

# INSTALL LINOLEUM FLOORING

Installing linoleum flooring is a good choice if you're looking for an all-natural, durable, beautiful floor for your home or office. Below are the essential things you'll need to know during your linoleum installation. For more detailed information on what to do before, during and after your linoleum installation, see the full **Installing Linoleum Flooring** guide on FindAnyFloor.com.



## LINOLEUM INSTALLATION METHODS

Linoleum is installed one of three ways depending on the type of linoleum you choose:

- **Sheet Linoleum** – Secured to the subfloor with a full spread adhesive.
- **Linoleum Tiles** – Secured to the subfloor with a full spread adhesive.
- **Floating (Click-Lock) Linoleum** – Panels are clicked and locked together to form a floating floor.



## TOOLS AND MATERIALS

You will need most of the general tools and materials plus anything specific for your installation method.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carpenter's square              | <input type="checkbox"/> Respirator or mask   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gloves                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Scribes, snips and/or shears   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Masking tape                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Straight edge  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Measuring tape                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Utility knife, edge trimmer and/or trimming knives (under, over, straight) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Half moon knife and guide plate |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pencil and/or felt tipped pen   |   |

### Sheet or Tile Installation

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 100 lb roller and/or rolling pin | <input type="checkbox"/> Notched trowel                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chalk line                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Scissors                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Floor pattern or craft paper     | <input type="checkbox"/> Seam sealer kit or seam welder |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Full spread adhesive             | <input type="checkbox"/> Staple gun                     |

### Floating Floor Installation

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hammer                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Tapping block           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hand saw                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Tension iron or pry bar |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Keyhole, jig or power saw | <input type="checkbox"/> Wedges                  |



## PREPARE THE FLOOR

- Linoleum can be installed above wood (plywood, plywood and OSB board) subfloors and concrete subfloors.
- Linoleum can be installed in On Grade or Above Grade areas. Some linoleum is approved for Below Grade installations.

- If approved by the manufacturer, linoleum can be installed over radiant heating systems and above existing linoleum or vinyl. Remove all other floor coverings. However, do not remove any existing flooring if you find asbestos. Follow all local, state and federal guidelines when handling and/or disposing of asbestos.
- All subfloors and existing flooring must be structurally sound, level and dry.
- Some subfloors require an underlayment for stability. Only choose underlayment grade plywood, class 4, 0.215" service-grade hardboard or Type 1 lauan plywood. For specific information about these underlayments, see the full **Installing Linoleum Flooring** guide on FindAnyFloor.com.
- Do not use other types of lauan plywood or lesser quality plywoods as they are not dimensionally stable enough to support the floor. These plywoods tend to have hollow spots (which causes soft spots in the floor) and have higher instances of delamination (which causes your linoleum to bubble).
- For concrete slabs, perform all moisture tests as recommended by your manufacturer. Moisture tests may include Polyethylene, Calcium Chloride, and/or pH Alkalinity tests. Follow all your manufacturer's recommendations if your subfloor has excess moisture.
- If installing on a concrete slab or in a Below Grade environment, use 4-6mm plastic sheeting or a paint-on moisture barrier/waterproofer below your linoleum.
- Ensure your subfloor is level and free from all dips, valleys or imperfections (such as drywall mud, paint overspray, etc.). Scrape your subfloor completely clean. Sand down any high areas. Use self-leveling compound to level all low areas.
- Place your linoleum in the installation area 1-2 days before your installation to allow the material to acclimatize. Follow all the manufacturer's recommendations for room temperature (both before and during the installation) and acclimatization time.
- If desired, undercut door casings in your installation area.
- If desired, remove all molding. In some cases, you can leave molding in place and either install the linoleum under the molding or install the linoleum almost flush with the molding.
- Remove all doors and set aside especially if working with sheet linoleum.
- Remove the toilet if working in a bathroom.
- Sweep and/or vacuum your subfloor before installing your linoleum.
- Always install safely using the proper safety equipment. Follow all manufacturer safety recommendations.

**TIPS AND TRICKS**

- When possible, use the same brand adhesive as the linoleum to ensure compatibility.
- Some linoleum will expand slightly width-wise and shrink slightly length-wise. Always follow your manufacturer's recommendations for expansion spacing. Some manufacturers recommend leaving an expansion space while others do not.
- If your linoleum floor will have seams, follow all seam width recommendations. Some manufacturers recommend fitting the linoleum flush at seams while others may require a 1/64" space between seams.
- Always wear gloves if using a full spread adhesive.
- If using sheet linoleum, do not unroll the linoleum until you are ready to cut and install it.
- Never store your linoleum in direct sunlight.
- "Hook blades" work well for trimming linoleum in place. These work with most utility knives and can be purchased at many home improvement stores.
- When trimming linoleum along walls, use a scrap piece of wood to create a crease in the linoleum along the wall. Cut along this crease.
- On outside corners, cut the linoleum vertically from top to bottom.
- On inside corners, cut "V" shapes in the linoleum until it lays flat along both walls.
- Place heavy objects on the linoleum during trimming, rolling and gluing to ensure the linoleum does not shift before it is secured to the subfloor.

**INSTALL THE UNDERLAYMENT**

If installing a plywood underlayment, keep these things in mind:

- Stagger sheets so seams are at least 12" from all subfloor seams.
- Leave a 1/8" expansion perimeter around the whole room.
- Leave between 1/16" and 1/32" expansion gap between sheets of underlayment. Fill these gaps with leveling compound, then sand so the seams are level and flat with the rest of the subfloor.
- Place factory edges together whenever possible.
- Use 1/4" crown divergent, galvanized staples spaced 4" apart in the floor and 2" apart at all seams. (Some manufacturers also recommend 1 1/4" 3d ring shank nails.)
- Let the underlayment acclimatize for 24 hours before beginning your linoleum installation.

**INSTALL SHEET LINOLEUM**

Sheet linoleum can be installed with or without seams.

**INSTALL SHEET LINOLEUM WITHOUT SEAMS**

Use this method when you are working in a small area with few obstacles that will require only one sheet of linoleum.

1. Measure your installation area. Add 3 inches to all perimeter measurements.
2. Cut out your sheet linoleum based on the room measurements.
3. Place the linoleum in the installation area. Carefully trim away all excess around obstacles and walls.
4. Roll one half of the linoleum back and secure temporarily with masking tape.
5. Apply the full spread adhesive to the subfloor as recommended by the manufacturer.
6. Unroll and lay the linoleum into the adhesive. Apply pressure from the center to the edges. Roll the floor with a 100-lb roller if recommended by the manufacturer.
7. Repeat steps 4 through 6 for the other half of the linoleum.
8. Re-roll the entire floor if recommended by the manufacturer.

**INSTALL SHEET LINOLEUM WITH SEAMS**

Use this method when you are working with sheet linoleum in a large area with multiple seams and/or obstacles.

1. Create a pattern of your floor using a pattern kit (available at many home improvement stores) or use craft paper, tape and scissors. Make sure the pattern is flat on the floor at all times. Account for all obstacles in the pattern.
2. Unroll your pattern on top of your linoleum. Ensure there is a piece of linoleum beneath the entire pattern. Try to position seams in low traffic areas. If your linoleum has visible lines such as grout lines in the pattern, plan your seams accordingly. Seams are much less visible if hidden within a grout line.
3. At each seam, overlap the two pieces of linoleum by at least 1". Make sure the patterns on both pieces match. Tape the two pieces of linoleum together with masking tape.
4. Following a metal straight edge, use a utility knife to cut through BOTH pieces of linoleum at each seam. Once cut, align the seam edges so flush and tape securely.
5. Cut the rest of your linoleum to fit your pattern. Leave 3" around the perimeter.
6. Once cut, carefully roll up the linoleum and take it to the installation area. (Consider sweeping/vacuuming the subfloor just prior to laying down your linoleum.)
7. Unroll the linoleum carefully and align it correctly with the room. Trim all edges so they are flush with walls or obstacles. Leave expansion spacing as recommended by your manufacturer.
8. Starting with the largest piece of linoleum first, roll back and tape the half opposite the seam.

9. Apply the full spread adhesive to the subfloor as instructed by the manufacturer.
  10. Unroll and lay the linoleum into the adhesive. Apply pressure from the center to the edges.
  11. Roll back and tape the other half of the linoleum (near the seam). Use a pencil to trace the seam edge onto the subfloor. Roll back and tape the second (smaller) piece of linoleum.
  12. Apply the adhesive on the whole floor under both sheets of linoleum and along the seam as instructed by the manufacturer.
  13. Carefully unroll both pieces of linoleum and set in the adhesive. Follow your flooring manufacturer's recommendations for seam spacing. Wipe away any excess adhesive from the seam.
  14. Roll the linoleum and the seam with a 100-lb roller if recommended by the manufacturer.
  15. Repeat steps 8 through 14 for all other seams on the floor.
  16. Re-roll the whole floor with a 75-100lb roller if recommended by the manufacturer.
  17. Seal all seams.
    - Use a seam sealer kit if recommended by the flooring manufacturer. Not all kits are compatible with your linoleum.
- OR**
- Heat weld seams. If using this method, consider seeking assistance from a flooring professional. Heat welding takes a good deal of skill and practice.
18. Let the new linoleum cure and bond for 24-72 hours or as recommended by your manufacturer. Do not move anything back into the room during this time and keep foot traffic to a minimum.

## ***INSTALL LINOLEUM TILES***

Linoleum tiles are laid out much like ceramic or vinyl tile.



### **INSTALL LINOLEUM TILES**

1. Snap a chalk line between the center points of each opposite wall to divide the room into four relatively equal quadrants.
2. Layout a row of loose linoleum tiles in all directions at the center intersection point. Evaluate the fit. If there are small cuts (less than 1/2") along walls, move your starting point down by 1/2 a linoleum tile width and re-snap the chalk lines. If desired, snap chalk lines to divide the larger quadrants into smaller (approx 2' x 3') sections.
3. Begin securing linoleum tiles at the center intersection point in one quadrant and work your way towards the walls. Follow all the adhesive manufacturer's recommendations during installation.
4. At walls, scribe fit linoleum tiles to fit.
5. Once all linoleum tiles are installed, roll the floor if recommended by your flooring manufacturer.
6. Let the newly installed linoleum tiles dry and cure for between 24-72 hours or as recommended by your manufacturer. During this time, do not move anything back into the room and keep foot traffic to a minimum.

## ***INSTALL FLOATING LINOLEUM***

Floating linoleum is installed much like a laminate floor. You will be laying out the linoleum then locking panels together. During the process, keep the following things in mind:

- Always leave the correct expansion perimeter as recommended by your flooring manufacturer. If you are installing a large floor, leave the correct expansion joints.
- Stagger all end joints at least 12".
- Use linoleum from multiple boxes throughout your floor to mix color variations between boxes.
- Always cut into the face of the linoleum to avoid chips when cutting by hand. When using a power saw, cut into the side of the panel.
- Never install floating linoleum floors in wet areas with sump pumps or floor drains.



### **INSTALL THE FIRST ROW**

Take extra time when installing the first row of floating linoleum. The row must be straight even if the walls are not.

1. Along the longest wall, measure out your expansion spacing in at least two places and snap a chalk line.
2. Lay out the linoleum panels end to end but do not lock together yet. Scribe fit (if necessary) so that the linoleum matches the contours of the wall. Add wedges between the linoleum and the wall.
3. Once satisfied with the fit, click and lock the first row of linoleum together. There should be no space between locked panels.
4. At the end of the wall, measure, cut and lock the last linoleum panel in place. Add a wedge at the end of the first row and evaluate the fit. Adjust where needed.



### **INSTALL THE MAIN PART OF THE FLOOR**

1. Use a partial panel to start the second row.
2. Click and lock the linoleum panels together as you did with the first row.
3. Work your way across the floor until you reach the last row.



### **INSTALL THE LAST ROW**

1. Measure out your expansion spacing and snap a chalk line.
2. Lay out the last row of linoleum. Scribe fit (if necessary) so that the panels match any contours in the wall.
3. Once satisfied with the fit, click and lock each panel together with the rest of the floor. Evaluate the last row to ensure it is straight and level. Adjust where needed.

Your floating linoleum floor does not need any time to set. Once you lock the last panel into place, you can remove all wedges and begin using your new linoleum floor.

**SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCE AREAS**

Linoleum flooring can be installed in a variety of special circumstance areas such as:

- **Around Fireplaces** – Install the linoleum flush with fireplaces/brickwork and caulk all edges.
- **Pipes and Vents** – Account for these objects in your pattern (for sheet linoleum) or make small patterns to help you cut around these areas when installing linoleum tiles.
- **On Stairs** – Linoleum should not be installed on stairs for safety reasons.

For more detailed information about installing linoleum in these areas, see the full **Installing Linoleum Flooring** guide on FindAnyFloor.com.

**TRANSITIONS AND TRIM**

Install transitions and trim to hide any expansion spacing and put the finishing touches on your room.

**INSTALL TRANSITIONS**

- **For Carpet** – Metal, vinyl and rubber transition pieces are available. These transition pieces are either nailed or glued to the subfloor.

- **For Other Flooring Surfaces** – Transitions to bamboo, tile, hardwood or laminate should match or accent that flooring surface. Most times, these transition pieces are already in place. For more information on these transitions, see the full installation guide for that specific type of flooring on FindAnyFloor.com.

**INSTALL TRIM**

Install all wall base, shoe base and quarter round trim around the perimeter of the room. Do NOT glue the trim to the linoleum. Always glue trim to the wall and nail at an angle every 16". Caulk significant gaps between the trim and the wall.

**CAULK THE FLOOR**

Use flexible, mildew resistant silicone caulk to seal around showers, bathtubs and other wet areas. If you did not remove your baseboard, caulk all perimeter edges to seal against moisture and prevent the linoleum from peeling up.