

BUYERS' GUIDE VINYL FLOORING

This affordable option is practical, comfortable, and easy to maintain. Here's what you need to know before choosing the right style for your space...

Words: Yvette Murrell

With a lot of benefits, vinyl flooring is low maintenance, easy to clean, scratch resistant, and waterproof, to name a few – which makes it an ideal choice for kitchens, bathrooms, and bedrooms with an adjoining ensuite. While you may think of those rolls of traditional vinyl, the material has come a long way in terms of its appearance and durability and, in addition to its most common form, developed a more sophisticated option: luxury vinyl tiles (LVT). Also available as planks, these are much thicker than standard rolls and mimic the appearance of natural materials such as wood, marble, stone, and even encaustic tiles, meaning you can achieve the real deal's look for less. All types of vinyl are made from a combination of layers compressed together, including at least a protective top layer, a sheet featuring the pattern or design, and a padded backing. Because of this, it can usually be laid without any need for additional underlay and is normally compatible with underfloor heating.

Buying tips

You'll need to calculate exactly how much floor you need to cover before purchasing any vinyl, and this should be worked out by the square metre. Standard rolls are usually sold in certain widths, which you can then cut to size, whereas LVT come as tiles or planks that slot together. Depending on what you go for, you may need to consider the cost of adhesive or underlay for added comfort and soundproofing. Also think about skirting board trims for a neat look.

Design decisions

With so many different finishes and authentic-looking replicas of, for example, marble, stone, and wood, there are endless possibilities when it comes to the design of your vinyl. Many of the available textured options feel like natural wood grain or luxury matt marble, can be sourced in a range of patterns, and you can also opt for bold colours or shimmery finishes. Additionally, most LVT can be laid in pattern formations such as herringbone to create a variety of looks to suit your style and space.

Need to know

Fortunately, vinyl is an easy surface to clean and maintain, but there are some precautions you should take to increase its longevity. Sweep your tiles regularly to remove debris and mop up any dirt or spillages with a warm, soapy solution. Many brands have their own products, made specifically to accompany their flooring, which are useful for deep cleans. And while vinyl can look as good as the real deal, it won't add the same value to your home as investing in, for example, real wood flooring could do. Keep an eye out for brands that offer long guarantees, as vinyl is not easy to repair if damaged.

Pricing

Vinyl is one of the most affordable types of flooring, with prices starting from around £6 per sq m – but you could pay up to around £80 per sq m for luxury vinyl tiles.



↑ Available in Lavastone, Ochre, Flax (shown), Ink Black, and Oxford Blue, Neisha Crosland's Dovetail luxury vinyl tiles cost £44.80 per sq m from Harvey Maria.

→ Lifestyle Floors' Baroque collection comes in a range of patterns, including the tile-like Lisbon 909 (shown), from £14.50 per sq m.



"It's a good idea to order or request samples of different flooring types before you commit to one style, so you can get an idea of what it will look like in the room you are decorating. It will also give you a much better understanding of the texture and quality of the flooring itself."
Yvette,
features writer



Designed to resemble aged wooden boards, Memphis vinyl from the Luxury Woods collection by Leoline costs £20 per sq m.



With a realistic varied grain and textured finish, Amtico's New Cubist in Nomad Oak from the Amtico Signature luxury vinyl tile range comes in a variety of plank lengths to fit your space, along with a lifetime warranty. Priced £70 per sq m.



Noise-reducing and totally waterproof, this marble-effect luxury vinyl flooring contains 70% limestone for a realistic finish. Priced £25 per sq m from Wickes.



↑ Carpetright's True Colours vinyl collection, available as 4m-wide rolls, is shown in UNI 518 (red), UNI 556 (yellow), and UNI 574 (blue), all £22.99 per sq m.

↓ Although the Mardi Gras 599 Sagres slip-resistant vinyl – £15.99 per sq m from Carpetright – has a tile effect, it comes in 2, 3, or 4m-wide rolls.



Available as 22 x 20cm rectangular tiles, Goldie from Avenue Floors' Ultimate Expressions collection features a multicoloured hexagonal-effect design, priced £19 per sq m. **KBB**