

Last on the List: The Kitchen Floor

BY KRIS BRIGDEN | Although the most satisfying, the kitchen can be the most challenging space in a home to design or tackle as a renovation project. Why? Simple — it's a very personal space, and it's more technical than you may think.

How many times in a given day you or a family member use the kitchen? When designing a kitchen, the focus of selections tends to be on the cabinets, the appliances and the counter top. The first item that needs to be installed is often last on the list — flooring.

There are numerous choices available when considering kitchen flooring and the task can seem overwhelming. Flooring can be both practical and personal, well beyond its cosmetics.

Much like other products for the home, types of flooring and their popularity come and go. “What’s Hot” today, may not be tomorrow. It is important to choose a floor that has longevity. I am often reminding clients to have fun with other design elements; choose elegant, timeless, durable flooring. Lime green anything may seem fun at the time, but when it's had its run, you will want ease of removal.

Kitchen flooring usually is installed underneath the base cabinets, and on a sub floor. You can imagine the labour and effort to change that floor at a later date.

Types of Kitchen Flooring

HARD WOOD | Often people use this term even when talking about soft woods. Some



In this photo: **TORLYS Flooring (cork)**

examples of softer woods: Pine, Hemlock, Cork, or Hickory. Harder woods: Walnut, Ash, Oak, Bamboo (although it's a grass).

ENGINEERED WOOD FLOORING

Typically a “sandwich” of layers with the inside running opposite to the outside, creating strength and made in the form of a plank. There are several categories of engineered wood flooring: **Laminate floors** use an image of wood on its surface; **Vinyl flooring** is plastic formed to look like wood. **Veneer floors** use a thin layer of wood over a core of composite wood.

TILE FLOORING Manufactured pieces of hard-wearing material such ceramic, stone, porcelain, concrete or glass.

NATURAL STONE Granite, Slate, Quartzite, Sandstone, Limestone, and Marble (often Travertine is considered a marble); again varying degrees of durability, soft or hard. There are several categories of finishes to stone as well: polished, honed, acid washed, saw-cut refined, flamed, split faced, tumbled, brushed or sandblasted.

Here are a few tips to help you choose appropriate flooring suitable to your lifestyle:

“TOO CURRENT” Resist the urge to install an overwhelmingly loud floor, in colour, texture or material. Make some other feature your focal point.

FUNCTION Wood, Vinyl, Laminate and Cork: Great choice for people who stand a lot

in a kitchen or for those of us with older knees. They are softer, more forgiving surfaces. Wood can be either engineered (man made), or solid, in varying widths and species. These products vary in durability; make sure they can stand up long term in your household.

TILE AND NATURAL STONES There can be a lot of ‘Wow’ in these selections, so be careful when choosing. These materials tend to be higher maintenance, more fragile and often more porous. Always talk to your flooring specialist about sealing the product.



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