

## **Introduction: Deciding on laying Carpet, Tile, or Hardwood floors? Home Improvement Basics & Practical Advice for your floor space**

You may be surprised that you are capable of laying carpet, tile, or a hardwood floor.

My experience is rudimentary at best. Still I have been involved in all three of these types of floor projects. My intention is not to instruct on all of the elements of any one of these processes; but rather it is to give a basic understanding of what you can expect to encounter in laying floor: be it carpet, tile, or wood.

### **Laying Carpet**

If you would like to carpet an area, my first suggestion is to just get it done professionally. They have the tools, the expertise, and the backs for it. Laying carpet is not fun work. However, in principal it is not the most difficult trade. Pulling up old carpet has more to do with grunt work than it does tools. You don't need any expertise taking it out. Get a crowbar in under a place of the carpet, like where the carpet meets a vinyl or tile floor, or if you have to, where it meets the wall. Pry some carpet up and start pulling. Tack boards were placed around the borders of the room; these need to be pulled up too (don't get poked by the tacks and nails). Scrape the floor clean of any areas where glue has particularly stuck the padding or carpet, or made rough places on the floor. Now the room is prepped for new carpet. New tack board strips must be laid down. These get nailed in with a good cement hammer. You will want to get further instruction for laying the carpet properly, but the idea is to measure well, roll it out and cut the angles, and with the right tools stretch and stick it into place. Again, pulling carpet was worth the savings but laying it is a whole new hassle.

### **Laying Tile**

Tiling is easier than it would seem with the right tools (a good wet saw makes a lot of difference). Linoleum doesn't even need to be pulled up. You mix the puddy to the right consistency; you cut tile as needed; you lay the tile and insert removable plastic dividers; and you grout it, wait for it to dry, and wipe it clean. You should lay the tile, having made necessary cuts, first. Before you've done any real damage you will already have a great idea of what your new floor is going to look like. If you have a toilet in the area you are tiling, you will want to remove the toilet and tile under it. This will make things a little trickier, but it will be satisfying to get the job done right with professional results. The beehive wax should be replaced to ensure no leaking occurs. It is not worth trying to salvage it for a cheap replacement. Look further into tiling; you can do this one.

### **Laying a Hardwood Floor**

My least experience of the three types of floors is hardwood floors. I have never taken one out or put one in. But I have seen it done by a novice or two who were just reading the instructions off of the box.

Much of putting in a hardwood floor has to do with following directions. There are a few

different patterns depending on the flooring you will be using. You will want to pay attention to the instructions given specifically for the materials you buy. Some wood flooring fits together by snapping in place while others mesh together. If you find you have to make several cuts to tailor the wood flooring to your needs, you are either covering a uniquely angled space or you are likely doing something wrong. You will want to place as much of the flooring in place as you would like to see it, before actually setting any of the wood flooring in place. If you do this, and cuts will need to be made, you will know where these need to be done first off. Adhesives that may be used in the process are very effective, so you will want to plan things out well. Ask your local Home Depot expert for advice on different wood floor installations.

### **A review of the overview**

Again, my overview is only intended to give you a preview of what to expect. The first time you will want to solicit better step-by-step instructions. But if you have decided what would be perfect in the flooring space of your place, now you just have to decide if it is worth it to take on the challenge yourself, or if you should relinquish the job to the labors of the professionals. I have tried to give some insight into that decision.

All of these home improvements can be worth the expense—given the potential increase in the resale value—even during tough economic times. Just be sure to pick your project wisely. A fresh coat of paint on a wall, for example, brings in much more money than it costs, whereas repairing holes in walls is not usually a smart quick turn around type purchase. In review, tile goes a long ways for the effort. Wood floor goes farther but requires a little more doing. Both are worth the trouble. Carpeting, however, though often necessary, is not usually worth the do-it-yourself mentality.