

Environmentally Friendly Flooring

So it's time to replace that shabby hallway carpeting, or maybe you need new flooring for the front entryway. In the kitchen and the bathroom for that matter, you want a sturdy floor that can hold up to significant wear and tear, including foot traffic and food spills. Why not go green? There are ways to make the material under your feet give you a toehold on saving the world. Environmentally conscious flooring choices include:

- **Linoleum** is not the same thing as vinyl, though both are installed as sheets. Vinyl is made from synthetic materials and though it is affordable, easy to clean, durable and quite popular, it is not biodegradable, and its manufacture creates toxins. It can also off-gas harmful chemicals. Linoleum is made from natural materials: felt, burlap or canvas coated with linseed oil, cork or wood dust and resins.
- **Bamboo**, a grass that looks like wood flooring and grows rapidly, becomes large enough to harvest in three to six years. Its rapid growth inherently makes it a much sustainable product than most hardwood species. It can be installed the same way as hardwood flooring and is similarly dent resistant.
- **Concrete** has gained popularity thanks to decorative techniques such as staining, coloring; stamping, scoring and sealing that make it customizable and attractive. Highly durable, concrete is easy to clean and maintain.
- **Wood** is a naturally found material, but beware of harmful logging practices that destroy old growth forests and damage ecosystems. Look for wood with FSC certification. Also consider salvaged or reclaimed wood—retrieved from river bottoms or taken from old barns or train tracks, for example—for a vintage look. Use low-VOC sealants and water-based finishes.
- **Stone** is durable like concrete and found in nature like wood. Cut into tiles and polished or honed, travertine or granite makes a beautiful surface. Use a low-VOC sealant.
- **Tile** Some ceramic and glass tiles are made with recycled content such as old light bulbs, bottles and porcelain fixtures. Ceramic tile is durable and biodegradable. Use low-VOC adhesives.
- **Cork** flooring is made from the bark of the cork tree. Removing the bark does not hurt the tree, and the bark renews every seven to 10 years. It is soft under foot and helps reduce noise.

Today's tip: Locally, there is an all green flooring store located in Salem at the Breckenridge Plaza called TORLYS Flooring Studio. The proprietor of this retail store, Joel Trippiedi can help you make your eco-friendly flooring selections that include: Cork, Hardwood, Laminate and Linoleum and a NEW Leather floor. Check it out!

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