

The Vinyl Flooring Buyers' Guide

How do you choose vinyl flooring? Learn about this type of flooring and what it is made of and more.

Vinyl flooring is the most common type of resilient flooring and by far the most popular flooring material in the U.S. Often, resilient flooring and vinyl flooring are two interchangeable terms.

Vinyl flooring comes in both low end and high-end types. Low-end vinyl flooring is often recommended if you want to have the least expensive type of flooring material. However, high-end vinyl floors can also compete with expensive flooring like hardwood in both quality and appearance.

What is vinyl flooring made of. Vinyl flooring materials are composed of varying amounts of vinyl. These are either in solid or composite types of vinyl. Solid vinyl is composed of vinyl pieces set in a vinyl base while composite vinyl is made of vinyl pieces embedded in non-vinyl fillers. The more expensive and more durable of these two types of vinyl is solid vinyl. Good quality flooring contains higher amount of vinyl components. Wear layer is the protective topping that is found in all vinyl flooring. This is either in urethane, which is clear and with no wax covering or all in vinyl. The vinyl type is more resistant to stains and scratches. However it can lose its gloss more easily than the urethane protective topping. Glossy floor can get slippery and can be hazardous especially when used in the bathroom. Both types of protective toppings can wear in time and may become dull unless wax is applied regularly.

All vinyl floors have a cushion backing, which comes in variety of thickness. This property is valuable especially when vinyl is installed in the kitchen where there is a higher tendency of dropping breakables. Unfortunately, the thicker the cushion backing is, the easier the floor can suffer from dents. To solve this problem, you can choose textured vinyl surfaces to camouflage the dents.

Vinyl flooring comes in two forms. These are in tile and sheet forms. Most people who do their own installations prefer to use vinyl tiles. These are easier and quicker to install. Most vinyl tiles come with adhesive backing that an installer will have to peel off, position on the floor and stick it on. The surface where the vinyl will be installed should be clean and smooth to provide a good and tight fit. Others have felt backing and glue application is needed on the floor surface for installation. This type however is very difficult to remove if replacement is required. There is also a vinyl-backed type, which only requires gluing on the edges and can be easily removed when replacement is needed. Sheet vinyl on the other hand costs higher than tiles per square foot. This also requires more time and motivation to install. An average do-it yourself homeowner may find installing sheet vinyl a little more difficult.

Finally, it is usually advisable to settle for better quality vinyl flooring that lasts longer than to get the lowest type and suffer from the arduous process of replacing the cheap floor material in just a few years time.

Michael Russell

