

LOG HOME LIVING

6 Standard Flooring Options for Log Homes

Here's a summary of what your primary choices are for flooring.



Selecting the floor coverings and finishes in a home is among the most challenging aspects of design planning. Where you may limit types and styles of other building materials through the home, flooring dares you to mix and match, combining the sensible with the fanciful. And when you see the enormous range of possibilities, it just makes it that much more fun. These are some of the hottest trends in flooring today, their pros and cons and the bottom line.

1. Hardwood Floors

Durability, beauty, shine and ease of care have topped the list of reasons to choose hardwood. Even if the floor takes a beating over time, provided its veneer is thick enough, hardwood can be re-sanded and refinished to a gleam that echoes back to the time when it was new. Oak and pine have been used for literally hundreds of years. They accept color and retain finishes well. The natural grain adds considerable character, too. But even as they continue to lead the parade, there are many new, more unusual species being tapped for use in homes. From South America, Asia and Africa, importers are bringing indigenous cherry, mahogany, teak, cypress, rosewood, and especially bamboo.



But even domestic species such as ash, hickory, walnut and pecan are enjoying a renaissance, particularly as manufacturers offer custom work that includes hand-carved borders and center medallion pieces. It seems the homeowner is limited only by his or her imagination. The old rap against hardwood was its susceptibility to water stains, discoloration and warping, but over time the finishes have improved to such an extent that — with reasonable care — wood is just as at home in the kitchen as any room in the house. Even in the family and recreation rooms, where floors may be subjected to the dreaded toddler stomp, drag and toy-roll test, wood is as viable as any other resource.





2. Rugs and Carpeting

Carpeting has been resurrected from the low-rent bin to covering floors in some of the loveliest homes imaginable. Carpeting never lost its appeal as a warm, comforting surface. In cooler climates, where rugs never did go out of style, that wrap-in-comfort charm has returned in the form of natural fibers (if cost is not the determining factor) or nylon (when durability counts). After being exiled to the bedroom, carpets and large rugs are rolling back out into great rooms, dining rooms and libraries across the spectrum.

3. Stone and tile

The options in buying tile can be almost overwhelming, but the most interesting development has been the ability to heat tiles for warmth never possible before. In some systems, a mesh-backed mat is embedded directly into the cement for the tile (or in some instances, even stone). A heating cable is then affixed that allows for warmth at the flick of a switch, and it's a simple enough procedure that many do-it-yourselfers can tackle the project. New manufacturing processes are allowing companies to offer tile that is substantially more resilient and resistant to scratches than ever before. Foam backing also protects against moisture and stains from the bottom while adding comfort.

4. Fiber Flooring

The term can be confusing as "fiber flooring" is applied to describing a wide range of materials all the way from carpet to what might have been called linoleum in years gone by. All are distinguished from other types of flooring in that they are made from natural, fibrous materials. This includes sisal or jute carpet. It also may be a roll-out, 12-foot-wide material that looks like wood floor or even stone, depending on the pattern. However, the materials are usually very

resistant to damage, and most (but not all) come from green, or earth-friendly, resources. (Look for a FSC Certification label to ensure environmental claims are accurate.) Depending on the finish, fiber flooring can also be relatively easy in maintenance and cleaning.

5. Cork

It's not just your bulletin board any more. Nor has it been since the latter 1800s when cork started being utilized as sound-absorbing, cushiony flooring. The great news is that the variety of styles and colors has grown tremendously in recent years and in fact, cork is often mistaken for tile or hardwood. A natural material, cork is renewable when harvested correctly, environmentally friendly, resilient and water resistant. Ideal in rooms with lots of activity going on, cork is also elastic and insulating.

6. Concrete

Even concrete is becoming popular. It can now be colored or stained to almost any hue, while patterns and textures are virtually limitless. In warmer climates, concrete can hold coolness and help the air conditioning bill considerably. In cooler areas, in-floor radiant heat means you'll not be able to tell the difference from other types of flooring. Glass can be added to the original concrete pour, then polished when dry to create an exciting, brilliant finish. Overlays can be done later to almost any concrete source to change the appearance or finish, or to correct fissures. Regardless of the type of flooring selected, bear in mind that today's materials are more resilient and easier to maintain than ever before.
