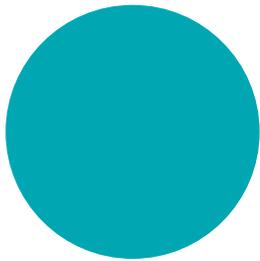
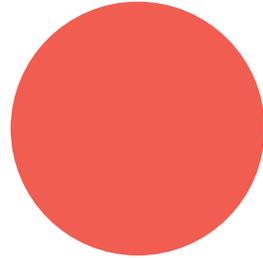
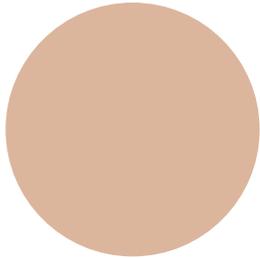


# IMPROVEMENT CENTER



## DIY Flooring Guide

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If you are a dedicated do-it-yourselfer, you may be resistant to hiring a professional to install your new flooring. But before you take on any flooring project yourself, it's important to note that some flooring types are easier to install than others, and some types of projects can only be accomplished with specialized tools and knowledge.

If you choose the right type of flooring material and take the proper steps to prepare for your project, you may be able to successfully install new flooring yourself.

## Selecting the Right Flooring Material

If you approach your product search from a do-it-yourself viewpoint, you can quickly eliminate some flooring materials. Then you can select the material, style, color, and price range that fits your needs from the remaining options. Here's a rundown of common flooring materials and their appropriateness for DIY installation:

- **Laminate:** Perhaps the easiest flooring material for the do-it-yourselfer to install.
- **Wood:** A fairly straightforward installation for the reasonably handy homeowner.
- **Recycled wood:** Can be installed by a reasonably handy homeowner.
- **Bamboo:** Installs much like wood or laminate. Within the capabilities of the average do-it-yourselfer.
- **Cork:** Glue-down squares are time-consuming; boards install like wood or laminate.
- **Tile:** Requires exacting prep work and layout, and special tile-cutting tools may be required.
- **Vinyl:** Vinyl squares are easy to install; sheet vinyl is more difficult as it requires special tool and expertise.
- **Carpet:** Requires special tools and expertise, but can be accomplished by a very talented homeowner. If you're unsure of your abilities, it may be best left to the professionals.
- **Natural stone:** Subfloor structural concerns can raise issues here due to the weight of material. It's likely that professionals will need to handle this one.
- **Leather:** This unique option may be best left to the professionals.
- **Glass:** Professional installation recommended.
- **Liquid Lava:** For best results, let the professionals handle this flooring.
- **Antibacterial porcelain:** Should be professionally installed.





## Flooring Installation

Once you have selected your flooring material, gathered your tools, and read the manufacturer's installation guide completely through, you should be ready to begin with these steps:

- **Prepare your surface.** Subfloor preparation is the key to a successful flooring installation. It is critical that it be clean, free of contaminants, flat and level, and strong enough to support the flooring material without sagging or flexing.
- **Acclimate your materials.** Most flooring materials should be left in the room where they are to be installed for a few days to acclimate to the temperature in the room. Hardwood may benefit from a longer acclimation period.
- **Lay out the manufacturer's instructions for reference.** Although there are different methods to install each type of flooring material, the best way is usually to follow the manufacturer's directions for installation to the letter.

Installing flooring can be difficult and time-consuming, so if you're unsure whether you can fully commit to the project, it's best to call a professional. But if you use the proper tools and commit to doing the project correctly, you will have a floor you can be proud of and the satisfaction of a job well done.



## Special Tools and Equipment

Depending on the type of flooring material involved, various items will be necessary for installation:

- **General:** You should have a good set of kneepads, as well as safety glasses and gloves, a tape measure, and a carpenter's square.
- **Subfloor prep:** You may need floor patch, leveling compound, and solvents to clean up old glue and other contaminants.
- **Carpet:** Carpet stretchers and accessories, a knee kicker, glue gun, seaming iron and seam roller, tacker (or tackless tool), carpet trimmer, and shears are all likely to be required.
- **Wood, laminate, bamboo, cork:** Depending on your fastening method, a good stapler or nailer can be important. You'll need a saw for cutting to length or a laminate cutter and laminate file. A laminate roller, strap clamps, and pull bars can be helpful. If you use glue, you'll need an applicator.
- **Tile:** A tile cutter or tile saw are required, in addition to a chisel, mallet, level, grout, mortar mixer, tile nippers, adhesive trowel, grout float, grout sponges, and tile spacers.
- **Vinyl:** If you decide to install sheet vinyl, you will need a heat gun (electric or propane), an underlayment stapler, vinyl knife, vinyl scribe, and vinyl roller.