



## How to Lay Slabs



### Step 1

Create your mortar by either mixing four parts sharp sand to one part cement, or use a pre-mixed alternative. If using a pre-mixed one, add and mix in clean water straight into the tub or bag. It should be of a slightly moist, smooth and damp consistency, not wet or sloppy.

Use the trowel to lay the mortar onto the sub-base. Do enough for one paving slab at a time.

Wet the back of the paving slab with a hand brush dipped into a bucket of water. This dampness improves adhesion and make it easier to slide the slab into position.



### Step 2

With a helper, carefully lift the first slab and lay it on top of the mortar.



### Step 3

Use a piece of timber and a club hammer or rubber mallet to tap the slab into position. Take great care not to crack the slab.

Cut in the external edges of the paving flush with the slab as you go with a trowel.



### Step 4

Continue to lay the first row of slabs.

Make spacers (between 5 and 10mm wide made from pieces of timber) and use these in all the joints to ensure they're the same size.

Use a long spirit level to check and re-check that the surface is flat and level. If you put a slab down and it rocks on the mortar, take it up and re-lay it; you're unlikely to be able to correct it by trying to push mortar underneath a slab once it's in position.



### Step 5

When the first row is complete, lay slabs along the two adjacent outer edges. If you're using a grid pattern, the first and last slabs on alternate rows will be half slabs.

Fill in the central area, working back row by row.

Keep using a spirit level to check and re-check that the surface is flat and level.



### Step 6

Leave the mortar to set for 48 hours before walking on the slabs (or as recommended by the packaging instructions). Only then can the joints be filled. If the slabs are wet or it looks as if rain is imminent, wait for a drier day and cover with tarpaulin to protect against the elements.

Remove the wooden spacers and fill the joints either with more mortar (pictured) or paving grout (also known as dry joining compound).

**If using mortar:** Fill all the joints with mortar, and once all filled, push the mix down firmly with a trowel or a piece of wood, then brush in more mortar. Repeat this process three or four times to prevent holes from appearing in the mortared joints.

Carefully brush away all the excess mortar – take time over this, as it's easy to end up with mortar on the slabs.

**If using paving grout:** Brush it in and compact with a jointing tool. It dries hard in a few hours, so protect it from rain with tarpaulin until then.