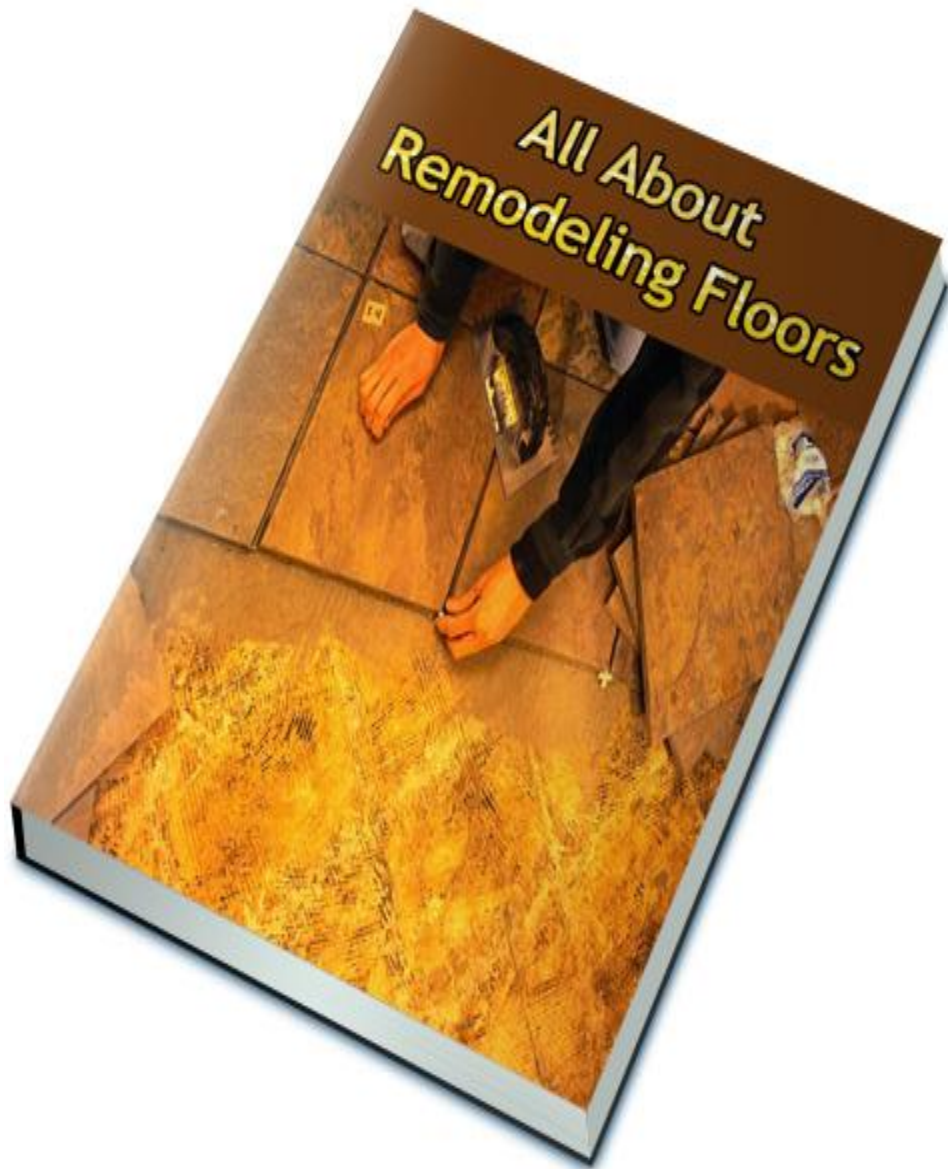


All About Remodeling Floors



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Carpet Capers: Picking the Carpet that Suits your Lifestyle

There is no other flooring option that offers the comfort and quiet of carpet. Now there are not only many colors and patterns of carpets to choose from; there are also a variety of types to suit any household and decor.

Carpet is a good choice because it is warm and soft, particularly on children when crawling or playing on the floor. Carpet is much quieter than other flooring options, particularly hard wood surfaces. Carpeting is also an economical option because the product itself and installation fees are much lower than other flooring types.

Here is an overview of the main carpet types of the market today.

Saxony: Saxony carpet is smooth and has a cut-pile surface. It is used mainly in traditional or formal rooms.

Textured Saxony or Shag: This type of carpet has a more relaxed appearance and is very popular for families. The textured surface of this type helps to hide footprints, which means less upkeep for you.

Velvet: As the name might imply, this is a type appropriate for very formal and elegant rooms. It has a very fine sheared surface. Because of its suitability to formal rooms and the upkeep required, this is not as popular an option as other carpet types.

Frieze: This kind of carpet is extremely durable so it is perfect for rooms that see a lot of activity. It has a textured almost knobby appearance, which makes it a less popular option even though it does stand up well to wear.

Cut and Loop (or Random-Sheared): Cut and loop has a very distinctive appearance with cuts and loops of different sizes on the surface. It works in a variety of rooms since the multi-colors and multi-layers help hide traffic and stains.

Level loop and Multi-Level Loop: These two types of carpets are made up of loops (with level loop, all the loops are level, whereas with multi-loop there are different levels of loops). Both of these are very durable and stand up well in high traffic areas. They have a casual rather than elegant appearance.

Once you've decided on the type of carpet you want to put in, you need to keep a few other things in mind.

You will need to take into consideration the different types of carpet fibers: nylon, olefin, polyester, acrylic and wool. Nylon is the most popular of these fibers because of cost and its ability to hide wear and stains. The other types of fibers have other benefits, but there is nothing that can match the durability and brilliant coloring of nylon fibers.

Knowing about yarn twists will also come in handy. With carpet, the rule is the tighter the yarn twist is the better. You want to look for a carpet with a shorter nap. The longer the nap the more difficult it is for the carpet to be crush resistant. Your carpet will look newer longer if you choose one with a shorter nap. The stitches per inch also contribute to the crush resistance of a carpet. Try to choose a carpet that has more yarn or stitches per inch to increase your carpet mat and crush resistance. If you are buying a looped carpet, then you need to look at the density of the loop and the amount of space right in the middle of the loop, because the tighter the loop, the better the wear will be.

Once you've decided on the type of carpet (taking into consideration the fibers, nap and yarn twist), you'll need to pick a pattern and a color. There are many, many options out there nowadays. You may want to consider a solid, neutral color that will go with many wall and furnishing colors and patterns. You don't want to have to change your carpet every time you redecorate, so try to select something that is versatile.

To help keep your carpet looking new, there are some basic maintenance steps to follow. You want to vacuum regularly and remove carpet stains as soon as you notice them. The longer a stain sits, the most difficult it is to remove. You can also practice some preventative measures (like using mats and runners in high traffic entry ways) to reduce the wear on your carpet.

Five Important Things to Consider Before Tiling

Picking a new floor can be overwhelming. Even after you've narrowed it down to one particular type, it is still challenging to find the right tile because there are so many different varieties to choose from these days. And then once you've purchased your new tiles, there are still quite a few things to consider before you begin laying the tile. Here are the top five things you should know before you began tiling.

1. Is Ceramic Tile Suitable for Your Space?

There are many advantages to ceramic tile. It is really durable and easy to clean. It isn't the best option in some spaces though. During the winter months, ceramic tiles can really hold the cold, so you might not want to use them in a basement space. Certain types can be slippery, so you if you are considering tile for an entryway, you should go with a more slip-resistant variety.

2. Select the right Size, Style and Texture

Ceramic tiles come in all sorts of shapes, anywhere from one inch to two feet. The most common size tiles are between one and one and a half feet in size. Choosing the right size is actually easier than you might think. Just figure out the size of your room and then choose a size that suits it. For example, if you have smaller room, a large tile would not be the best option because it would look like panels rather than tiles. A large tile is really best suited to larger spaces because they look less busy than smaller tiles do.

Currently, there are many styles of ceramic tiles to choose from. The easiest way to narrow down your options is decide on the type of look you are going for. If you want a rustic, natural look than you might want to consider a rugged, natural looking tile instead of a polished marble.

Choose a tile with the texture that will best suit your rooms theme. If you go for a rustic, natural looking tile, it will be rougher than a polished marble surface. When choosing a texture, you do need to take safety into consideration. The smoother that a surface is the more likely it is to be slippery when wet. If you have children or elderly people in your home, then a high-gloss tile is not the best option from a safety standpoint.

3. Choose an Appropriate Grout Color and Width

Grout is a cement mix that has color added to it to compliment your tile. Grout fills the space between tiles so you need to choose a grout width and a color that works in your space.

4. Installation Materials and Methods

There are different installation methods and a successful installation will really depend on the materials used and the energy and patience put into the project. You will want to make sure that you do the proper preparation and have all the materials you need at hand. You will need to make sure that you purchase a high quality bonding material, grout (as discussed above), a sealer and the right tools to get the project done.

Laying tile can be a bit tricky. You need to make sure that your cuts are correct and that the space around each tile is even. If you feel overwhelmed by the prospect of installing it yourself, then you might want to look at contracting the job out to a tiling professional.

5. Maintenance

Ceramic tile is one the easiest types of floors to clean and if you take care of them, they will maintain their shiny, new appearance for years to come. To clean tile, all you really need is water and any household cleaner product. You can start by removing any dirt and dust with a broom or vacuum and then using a sponge or mop you can apply the mixture of water and cleaner to your tiles. It's as simple as that! You will need to be cautious about dropping heavy objects on tile. If tiles split, crack or chip, it is impossible to replace just one tile. Odds are you'll have to live with any cracks or chips until you're ready to re-do the entire floor.

Feeling Floored: How to Decide Which Floor is Best for You

There are more flooring options than ever before, but so much variety can lead to confusion. How do you choose which floor is best suited to your space?

There are three main things you need to keep in mind when choosing a floor: your room type, amount of traffic and budget. You need to determine what type of room the flooring is needed

for and then consider how much traffic will be going through that room. After determining that, you should consider how much you're willing to spend on flooring, because that will make a difference in terms of the flooring you choose.

Here is a brief overview of the main types of flooring on the market today to make choosing your new floor a bit easier.

Wood

Hardwood is one of the most popular options these days because the elegance of this type of flooring will add character to any room in your home. Recent advancements in technology and manufacturing have made it possible for wood floors to be installed easily over almost any kind of sub-flooring. The increase in demand has also given rise to a higher quality and variety of finishes for the wood.

There are three types of wood floors that can be purchased today: strip, plank, and long strip. Each of these comes with its own pros and cons so you'll need to do a bit of research and decide on the best option for your home. You can also choose between a pre-finished or unfinished wood floor. Pre-finished may be more practical, but if a smooth, uniform surface is your goal, you might want to go the unfinished route.

Laminate

If you want the appearance of wood, but have high traffic areas or can't afford real wood flooring, you should consider laminate flooring. Laminate floors originated in Europe and most of the floorings available are still imported from there, though you can find a few domestic brands nowadays. Laminate floors are very easy to clean and are incredibly durable. They are also stain and fade resistant. Most brands snap together so installation is easy, as is replacement at a later stage. With the quality of laminate floorings these days, some can even be mistaken for wood. Laminate flooring is an excellent alternative to wood if traffic and cost are issues.

Vinyl

Vinyl flooring may have gotten a bad rap, but now this type of flooring is available in all sorts of stylish colors and patterns. There are new manufacturing processes being used now that mean both the texture and look of tile, wood grain and stone can be replicated on vinyl. If you haven't looked at vinyl flooring options recently, you might want to take a second look.

Ceramic Tile

There are many reasons to choose ceramic tile. They are durable and scratch-, fire- and water-resistant. They are also environmentally friendly because they do not retain bacteria and odors. If you decide to go with ceramic tile then you will need to consider things like the slip-resistance of the tile, the most suitable cleaning methods and the color and thickness of the grout. Ceramic tile works better in some rooms than others. Types of ceramic tiles include: marble, granite and unglazed floor tiles.

Carpet

Carpet may not be as trendy as hardwood floors, but it can offer you a floor that is warmer and softer than any other flooring option. It is also much quieter than any of these other kinds of floors. You can choose from a real array of colors and patterns these days. If considering carpet, you might want to go with a solid, neutral color that will go easily with any decor you choose. Carpet is also more economical (in terms of the product itself and installation costs) than some of the other flooring options on the market today.

There isn't really a right floor for everyone, just floors that are more suitable for certain rooms and for certain budgets. Take a bit of time and think about your needs. This will really help you narrow down the type of floor that is best suited to your room. You can also consult your local home or decor store for more information on each type of floor if you are still having trouble narrowing it down.

Wondering How to Remove Linoleum?

Wondering how to remove linoleum? It's tough, but doable. Removing linoleum from your home can be quite a chore, a lot of it depending on how old the linoleum was, and the type of adhesive used to fasten it down. In some cases, if it's solidly bound, and not cracking or heaving, some people choose to leave it underneath whatever else they are laying down. However, most homeowners choose to start fresh, and that means a lot of elbow grease, no matter which method of removal you decide on.

First of all, it's unlikely that you'll be able to just remove the linoleum and adhesive all at once. What's under the linoleum can be part of the problem, particularly if it's wood. Concrete floors can take a lot more in the way of rough treatment, including the type of scraper you use. Most people will try paint scrapers, although those with a razor blade are usually more efficient. Be prepared to break some blades if the adhesive is hard, and you're working on concrete.

One tip is not to try and remove everything at once. Many people will cut the linoleum into strips or sections, and peel that off. You should get most of the surface, and likely a good portion of the backing. This will make it easier to get at the adhesive underneath as well.

Once you are down to the leftovers, there are two basic methods to aid your scraping efforts. One is to apply some kind of solvent or remover. A popular brand is Krud Kutter, which appears to work very well from the customer feedback comments. Follow directions on the label of whatever product you employ, and wear gloves to protect your hands. Do a small section at a time, and then move to the next one.

Other do-it-yourself-ers report success with using nothing more than boiling or very hot water. It can be poured directly on the backing and adhesive, a small area at a time, left to soak, and then scraped up. Or you can fold an old towel and lay it on top of a section of adhesive, pour boiling water over it, let it set, remove and then scrape.

One technique that may help you remove them, then, is to heat them. Pick a very inconspicuous area, such as behind a door, to try it. Heat the adhesive with a hair dryer and scrape it up with a straight-blade scraper (like a stiff putty knife with a beveled edge). Move the scraper in the direction of the grain of the wood if you are uncovering a hardwood floor. Have a pan or some other container handy to drop the scrapings into - one that is unlikely to either melt or ignite when coming in contact with hot materials.

You may want to move up to using a heat gun after you become comfortable with this process. If so, be careful not to overheat the wood and scorch it. You should also realize that using this technique may allow some of the softened mastic to flow into the joints between the floorboards. Keeping the heated area small, constantly moving the heat source and scraping as soon as possible will all help improve the outcome.

Keep in mind this trick will never remove all of the old adhesive. Trying to go that far is likely to damage the wood. Remove the amount that will come up readily, sweep and vacuum, and consider your next step. In some cases a light sanding may be best. In other cases you may be able to mop enough of the residue off with rags dampened with turpentine, mineral spirits or some similar solvent to get the floor ready to refinish. If you were going to apply a new covering that needed new mastic, seal the wood and go ahead.

What to Know About Installing Pergo Flooring

Considering installing Pergo flooring? It's specially constructed with a unique tongue and groove system to ensure an easy and accurate installation - whether you do it yourself or have a professional do it for you. If you want to have your Pergo floor professionally installed, just call your retailer. They can recommend a professional installer.

Before you do anything, you will need to figure out exactly how much flooring and accessories to buy. Use a room size calculator to help you determine the amounts you will need. If you decide to install your Pergo floor yourself, all of the items you will need for installation will be available for you wherever you buy your floor. This is why Pergo is not just a floor, it's a complete flooring system. All of the following are available to help make your installation easier:

- Pergo Glue (Must be used in order for the Pergo warranty to be valid)
- Installation Kit - includes spacers and a tapping block to ensure tight joints
- Pull bar - helps to ensure a tight fit in difficult to reach spaces
- Under-layments - even out minor irregularities in the sub-floor and provide heat and sound insulation
- Floor clamps - simplify installation and make a finished floor stronger
- Pergo Sealant - secures the gap between the floor and the wall, ensuring maximum moisture resistance
- Pergo Putty - mends any damage that might occur to your floor during installation
- Installation straps - are not required to install Pergo, but they do simplify the process

A few things you should know before you begin installing your Pergo floor. Pergo floors are intended for indoor use only. Pergo must be installed as a floating floor, with sufficient space for movement around the perimeter. Pergo must not be fixed to the sub-floor.

The degree of floor movement in relation to walls, staircases, pipes and other fixed objects must be considered with regard to the local changes in relative humidity and temperature. The expansion distance is 1/4" in normal climates. This is particularly important at corners, angles and openings such as doorways, archways and the like.

Allow the Pergo products to acclimate in unopened cartons where they will be installed for at least 48 hours before starting the installation. In very dry or very humid climates, allow at least 96 hours (4 days). For acclimation before, during and after the installation at the job site, the relative humidity should be 30-90%. The temperature should be stable and within 15 degrees F of the normal operating temperature.

Pergo can be installed above, on or below grade. Pergo planks should be installed over Pergo Underlayment Foam or Whisperwalk. When installing over concrete, a Pergo 6-mil polyethylene vapor barrier is always required. Check the sub-floor requirements for more information.

Three Top Reasons NOT to Tile over Vinyl Flooring

Though more and more people are tiling right over their existing flooring, there are many disadvantages to this. Though you may think that this will save you time, tiling right over vinyl can compromise the stability and look of your ceramic tile. Here are the top three reasons not to tile directly over vinyl flooring.

1. It won't stick well.

The top layer of vinyl is similar to plastic and it is very difficult to adhere anything to it. Vinyl is shining with an artificial shine and as your base it isn't porous which means a good bond is very difficult to achieve. No matter what kind of glue you try to apply to the vinyl, your tiles will not bond well to the vinyl. There are some who recommend roughing up the surface of the vinyl for a better bond, but this really isn't an effective method.

Because the tile and vinyl will not adhere well to one another, there might be lifting after you lay the floor. If the vinyl begins lifting and pushing the tile up, you may have to replace a section or the entire floor. If you do tile directly over vinyl or linoleum flooring, you may find at a later date that you need to remove the new tile floor to get to the old vinyl because of lifting and instability. It is probably better to save yourself the time, money and hassle by removing it now.

It is important that your new tile floor is secure and stable and direct adhesion to vinyl flooring will not ensure that. There isn't a mortar on the market that will stick to the surface of vinyl at the level needed for tile installation.

2. It won't be level.

It is much more difficult to get the floor level if you tile right over vinyl. You won't be able to figure out the anchoring pattern when you tile on top of vinyl and this is one of the key factors in a stable and level floor surface. It will also be difficult when trying to insert transitions where the floor rises or where spaces must be filled. If you start with a fresh or existing sub-floor you will have a much more stable and level end result.

3. The sub-surface under the vinyl isn't suitable for tile.

Vinyl flooring is usually installed on 1/4" plywood or particleboard. These substrates are not approved for tile because of a different material make-up. If you lay tile right over vinyl or linoleum the safety of your floor will be compromised. Tile on top of a cushioned floor is very unstable and you can develop cracks in the tiles or the grout. Because vinyl flexes, it can crack the tile. It is nearly impossible to replace a tile with a chip or a crack once it is adhered so you may end up having to replace the entire floor in the future because of the vinyl lifting and flexing.

If you do want to leave your vinyl down, then you need to prepare the floor structurally for the tiling. You will need to screw down the old vinyl and then create a mortar base using mesh and concrete. If you don't want to get into pouring cement, you can lay down a plywood sub-floor. There are products on the market now that increase the crack resistance of tiles placed on wooden sub-floors. This method isn't really much different from lifting the vinyl up. It may seem like a lot of work right now, but taking your time and doing it properly now will save you a lot of time and money down the road.

If you are still determined to keep your vinyl down, then you might consider talking to a professional tile installer. They can go over all of the pros and cons with you and look at your specific situation.

Before you proceed with your plans to tile directly over vinyl flooring, keep all of this information in mind. Not only will you have difficulty with bonding and leveling, but you will also end up with a floor that is unstable and in some cases unsafe. This money-saving and timesaving route could end up costing you a lot in the future.

Grouting Tips: Five Key Things to Consider Before Applying that Grout

When selecting a new tile floor, you don't want to forget about grout. It may seem like a trivial decision to make, but grout color and width will make all the difference in the appearance of your new floor. Before you apply grout to your new tile floor, there are five key things to keep in mind.

1. Selecting the Right Color

No matter what the thickness of your grout, it will be visible so you want to choose a shade of

grout that will compliment your tile and your decor. You can get grout in all sorts of colors now, so you can try to match the color of your tile so it blends in more or you can choose a contrasting shade that will emphasize the spacing between each tile. Remember that white and lighter shades of grout will show dirt and stains more than darker colors. Grout color can also change over time so you'll want to keep that in mind when selecting a shade for your new floor.

2. Purchase the Correct Tools

Just as with any home improvement project, having the right tools is important if you want to complete the project effectively. You should purchase a good quality grout to ensure that it stands up over time. You will need some kind of tool to apply the grout; a palette knife or spatula or trowel will decrease the mess on the floor and on you. Using these tools will also help you keep the grout level. You don't want the grout to be too much lower or higher than the level of the tiles. You will also need a sponge or cloth and a bucket to remove any excess.

3. Spacing

Spacing the tiles and the grout is a tricky business, but you need to be patient and take your time to ensure that your tiles look evenly spaced out. You might want to take the time to layout your tiles and ensure the correct spacing before even gluing them in place. You will need to work somewhat quickly once the glue is down, so planning ahead like this can save a lot of stress and aggravation later.

Once you have your tiles and know the size, you'll want to figure out how much grout you want to have showing. When it comes to actually laying down your tile, you can purchase spacers at your local home improvement or hardware store. These will help you keep the tiles a specific distance apart and ensure a consistent width of grout all around the tiles.

You need to make sure that your tiles are in the correct spot before you put the grout down. The grout only fills the spaces between the tiles, so if you find that the grout lines are uneven it is the result of the tiles being crooked, not the grout itself.

4. Sealer

To protect grout, you need to apply a sealer. This sealer will protect the grout from damage and stains. You can purchase these sealers at your local home store or at a specialty tile store. It may take some time to apply this sealant, because you have to go over each grout line without getting any on the tile, but it will really help protect your grout from all sorts of harm. Your grout will probably show age quicker than the tiles themselves, so you want to do everything you can to protect your grout right from the start.

5. Maintenance

You need to clean and maintain your grout, just as you do the tile itself. In fact, you probably need to pay more attention to the grout since over time it will build up dirt faster than the tile surface. If your grout is not perfectly level with your tile, your mop may miss some of the dirt and stains and cracks or holes in the grout can also hide bits of dirt and bacteria. Every once and awhile, you should carefully clear all of the grout lines to ensure you remove any hidden

dirt and stains that might be missed during your usual cleanings. Over time you may even want to apply more sealer since it can be worn down by high traffic and scrubbing.