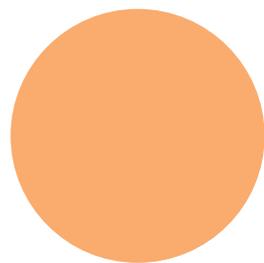
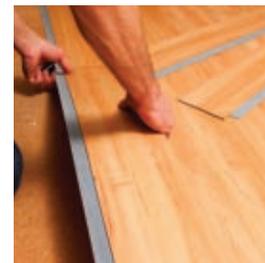
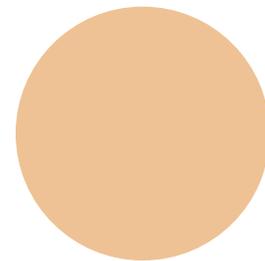
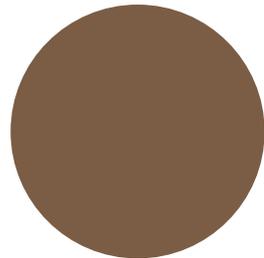
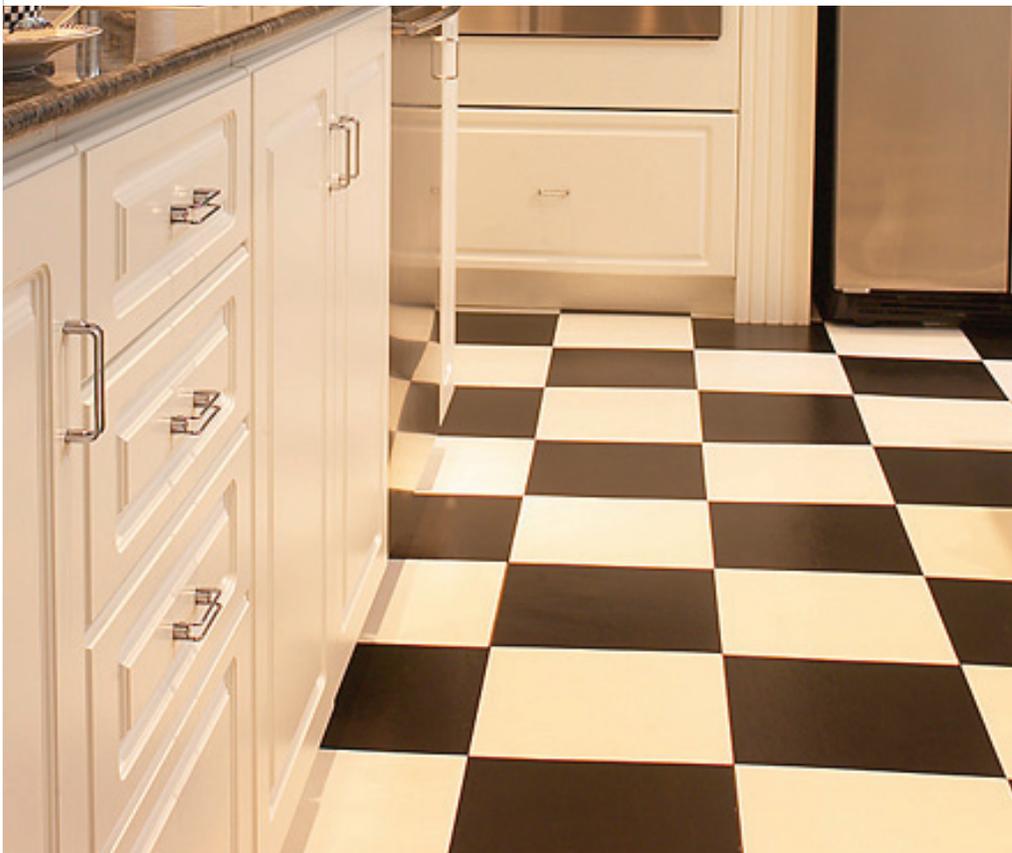


IMPROVEMENT CENTER



Guide to Vinyl Flooring

Guide to Vinyl Flooring

Modern vinyl has moved far beyond the products of the 1960s and 1970s. Today's vinyl wears better and longer, comes in a great variety of colors and patterns, and has a price range that can fit any budget. You can find vinyl used in many applications from siding, fencing, decking, and more, but the most common role of this plastic material is in flooring.

Resilient vinyl offers a softer surface than many other flooring materials. Though it's traditionally found in kitchens, bathrooms, and laundry rooms, vinyl can provide warm, practical surfaces for any room.

Styles

Manufacturers produce vinyl in a mind-boggling range of colors and patterns. High-quality vinyl looks like many other flooring materials, and these floors may be nearly indistinguishable from "the real thing" unless closely inspected. Vinyl can resemble materials like these:

- Wood: Virtually any species, color, or style, from plank to parquet
- Stone: Granite, marble, slate, travertine, limestone, or sandstone
- Tile: Ceramic or porcelain, in whatever color you desire

In addition, this versatile substance can mimic any new pattern or color that a designer might create.

Composition

The manufacturing process consists of building up layers of material on a backing of fiberglass or felt. A core of vinyl is laid upon the backing, and then a printed layer with the design is laid over the core. The rotogravure printing process creates the printed layer with the pattern, whether it is a geometric design or a simulation of some other flooring material. Finally, a vinyl wear layer is placed on top of the printed layer. This wear layer gives the vinyl flooring material its durability and resistance to



scratching, denting, and staining. A thicker, more durable wear layer distinguishes higher-quality vinyl from standard grade.

Prices

Vinyl comes in two forms: tiles and sheets. Tiles may or may not have a self-adhesive backing. Typical tiles sizes in inches are 12x12 or 18x18. Sheet widths, available as 6 feet or 12 feet, may result in seams.

Inexpensive tiles may start at under \$1 a square foot, but high-quality tiles generally cost from \$2 to \$5. Similar pricing applies to sheet vinyl flooring. The installed price for a vinyl floor usually falls in the \$3 to \$4 per square foot range, although very high-end vinyl installation could run much higher. Related costs include the removal of the old floor covering and preparation of the subfloor, if required.



Installation

For vinyl tiles, the average homeowner can usually handle installation with success. This forgiving, flexible product can go on a subfloor that isn't absolutely level. Simply make sure the subfloor is clean, dry, and flat, and then follow the manufacturer's instructions. For the first few days after installation, avoid walking on the seams, and keep the area well ventilated.

Sheet vinyl should be installed by a professional who has the required special tools and expertise. Ask the installer about the location of seams and consider a vinyl pattern that works well with seams.

Care and Maintenance

While vinyl flooring is easy to care for, it requires regular maintenance to keep dirt and grit from damaging the surface. Sweep or dust mop regularly, or use a vacuum without a beater bar. Wet mop with warm water and rinse with clean water when the floor looks dingy. If you need deeper cleaning, use a vinyl cleaning product recommended by the manufacturer.

For a beautiful, durable vinyl floor that suits your lifestyle, look no farther than your local flooring or home improvement store.