

# Tips for laying bricks

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As with most trades, when a tradesperson lays a brick, it looks so easy, and when you (or I ) try it, it doesn't work so easily. So I went to the trades training section of George Brown College in Toronto, Ontario to pick up some of those little tricks that make it all so easy. First trick I learned immediately. When you want to slide your trowel under the mortar to pick it up, move in a quick jerky motion and you will get a lot of mortar. If you move slowly under the mortar it tends to move ahead of you, or simply fall off. Second trick: 'snap it on'. That means to simply jerk your trowel up and back down a small distance quickly. The mortar will float a bit then snap back down onto the trowel. That gets rid of a bit of excess, but most importantly causes the mortar to stick well enough to the trowel to allow you to turn the trowel on its side or even up-side-down to apply the mortar to the end of the brick. I have noticed the snapping motion before, but never realized that it was one of the critical tricks of getting mortar properly onto the brick. Then it is easy to wipe the mortar onto the end of the brick, wipe to one side, wipe to the other side, wipe across the top and you end up almost instantly with the pyramid shape of mortar on the end of the brick that you see in the photo above. Always lay a brick into a full bed of mortar and then slide that end mortar over to the previously laid brick. As you place each brick you are actually only mortaring the bottom and one end. Using a guide line can actually allow the brick layer to make a straighter wall than with any other construction, as they adjust the top of each brick to the string line. Clean off excess mortar immediately to prevent staining of the brick. Now still pictures really don't do this snapping and wiping action justice, you really must catch the next re-run of this show. For some interesting information about laying bricks in extremes of weather, check out Working With Mortar .

**Keywords:**

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