

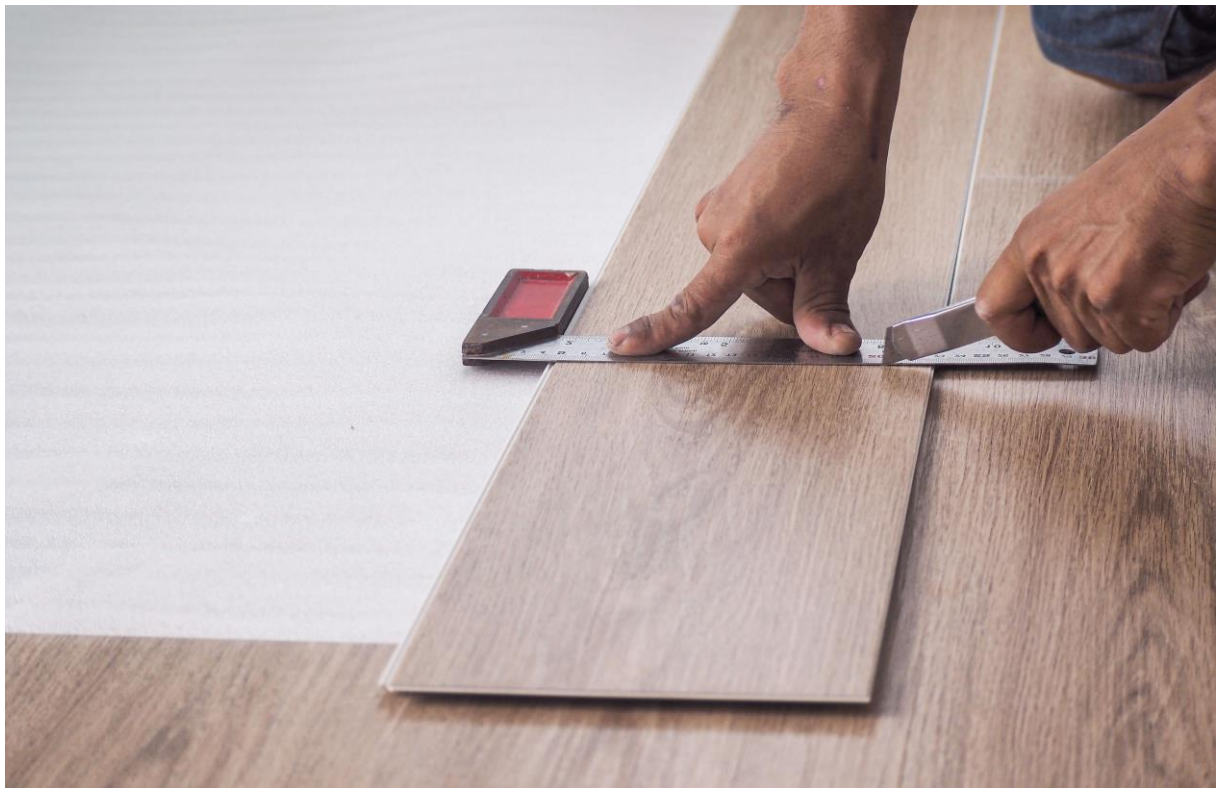
A Step By Step Guide To Choosing Flooring



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Abstract

Choosing the right flooring for your home or business is a crucial decision that impacts aesthetics, functionality, and long-term durability. This step-by-step guide provides a comprehensive approach to selecting the ideal flooring, considering factors such as budget, lifestyle, maintenance requirements, and design preferences. It explores various flooring types, including hardwood, laminate, vinyl, tile, and carpet, detailing their pros, cons, and best use cases. Additionally, the guide outlines essential steps like measuring your space, comparing materials, understanding warranties, and hiring professional installers. By following this guide, readers will be equipped to make informed flooring decisions that enhance both the appearance and practicality of their spaces.



1. Introduction

Flooring is one of the most important aspects of interior design, providing both aesthetic appeal and functional support to any space. Whether you are renovating a single room or designing an entire home or office, choosing the right flooring requires careful consideration. With countless options available—ranging from classic hardwood to modern vinyl, stylish tiles, and plush carpets—each type comes with unique advantages, disadvantages, and maintenance requirements. Making the right choice involves evaluating your budget, lifestyle, environmental impact, and desired look and feel. This guide will walk you through a step-by-step process to help you select the perfect flooring for your needs, ensuring long-lasting satisfaction and value.

2. Types of Flooring and How to Choose the Right One for Your Home



With so many types of flooring available in Ipswich, which one is best for your home? The right flooring should match your desired aesthetic and durability needs while keeping costs within budget.

Here are the main types of flooring that you should consider for your home.

Hardwood Flooring

Hardwood flooring has remained a top flooring material throughout history for many reasons. It's durable, can last several lifetimes, and is unmatched in authentic beauty. After all, it's the real thing, not a replica.

Oak is the most commonly used hardwood flooring species, but other species like cherry and maple are popular options. Every hardwood species can be further customized through patterned layouts and finish options.

Laminate Flooring

Laminate flooring is perfect if you want the look of hardwood flooring without the high price point. Though most laminate looks like wood, it can also reliably mimic the look of stone and tile.

Many laminate options even feature an embossed wear layer to add a texture that makes the imitation more convincing.

Vinyl Flooring

Vinyl flooring is inexpensive and highly durable, making it a great flooring option for those with kids and pets. Best of all, vinyl flooring is easy to install, saving you the cost of professional installation. A downside is that vinyl flooring requires a perfectly level, smooth, and flat subfloor. Other types of flooring can bridge minor imperfections, but vinyl flooring cannot.

Tile Flooring



Tile flooring is an extremely popular option with supreme durability and easy maintenance. From large-format tiles to penny tiles, the scale can be adjusted to better fit different-sized spaces, while the various materials, colors, and patterns offer plenty of stylish combinations.

Bamboo Flooring

Bamboo flooring is a low-maintenance, durable alternative to hardwood flooring. This highly renewable material is often mistaken for wood when it's technically a type of grass. However, as a flooring material, it's comparable to wood in terms of appearance.

Carpet

Carpet has remained a popular flooring option for decades. While it's rare to see high-traffic areas like living rooms and dining rooms carpeted these days, many homeowners still opt for carpet in bedrooms, hallways, and bonus rooms like playrooms.

Stone Flooring

Stone flooring is one of the most luxurious flooring options on the market. However, this luxury comes at a high price. Whether on its own or paired with other natural materials like hardwood, stone can make a major style impact on your space.

While natural stone flooring is generally low maintenance and easy to clean, some varieties can stain easily.

Concrete Flooring



Concrete floors are as low maintenance as they get. Concrete is easy to clean and has unmatched durability, so concrete is the best choice for high-traffic areas.

Concrete floors aren't always the first choice of many homeowners, as they yield a specific aesthetic. However, you can manipulate the concrete's appearance by painting it, staining it, or by adding area rugs and furnishings.

Cork Flooring

Cork flooring isn't as popular as traditional materials like hardwood, tile, and carpet, but its many unique qualities make it a flooring material in Ipswich worth getting to know. Cork is naturally pest-resistant, offers a soft underfoot feeling, and even has insulative qualities that dampen sounds.

Linoleum Flooring

Linoleum is highly regarded for its durability and budget-friendliness. Often mistaken for sheet vinyl, linoleum is available in sheets and tiles with a nearly endless list of styles.

3. Flooring Cost Guide

A flooring costs homeowners an average of \$1,000–\$7,000 for a standard-sized living room. See which factors will impact your total cost.



Floor replacement costs vary depending on the room's size, flooring material, and whether you decide to hire a professional or do-it-yourself (DIY). For a standard-sized living room, project costs range from \$1,000 with cost-friendly materials to \$7,000 for luxury installations.*

High-traffic areas may require high-quality materials to prevent wear, which adds to flooring installation costs. You may also choose higher-quality materials based on the subfloor's condition. For some projects, you may need to hire a professional.

Read ahead to learn the best options for your flooring project while staying within your budget.

Major Flooring Cost Factors

Replacing old flooring costs \$12.50 per square foot according to national averages, but the cost varies depending on the material quality and the installation's difficulty.

Square footage: Materials are typically purchased by the square foot, and more flooring increases costs.

Flooring type: Popular materials include laminate, hardwood flooring, vinyl, and tile. Each flooring material has a variety of options, with prices differing based on quality, thickness, and durability.

Square Footage

It will cost less to replace existing flooring in smaller rooms because you won't spend as much on materials or flooring installation costs (if you choose to hire a professional).

Flooring Type

Flooring costs vary depending on the materials used. Popular flooring materials, from most to least expensive, include:

- Natural stone
- Designer tiles
- Solid hardwood
- Vinyl
- Laminate

How To Choose the Best Flooring for Your Project

Natural Stone

Natural stone is costly but comes with certain benefits. It is eco-friendly, scratch-resistant (when properly treated), and sophisticated. This makes it ideal for high-traffic commercial spaces.

Natural stone is often porous and susceptible to water damage unless treated with a sealing agent, such as polyurethane. Stone flooring also usually requires professional installation.

Ceramic Tile

Ceramic tiles are water-resistant and easy to clean, which is ideal for bathrooms and kitchens. They provide excellent insulation and sound dampening and are scratch-resistant and difficult to break when installed properly. This makes tile a low-maintenance flooring option for many kinds of rooms.

Ceramic tile is affordable but requires special tools and may require professional installation. See our comprehensive guide to tile flooring.

Hardwood

Hardwood flooring can last decades with proper care, making it a long-term, cost-effective solution. Hardwood flooring is also easy to clean and maintain. It can be pricey, depending on the type of wood flooring, but there are more budget-friendly options, such as engineered wood flooring. See our comprehensive guide to hardwood flooring.

Hardwood is susceptible to water damage and not ideal for bathrooms, kitchens, and other rooms with high moisture. Further, hardwood is at risk of termite infestation if not properly maintained and can be scratched.

Vinyl

Vinyl flooring is resistant to scratches, dents, and water damage, making it a durable option for families with active children and pets and a viable alternative to other water-resistant options like tile. Vinyl can mimic the look of more expensive materials at a lower price, and comes in two varieties known as regular vinyl and luxury vinyl. Vinyl planks, tiles, and sheets often click into place, making them accessible for DIY installation. See our guide to DIY vinyl floor installation. Vinyl is not very eco-friendly to produce or recycle.

Laminate



Laminate is durable and low-cost and comes with different abrasion ratings (ACs), which means that some types are highly scratch-resistant. Laminate with a higher AC rating is

better for high foot traffic. Laminate is popular among homeowners for its affordability, ability to mimic more expensive materials, and easy installation.

Laminate requires a level subfloor for proper installation, so subfloor issues may require the help of a professional flooring company. Laminate is less water-resistant than vinyl or ceramic tile, so it is not frequently used in bathrooms or kitchens. See our guide to laminate flooring.

DIY vs. Professional Flooring

Materials like vinyl and laminate often come in sheets or planks that snap into place, which makes them a popular choice for DIY installation. Some can even be installed on top of existing flooring without removing old materials. Other materials, such as solid hardwood, natural stone, or tile, are more labor-intensive and require professional installation.

Homeowners may find it more cost-effective to hire a flooring company in Ipswich if significant work is needed on the subfloor or underlayment. The time saved and peace of mind may offset the cost of paying a professional.

DIY Flooring

When starting a home improvement project, consider how long you're willing to go without a floor if you encounter unexpected delays. This question is especially relevant for bathrooms, kitchens, and other central household hubs.

Flooring installation costs vary based on surface area and material type. Here are popular materials' average costs (based on a 200-square-foot room):

- Hardwood: \$600–\$2,000
- Ceramic tile: \$500–\$2,000
- Vinyl: \$400–\$1,400
- Laminate: \$200–\$800

Another potential cost for DIY flooring is truck rental. Consider whether your current vehicle can transport flooring materials, which are often sold in lengthy planks. Renting flatbed or moving trucks often involves paying a flat rate plus a per mile rate. See our guide to renting moving trucks.

Think about whether you have the necessary tools and skill level to complete DIY installation. Materials such as ceramic tile require special tools for cutting and shaping. Materials such as laminate require level subfloors that may require professional repair before installation if they're not in good condition.

For example: Installing 200 square feet of laminate flooring costs between \$200 and \$800 in materials and between \$4 and \$8 per square foot in labor. Therefore, the total cost of professional installation is between \$1,600 and \$2,400. Consider whether saving money is worth the risks, time, and labor of DIY.

Professional Flooring

Hiring a professional flooring contractor comes with many benefits:

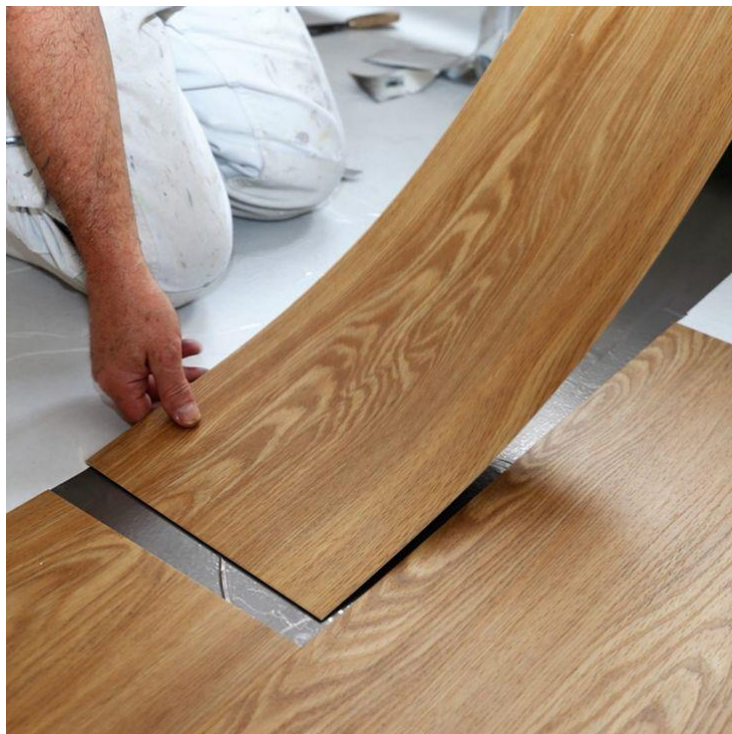
They have the expertise to get the job done correctly and efficiently.

Professional flooring companies are licensed and may offer a warranty in the event that something goes wrong.

They're knowledgeable about local permits and codes.

Professionals will likely be able to install flooring much faster than somebody without experience.

3.1. Cheap Flooring Options Will Look Awesome And Save You Money



If you're looking to make some updates to your home but are working under constraints of a tight budget, you may consider making small changes like repainting the walls, replacing the hardware on cabinets or restaining the furniture. However, there are some things you can

do to make a bigger impact without having to break the bank. One of these options is replacing your flooring.

There are many different types of flooring available to fit into just about any price point. If you're considering installing new flooring, a little bit of research will go a long way as far as helping to determine the material that will get you the most bang for your buck, while also supporting your lifestyle needs.

1. Sheet Vinyl

Sheet vinyl costs, on average, between \$0.50 to \$4.50 per square foot, making it a great affordable option. Sheet vinyl is a popular flooring choice among homeowners because it's durable and cost-effective. Additionally, it's available in a wide variety of colors and patterns to accommodate just about any style wants or needs.

That said, the quality of sheet vinyl can vary from brand to brand, or even within the same brand. If you're looking to save money, sheet vinyl is an especially great option because it's generally easy enough for most homeowners to install on their own, so it's possible to skip the cost of installation. However, it can be difficult to remove, so if you get to that point in the process, it's recommended to bring in a professional.

2. Linoleum

The typical price of linoleum flooring usually ranges between \$2 and \$7 per square foot, making it slightly more expensive than sheet vinyl. It's often confused with vinyl, as they're visually very similar and it is also offered in sheets. This flooring type is a good option because it's low-maintenance, durable and eco-friendly. It should be noted that it's water-resistant but not waterproof, and if it becomes completely submerged in water, damage will likely occur.

Linoleum that is installed in rooms with high amounts of sun exposure may experience ambering, which is when the surface begins to yellow, however, this can be avoided with proper maintenance like waxing every two to three years (if the floor is not already factory coated). It is possible to install linoleum flooring on your own, but if you're working with an uneven subfloor, you may want to bring in a professional. If you do want to try your hand DIY installation, you will need to rent a linoleum roller.

3. Laminate

Laminate flooring typically costs between \$1 and \$6 per square foot in Ipswich. This is a great choice for those who want a flooring option that looks similar to hardwood floors but can be installed for a much cheaper price tag. It's easy to clean and maintain and is fairly durable. That said, laminate cannot be refinished or resealed, so if damage does occur, it usually needs to be replaced.

If it's not properly sealed and water or moisture seeps through the cracks, it can easily become damaged and warped. Laminate is a good option if you're looking to save money on installation, since it's decently easy to install without a pro. However, it sometimes has a reputation of having a fake appearance and being hard underfoot, so if comfort is a top priority for you, laminate may not be the best choice.

4. Carpet

Depending on the quality and material of the carpet you're looking to purchase, the prices can range from \$2 to \$7 per square foot. Carpet is an extremely soft and comfortable flooring option, so it provides a level of safety that makes it a particularly good option for households with children.

Carpet can be found in a wide variety of colors, styles and materials, so it's likely you can find something to suit your style. Because carpet installation is a project that is done without a professional can easily go wrong, it's not recommended to DIY.

Also, because it's not a surface that is easily wiped down, carpet cleaning and maintenance is slightly more involved and expensive than that of hard flooring options. Plus, hard-surface flooring options are increasingly on the rise when it comes to style and trends, so carpet can actually decrease the resale value of your home.

5. Polished Concrete



Polished concrete floors range in price from \$2 to \$8 per square foot, making this a relatively low-cost flooring option. Because concrete needs to be mixed and prepared to a specific degree before it can be properly installed, it's usually best to have a concrete professional do

the installation. Any mishaps that occur during the pouring stage will impact the final product and are difficult, if not impossible, to correct.

That said, once the floor has been set and polished, the cleaning and upkeep of polished concrete floors is extremely easy and low-cost. Additionally, if properly maintained, polished concrete floors are extremely durable and can easily last a lifetime.

However, as a flooring option, concrete can be particularly cold, hard and uncomfortable. While the density is an advantage when it comes to durability—as this is a material that is not easily damaged—it's a disadvantage when it comes to safety, as falling on it can be extremely dangerous.

4. The Best Way to Clean Any Types of Floor



From laminate to natural stone, here's how to get every floor in your home sparkling clean.

When the foundation of every room is sparkling, your entire home looks incredibly clean. But don't break out the knee pads and scrub brushes just yet. Whether you have tile, hardwood, or vinyl floors each type of flooring has particular cleaning requirements. Follow these guidelines for the right cleanser, the best tools, and the ideal technique for your specific type of flooring.

How to Clean Hardwood Floor

"Hardwood floors typically have one of two finishes: polyurethane or wax. Not sure what you're standing on? Rub your finger across the surface," said Meg Roberts, president of Molly Maid. "If a smudge appears, the floor is likely waxed."

Polyurethane-Finished Hardwood Floors

Here is how to clean your polyurethane-finished hardwood floors:

Mix a quarter cup of mild or pH-neutral soap with water in a bucket.

Then use a microfiber mop to clean the floor.

Microfiber mops like the Libman Wonder Mop are easy to wring out, making them ideal for hardwood floors in Ipswich that work best with a barely damp (not soaking) mop. Plus, this will help your floor dry faster, so you won't have to wait as long to get back into the kitchen or living room.

Wax-Finished Hardwood Floors

If you have waxed wood floors, you're off the hook—sort of. Since this type of flooring can be damaged by even small amounts of water, keep damp mops away from this surface, and instead sweep, dust mop, or vacuum regularly.

Cleaning Laminate Flooring

Your laminate may resemble hardwood planks or natural stone tile, but you still need to care for it as a laminate. "The good news: Very few things will harm a laminate floor," said Bill Dearing, president of the Laminate Flooring Association. After all, the planks are constructed in sun- and light-resistant layers to maintain a like-new appearance for years.

That said, it's important to keep water from getting underneath the planks. Dearing recommends dry mopping or vacuuming the floor, ensuring the machine is on tile mode (as opposed to carpet) so the beater bar is raised. Spot-clean with a slightly damp mop when necessary.

How to Clean a Cork Floor

The same quality that makes this natural material so beautiful—its porosity—makes it very susceptible to water damage. Because it's so absorbent, most cork flooring is sealed, but you still need to proceed with caution.

"Vacuum often to prevent scratching, wipe up spills immediately, and wash cork floors once a week," said Leslie Reichert, the Green Cleaning Coach.

Reichert suggests skipping commercial cleaning products in favor of a vinegar-and-soapy-water solution. Naturally acidic vinegar works with the soap to break down dirt, cut through the build-up, and disinfect. Here's how to clean cork floor:

Place $\frac{1}{4}$ cup vinegar in a spray bottle with one drop of dish soap and warm water. Don't shake the solution (that would create suds), just gently combine the ingredients in a spray bottle by rocking it back and forth.

Spray the floor a section at a time and wipe with a damp microfiber mop as you go.

How to Clean Bamboo Flooring



Bamboo is sustainable, beautiful—and in some cases, softer and more prone to nicks and scratches than hardwood floors. Unless you have strand bamboo flooring—the hardest, most durable type available—be extra vigilant about regularly sweeping up dirt and debris. "Especially with the expense of bamboo, extra care should be used," said Roberts, who uses a tennis ball to gently buff out marks.

She uses the same cleaning solution on bamboo as on hardwood:

Mix $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of mild or pH-neutral soap in one bucket of water.

Swipe across the floor using a barely damp mop, wiping up excess moisture with a dry microfiber cloth.

How to Clean a Linoleum Floor

We're not talking about nearly indestructible vinyl flooring (see the next section for tips on cleaning that surface). True linoleum is made from linseed oil, resin, limestone, wood fiber, and cork dust, and colored with mineral pigments.

"Treat this resilient, natural flooring as you would cork," said Reichert.

Mix up a spray bottle of just a few drops of dish soap and hot water.

Then spritz a section of the floor at a time and wipe with a damp microfiber mop.

The floor should air-dry almost immediately, but if it feels slightly sticky to the touch just swipe it with another clean, damp microfiber mop or cloth.

How to Clean a Vinyl Floor

Vinyl flooring is a low-maintenance option when it comes to your cleaning routine. For daily cleaning, simply use a vacuum on your vinyl flooring. Additionally, sweeping can help remove built-up dust and debris. However, if your vinyl floor is looking a little dirtier than usual and needs a deeper cleanse, use a dampened mop with a neutral detergent to clean your floors.

How to Clean Natural Stone Flooring



"Whatever you do, leave the vinegar in the pantry," said Kris Koenig, CEO of eco-friendly cleaning company Natura Clean, in Middleton, Wisconsin. Even a small amount of the acidic

liquid could damage stone floors, as could bleach and ammonia. Instead, mop sealed-stone floors with a pH-neutral, non-chelating cleaner that won't react adversely to the minerals in natural surfaces.

"If your stone tiles are unsealed, simply mop with a microfiber mop and hot water; chemicals would penetrate the stone. For stubborn dirt, use a steam cleaner," said Reichert.

4.1. How To Maintain And Clean Limestone Floors

Limestone is a phenomenal kind of rock. Not only are they beautiful natural stones, but they are also quite durable. Considering that they are a hardwearing surface that is quite straightforward to maintain, you will find limestone as a flooring option in many homes. Just like any other surface, they can also accumulate dust, dirt, and grime. Removing them is crucial to maintain them. This is where using the right cleaning solutions hold significant importance, as that will ensure a smooth cleaning process. This is why professionals prefer using suitable solutions for cheap bond cleaning in Ipswich. Here is how to maintain and clean limestone floors. Apply these tips to maintain your precious flooring.



1. Begin by Sweeping

It is best to initiate the process by removing the large debris. It will help you get rid of things that might block your way during the cleaning. This way, you will also minimise the chances

of scratching your limestone flooring with large debris. During sweeping, ensure you are utilising a soft-bristled broom on limestone that is textured or a dust mop on polished or honed ones. Such tools will guarantee that your floor's finish is left undamaged after you have completed sweeping the area. It is also a good idea to use a high-quality vacuum cleaner to get rid of dust and tiny particles from the flooring before using any sort of cleaning solution.

2. Prepare a Limestone Safe Cleaning Solution

Limestone is typically porous in nature. This means that if it is unsealed, this natural stone can easily absorb the solution that you utilise, leading to discolouration and possible damage. To prevent such situations from taking place, you must use a pH-neutral cleaner that neither has bleach nor any type of acid. Here are the ingredients you need to prepare a limestone-safe cleaning solution that you can use to clean these flooring materials:

5 drops of your preferred essential oil, such as lemon juice, to cover the rubbing alcohol's smell.

¼ cup of rubbing alcohol

5 drops of liquid dish soap

1 cup of warm water

Add all the ingredients in a spray bottle and mix them well until combined. Budget bond cleaners in Ipswich prefer using this solution for cleaning natural stone floors.

3. Clean the Surface

Once the solution is ready, you can proceed with the cleaning. Firstly, check if the cleaner is suitable for the floor or not. You can do so by spraying a tiny and low-visibility section of the floor with the solution. Identify if it causes any sort of damage or discolouration to the floor or the grout joints. After you have confirmed that the cleaner will not cause any damage, simply spray a small amount of solution on the floor's tiny section. Next, mop using a clean mop. Keep repeating the process until the entire floor surface has been taken care of. Finally, allow it to air dry. You can also hire professionals to clean the surface for you, especially if you are nearing the end of your tenancy.

4. Avoid Using Harsh Materials

During the DIY cleaning process, budget bond cleaners Ipswich recommend avoiding harsh materials like rags or sponges as they are likely to damage the stone along with its sealant. Using a soft cloth or a damp mop is ideal because they both are effective at cleaning the

natural stone without damaging it. If you are mopping the surface, ensure to use water moderately.

5. Apply Sealer to the Limestone Flooring

Just cleaning your floors will not be enough in the long term, you must safeguard them to ensure they stay in the best condition for the years to come. Because they are a porous natural stone, limestone needs sealing. It will minimise the chances of damage from scratching and moisture. Applying a special stone sealer will be safe on the stone while offering a protective barrier.

6. Deep Clean the Flooring



From time to time, you will need to deep clean the limestone flooring to restore them to their original shine. According to professionals who perform the best bond cleaning Ipswich, steam cleaning is the perfect option. It will get the job done in a quick time. Using it occasionally will help you stop dirt from building up in the tiny crevices in the stone. If not, the floors can start to look stained. Steam is quite safe to use on limestone if you are able to adequately dry the surface after completing the procedure.

7. Promptly Clean Spills

It is a must to stop a spill from becoming a stain. When something is spilled on the floor, you must deal with it immediately. Letting it sit there will lead to discolouration from the liquid

and also cause substantial stains that will become tougher to eliminate later on. In a few cases, the discolouration can even become permanent and most likely will become almost impossible to deal with. This will affect the chances of you getting your bond back in full when vacating the property. So, remember to promptly clean spills.

Conclusion

Selecting the right flooring is a significant investment that influences the overall appearance, comfort, and functionality of your space. By following this step-by-step guide, you can navigate the vast range of flooring options with confidence, considering essential factors such as budget, lifestyle, maintenance, and design preferences. Whether you opt for the elegance of hardwood, the durability of tiles, the comfort of carpet, or the versatility of vinyl, making an informed decision will enhance the beauty and practicality of your environment. Ultimately, the right flooring choice will not only elevate your space aesthetically but also provide long-term satisfaction and value.

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