

# How do I select my Floor Coverings?

Contributed by richart khalil

Floors define interior space and receive the greatest amount of use. They are for walking and occasionally for sitting, for insulation from the cold, for quietness, and for beauty. Floor coverings constitute a large part of the budget and should be selected carefully.

In ancient times, floors were made of closely packed earth. Gradually stone and marble and finally wood came to be used. Today, choices for floor coverings range from hard materials to soft ones, with each having specific advantages and disadvantages.

Before selecting floor coverings, several basic questions should be answered:

1. What kind of wear will the floor receive?

Floors that receive hard wear should be durable. Floors should be able to support furniture without cracking, chipping or denting and they should not be marked by ordinary traffic.

2. What kind of maintenance will be required to keep the floor attractive?

Tests indicate that carpets are easier to maintain, but hard - surface floor coverings may be preferred for a variety of reasons, such as appearance, appropriateness, or color. Neutral colors or patterns conceal soil and are easier to maintain than dark or very light colors. Stain-resistant or stains-releasing surfaces simplify care.

3. How much noise or quietness is desired?

Floors covered with carpet or with a resilient, cushioned material are quieter and more comfortable to walk up on. Floors can also be insulated so that they absorb noise (such as in activity spaces, household with young children or in apartments).

4. Should the floor be hard or soft?

In some areas (as in mud room or utility room), a hard surface may be more desirable. The amount of standing and walking required in the space should be primary factor in the selection of a floor covering.

5. How safe is the floor covering?

Safety should always be a consideration. Some surfaces are slippery when wet or waxed and should not be used, particularly in households in which there are older people. High traffic areas should also be safe for walking.

6. What kind of atmosphere is desirable in the house?

Some floor coverings are more formal in effect than others. Some suggest the outdoors. Some floor coverings, such as Italian or Mexican tiles, are indicative of a specific country. Floor color is also a factor: some colors are bright and sunny, while others are somber; the light reflectance of the floor color can affect the amount of electricity consumed, for lighter floors make the interior brighter; a warm color may create psychological warmth, while the warmth of wood represents a sentimental link with the past.

7. What is the cost of the floor covering?

The initial cost of a floor is high, and so is its replacement cost. Durability as well as initial cost should therefore be considered, and the time and energy required maintaining the floor.

Answering these questions can help you in setting the correct floor covering for your space, aesthetics then, are question of taste.