

FLOORING TYPES

with guide supply cost

Engineered Wood Thickness: 10-15 mm. Real wood appearance, less susceptible to moisture, use renewable timber (FSC/PEFC). Longevity 20 to 50 years. Cost: £25-£100 / sq m.

Bamboo Thickness: 8-14 mm. Renewable source, carbon sequestering, durable. Ensure it's not mixed with PVC. Check toxicity of binding adhesives + coatings. Cost: £25-£60 / sq m.

Cork Thickness: 6-12 mm. Renewable, carbon sequestering, soft, sound-absorbing, and hypoallergenic. Longevity: 10-30 years with proper care. Check toxicity of binding adhesives and coatings. Cost: £25-£60 / sq m.

Linoleum Thickness: 2-4 mm. Advantages: Natural, durable, anti-bacterial, sustainable, available in various colors. Made from natural materials, including linseed oil and jute backing, making it biodegradable and eco-friendly. Longevity: 20-40 years, if properly maintained. Excellent for indoor air quality. Provides reasonable sound insulation. Cost: £30 - £70 / sq m.

Hardwood Thickness: 10-15 mm. Durable, timeless look, use renewable timber (FSC/PEFC) or reclaimed timber. Longevity 50 to 100 years or more Cost: £30-£150 / sq m.

Laminate Thickness: 6-12 mm. Affordable, easy to clean. Longevity 15 to 25 years, depending on the wear layer's thickness and the quality of installation. Avoid PVC laminate for sustainability. Cost: £10-£30 / sq m.

Tile (porcelain or ceramic). Thickness: Usually 6-10 mm. Durable, water-resistant, wide range of styles. Look for eco-friendly options using low firing temperatures or post consumer waste - terrazzo. Longevity: 20-50+ years. Generally safe, but use very low VOC tile adhesives. Hard surface; may require rugs for noise control. Cost: £20 - £60 / sq m.

Natural Stone Flooring (slate, marble). Thickness: Varies, typically 10-15 mm. Natural biophilic appearance, extremely durable. Requires mining; choose recycled or reclaimed options. Longevity: 50+ years. Human Health: Generally safe. Acoustics: Hard surface; may require rugs for noise control. Cost: £50 - £150 / sq m.

Carpet Thickness: Typically 4-8 mm. Comfortable, insulating, easy to install, wide variety of designs, and can be replaced individually if damaged. Seek options made from Tencel, bamboo fibre, high percentage of post consumer waste recycled materials, such as reclaimed fishing nets or PET. Look for very low VOC (volatile organic compounds) emissions. Longevity: 5-15 years, depending on traffic and maintenance. Choose PVC-free backing materials. Very low VOC options are preferable, as they reduce indoor air pollution. Provides good sound insulation. Cost: £15 - £50 / sq m.

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SUSTAINABLE FLOORING TOP TIPS GUIDE

1 • Regenerative Materials

- Use renewable, carbon sequestering materials such as bamboo, cork, hemp, flax and timber, For timber look for FSC or PEFC certified. Use untreated with chemicals, adhesives or finishes that could be harmful at end of lifespan when composting.
- Linoleum is durable lasting 20-40 years and compostable at end of lifespan. Made from natural materials linseed oil, wood flour, cork dust and resins.

2 • Sustainability

- Avoid PVC-based materials, as PVC is a forever plastic containing forever chemicals. Look for reused preloved planks, or PVC-free and phthalate-free options. Look for high post-consumer waste options. NB 'Rubber flooring' is often made from PVC
- Avoid concrete, a highly carbon intensive material
- Check if adhesives, glues and coatings are animal derived. If using solvent based chemicals, these are likely to have been animal tested - check if tests are historical (shared and less bad, but still testing) or current testing
- Consider high percentage recycled content - but ensure it is post-consumer waste

3 • Human Health

- Choose minimum level VOC (Volatile Organic Compounds) finishes to improve indoor air quality, even better avoid floors with a chemical content
- Cork is hypoallergenic, so is a good choice for allergy-prone users of spaces and is good for sound insulation and therefore sound comfort
- Use underlays for soundproofing with hard surfaces like hardwood and laminate

4 • Longevity.

- Buy quality, maintain well and keep in use for all the time condition is good
- Bamboo, and cork typically last 15-30 years
- Hardwood and engineered wood floors can last 20-100 years with proper care.

5 • Maintenance:

- Sweep or vacuum floors regularly to remove dirt and debris that can scratch the surface. Avoid harsh chemicals: Always use manufacturer-recommended cleaning products to avoid damaging the finish
- Use rugs and mats in high-traffic areas and under furniture to prevent excessive wear and tear. Use furniture pads on feet to avoid scratching floors
- For non-water-resistant floors like hardwood, be cautious about spills and moisture. Quickly clean up any spills to prevent damage
- Hardwood and some engineered wood floors can be sanded and refinished to extend their lifespan. Stone and concrete floors may need periodic resealing
- For tile floors, keep grout clean & sealed to prevent stains & cracking
- Maintain consistent temperature and humidity levels to prevent warping and damage to some types of flooring, especially hardwood