

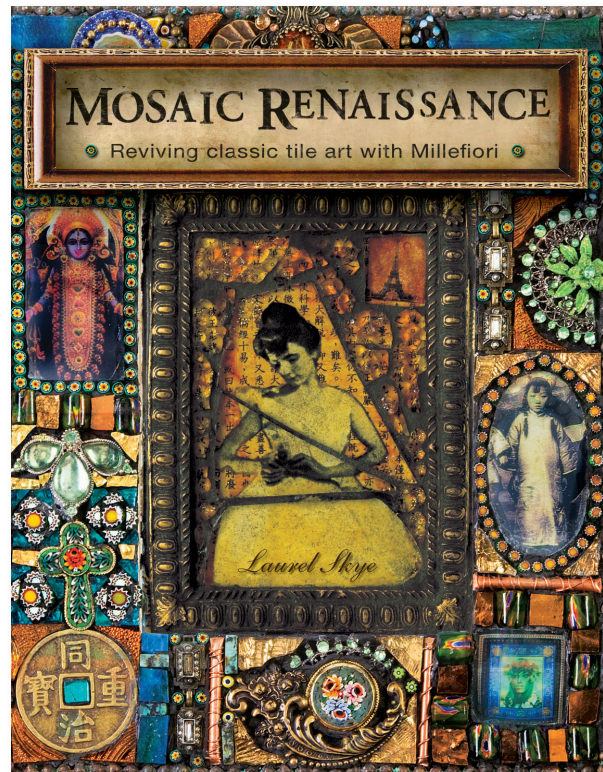
Tile Cutting Techniques

Let's say you're already doing mosaic. At some point you'll encounter a part of your work where a square tile just won't work. Or maybe you're ready to move onto something a little more advanced. In this lesson, Laurel Skye will teach you how to cut tile in all new ways.

Skye, author of *Mosaic Renaissance*, defines the types of tile and illustrates the shapes of the cuts. She then moves onto the techniques that you'll use to make those shapes; you'll learn to point, pinch and pop and the tunnel hold method, as well as the most efficient way to cut millefiori. Before you know, it, you'll be mosaicking things you never thought possible!

To learn more about or purchase *Mosaic Renaissance* by Laurel Skye, [click here](#).

www.CreateMixedMedia.com



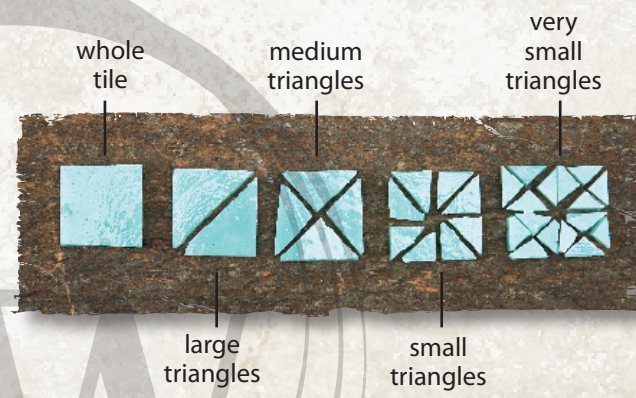
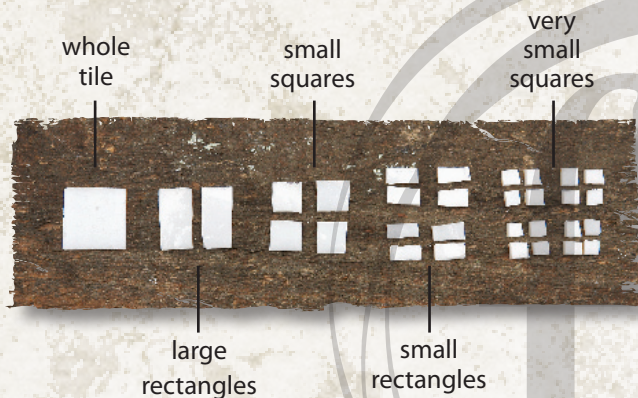
Mosaic Renaissance is published by North Light Books, an imprint of F+W Media, Inc.

Cutting Techniques

When you cut your tesserae you will open a door to more pattern-making options because you can create all sorts of shapes and sizes. The holding methods that I suggest for cutting may be a bit awkward at first, but stay with it because these techniques will help you achieve a secure hold on your tile for cleaner, more exact cuts. Plus, you'll have fewer pieces flying away and hitting the floor, leaving you wondering "where in the %*\$# did that go!"

Description of Cuts

Here you can see different cuts you can make from whole pieces of tile and millefiori.

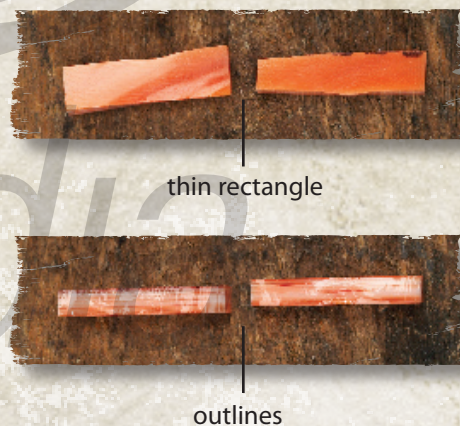


SQUARES AND RECTANGLES

These pieces show different sizes cut from one $\frac{3}{4}$ " (2cm) tile using the Point, Pinch, Pop method.

TRIANGLES

These pieces show different sizes cut from one $\frac{3}{4}$ " (2cm) tile using the Point, Pinch, Pop method.



MILLEFIORI IN FOUR WAYS

These pieces show different ways to use cut millefiori.

intero: whole slices

di profilo: cut in half, cross section face up

centro verso l'alto: cut in half, cut side up

centro verso il basso: cut in half, cut side down

THIN RECTANGLES

These pieces show two ways to use rectangles cut from one $\frac{3}{4}$ " (2cm) tile using the Tunnel Hold method.

thin rectangles: set flat side down

outlines: set cut side down

Cutting Millefiori

Even though each whole millefiori is a design in itself, it can be manipulated to form different shapes for creating more patterns. Cutting millefiori makes your tile go further, as well as offering different ways to achieve a rich pattern or texture in one's mosaic.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

millefiori
wheeled glass cutters



CUT IN HALF

The easiest and most reliable way to cut millefiori is right through the center of the pattern. Hold the outer sides with your thumb and index finger while cutting.



CUT IN HALF QUARTERS

The halves of thick pieces can be cut again through the belly, giving you four quarter sections from one whole millefiori.



WRONG WAY TO CUT

When cutting a whole piece of millefiori, this is the most difficult way to cut it in half. Cutting the glass from the side, through the "skin," will usually result in slivers ... and frustration.



SAVE A JAGGED PIECE

Have a crooked cut? No problem! Use your wheeled cutters like scissors and just trim away the jagged edge.



CREATE ROSETTES

Plant a mosaic garden in a heartbeat! Set a whole piece of millefiori first (intero). Then place four half-cuts (di profilo) around the whole piece.

Point, Pinch, Pop Method

I devised this holding method to be used with wheeled glass cutters while working with different types of glass tiles (i.e., stained glass, vitreous glass and smalti). This hold will give you excellent control over your glass, as your thumb will naturally be in alignment with your proposed cut line and lay next to your wheel, acting as a guide. This cutting method is especially useful for cutting on the diagonal, achieving uniform triangles.

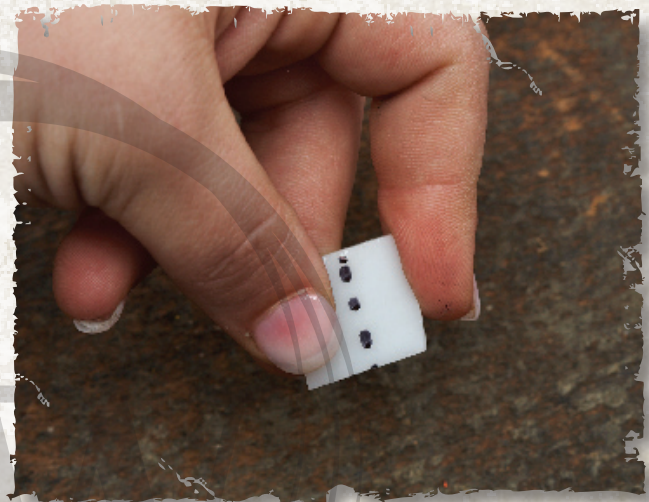
WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

glass tiles
wheeled glass cutters



1. POINT

Point your index finger while the thumb and middle finger pinch the tile. If you're right-handed, do this with your left hand. Your right hand will hold the cutters.



2. PINCH

Pinch the left side of the tile, against the flat surface, with your thumb and middle finger. Your thumb should align with the proposed cut line (represented in the photo by the dotted line). Pinch the other side of the tile, along the edge, with your index finger.



3. POP

Place the wheeled cutters over the center of the tile, over the cut line. Now pop your tile in half!



The Fourth P



It's helpful to add a fourth *P*—pray—right before you pop. This moment of prayer is not so much, "Oh, heavenly Father help me to make a good cut." It's more like taking a moment to line up your intended cut, breathing, planning on making a straight cut, then aiming and ... pop!



CUT A RECTANGLE IN HALF

Use the Point, Pinch, Pop method to cut your rectangular piece into two smaller squares.

CUT A TRIANGLE

Use the Point, Pinch, Pop method to cut triangles. However, make your cut along the diagonal and place your index finger on the corner.



CUT CURVES

Using the Point, Pinch, Pop method results in straight cuts. But sometimes you want a curved piece. Cutting rectangles from the edge of the tile instead of down the center will give you a curved cut.

CUT SMALTI

You can cut smalti using wheeled cutters and the Point, Pinch, Pop method. (The color is most brilliant with the cut side facing up.) Cutting too close to the edge of the glass results in curved cuts, so be careful to cut in the center.

CUT SMALL CERAMIC TILES

Cutting small ceramic tiles using tile nippers is slightly different than the Point, Pinch, Pop method. Pinch the tile with your index and middle fingers behind the tile and the thumb in front, at the base of the tile and partly over the cut line. Place nippers about $\frac{1}{8}$ " (3mm) into the tile. Now pop! These halves can also be cut in half again.

Troubleshooting: Dull blades

To avoid dulling blades, it's important to use the right tool for the job. Cutting ceramic with wheeled glass cutters will dull your blades very quickly. Be sure to cut ceramic with tile nippers.

Tunnel Hold Method

I use this cutting method to create four thin rectangles from one glass tile. (Using this method, as opposed to the Point, Pinch, Pop method results in more consistency in size among the rectangles.)

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

glass tiles
wheeled glass cutters



1. HOLD TILE

Place your middle finger to the left of the proposed cut line and the index finger to the right (both at the top). With your thumb, support the base of the cut line on the bottom.



2. CUT WHOLE TILE

Place the wheeled cutters in the center and hold firmly, making a quick pop to cut the tile in half.



3. CUT HALVES

Now cut each half. Support the half firmly with your index finger on top and thumb below. Center the cutters in the middle of the rectangle, hold securely and make a very fast pop.

Outlines

The widths of thin rectangles cut with the Tunnel Hold method, no matter how careful you are, will always vary, and they will have slightly jagged edges. When you want to have a thin, continuous line with an even width in a mosaic pattern, use what I call outlines.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

glass tiles
wheeled glass cutters



SET OUTLINES

First, cut thin rectangles using the Tunnel Hold method. Instead of setting these cut rectangles in the mosaic as you normally would—with the cut edges facing side to side (see rectangles on the left)—set them with the cut edges facing up (see rectangles on the right). The outlines will appear more consistent in size because their widths are all the thickness of the tile.