation of the grout fill. crumbs, sauces, etc., can get trapped in the grooves created by the grout lines, and the porosity of the grout itself can yield a dangerous environment for bacterial growth.

1) however, for bath vanities and other surfaces that do not support food-grade uses, tiled counters can not only be lovely, but they can also be useful. for these types of counter projects, clé only recommends crafting your counter edges by mitering this finish. for this use, simply bevel your corner edges into a fully mitered corner piece.

2) or create a more artistic edge by crafting a bevel from the field tiles. this is a particularly artful and defining feature as it showcases the craftsmanship of the installation.





## STANDARD BASE AND COVE BASE

in the tile world, baseboard is simply referred to as “base”- either standard base or cove base. for most floor applications, it is useful to have a base board in order to protect the wall area that abuts the floor from scuffing and damage caused by foot traffic.

### STANDARD BASE

standard base is like most wooden baseboards that you’ve seen for hardwood or other type floor finishes. however, with standard base, the standard height is usually 4" to 6" high, and there is typically a slight bevel or rounded edge at the top.

### STANDARD BASE CORNER

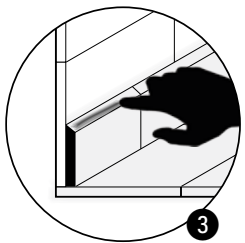
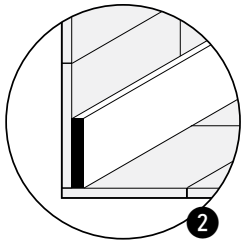
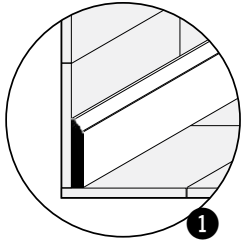
in order to create an inside corner or an outside corner, your installer need only cut a vertical miter from the base (inwardly or outwardly) in order to allow the base to turn corners – both inward and outward corners.

### COVE BASE

for cove base, the only difference from standard base seems slight but is actually substantial. there is a curve where the cove base meets the floor - see diagrams on following page. this cove is known in the industry as a “sanitary cove” and was developed and standardized in the industry as a feature that keeps bacteria in commercial food based and sanitary applications (commercial kitchens, bathrooms, etc.) from developing bacterial growth in the 90 degree corner where the base would typically meet the floor.

### COVE BASE CORNER

as with standard base, in order to create an inside corner or an outside corner, your installer need only cut a vertical miter from the base (inwardly or outwardly) in order to allow the base to turn corners – both inward and outward corners.



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### STANDARD BASE ALTERNATIVE

many floor tiles do not come with a matching standard or cove base, and that's mostly because as mentioned, trim is not a standard feature of most tiles made around the world.

furthermore, not all floor tile projects require a tile baseboard. therefore, if your tile does not have its own coordinating baseboard, here are a few ways to accomplish a baseboard finish:

1) use standard traditional or 2) modern wood baseboard trim . this is perhaps the most popular way to finish a floor tile at the walls.

3) cut the same tile that's being used for the floor, into 4" or 6" strips or base. the top edge, which exposes a cut edge, will look unfinished. therefore, we recommend that the installer finish off this edge with a caulk (matching the grout) edge that's been applied like a bevel.





DESIGN - WWW.ELLIS-ARCHITECTS.COM PHOTO - WWW.KATALVES.COM

## COVE BASE ALTERNATIVE

there is even less tile that makes base trim available for cove base. since cove base can be a requirement for many commercial floor applications, there are a number of resolutions for this need:

1) as with standard base, the installer can cut the floor tiles into a base strip, finishing the top edge with caulk. however, at the base the installer would then need to add a curved trim, aka finger cove, between the wall and floor joint.

2) if there is wall tile in the application, the wall tile may come with a cove base. if so, then it is recommended that the coved curve required be formed using the wall cove base. if the wall tile does not have a matching cove base, step 1 (above) can be used to include a finger cove to the joint between the wall and floor or 3) a finger cove for the transition between the floor and wall tile

4) if there is wall tile in the application and the project calls for a more "organic" finish to the cove requirement, some codes will allow an inward bevel at the coved joint. this application utilizes a much thinner strip of the floor or the wall tile to be cut and inserted into the cove joint area. by doing this, it allows for a cohesive look with the tiles (either utilizing the wall tiles for this beveled piece or the floor tiles).

