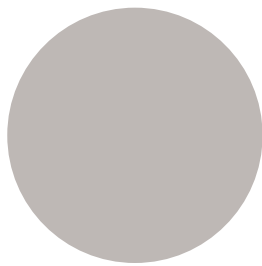
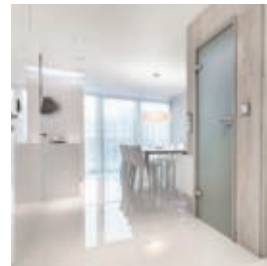
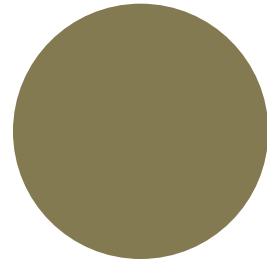
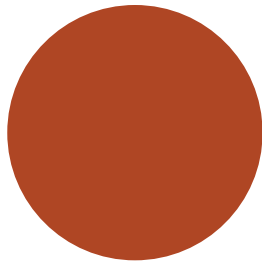
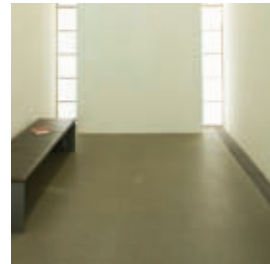


IMPROVEMENT CENTER



Guide to Alternative Flooring Options

Guide to Alternative Flooring Options

While traditional flooring choices include carpet, wood, vinyl, stone, laminate, and tile, other possibilities beckon to the more adventurous. Alternative flooring materials are not for everyone, but if you want a unique and breathtaking effect and have the budget for it, consider some of the options in this guide.

Alternative flooring materials

Some alternative flooring options on the market are not what you might expect when looking at flooring. However, they serve as functional floors even as they project the homeowner's taste and personality. Here are a few of the products currently in use:

- **Leather:** This natural material (cowhide) is tanned and treated. It can be dyed in a wide variety of colors and even embossed to further personalize it. Most leather flooring comes in tiles of standard sizes (12x12, 16x16 or 18x18 inches). Custom colors and sizes are available at an extra cost.
- **Glass:** Although glass block has been used in industrial flooring, it has become popular for home use since new manufacturing methods were developed around the turn of the 21st century. Laminate glass sheets, made of layers of tempered glass, or glass tiles applied to a substrate like porcelain tiles, are two options. Other types include fused glass tiles and Smalti tiles.





- **Antibacterial porcelain:** A number of manufacturers currently produce antibacterial porcelain or ceramic tiles, claiming that the material resists the more common bacteria found in homes. These tiles are recommended for bathrooms and kitchens.
- **Liquid lava:** Remember lava lamps and mood rings? Now you can get the same effect from your floor. Originally used for disco dance floors, these color-changing tiles can add a fun look to a kid's room, a playroom, or a recreation room. Tiles come in standard or custom sizes and even come in custom shapes.

Prices

Because of the unusual nature of alternative flooring materials, it is difficult to assign an average cost. Leather flooring starts at around \$6 a square foot for the material, plus installation, but customization escalates the cost significantly. Glass floor pricing varies widely depending on the manufacturing process, pattern, and color. For antibacterial porcelain tiles and liquid lava tiles, contact the manufacturer to get a quote.

Installation

Do-it-yourself installation is not recommended for any alternative flooring materials. Be sure to hire a contractor who is familiar and experienced with the particular material you choose.

Care and Maintenance

Each of these alternative materials has specific care instructions provided by the manufacturer. As with any floor, cleanliness is the key to prolonging its life and maintaining its appearance. Follow the specified procedures and use only cleaning products recommended by the manufacturer.

By choosing one of these alternative flooring materials, you are declaring your individuality and making your home a truly unique space.

