

INSTALLING CORK FLOORING

Congratulations on choosing to install cork as your new flooring! Cork flooring is comfortable, beautiful and ecologically-friendly flooring material that is a popular choice for many homeowners. And it's no wonder; with a wide variety of colors and styles, you're sure to find a cork flooring product that compliments your lifestyle and home décor.

When it comes to installing cork flooring you have a number of different options. This guide will help you determine what is right for your floor to ensure you have a successful installation.

✓ **TIP:** If reading online, click on any item in this contents list or any grey text in the document to jump to a specific section.

Installation Options.....	2	Installing the Last Row of Floating Cork.....	27
Installation Methods for Cork Flooring.....	2	Applying a Top Coat Finish	28
Veneered Cork Plank and Tile Composition	3	Setting Times for Glueless Cork Floors	28
Density Options	4	Installing Glued Down Cork Tiles	29
Acceptable Installation Areas and Subfloors.....	5	Tools and Materials	29
Radiant Heat System Considerations	6	Installation Tips and Tricks.....	30
Planning Your Installation.....	8	Pre-Installation Steps	30
Determine the Layout	8	Creating a Guideline Grid.....	30
Factor in Waste	9	Gluing Tiles to the Subfloor	31
Estimate Installation Time	9	Letting the Floor Set	33
Allow for Expansion and Contraction	10	Applying a Top Coat Finish	33
Using an Underlayment.....	10	Special Circumstance Installations.....	34
Special Considerations for Floating Floors.....	11	Types of Transitions	34
Install Safely	13	Using T-Molding for Interior Doorways.....	36
Preparing for Installation.....	15	Using End Molding for Exterior Doorways	37
Moisture Testing Your Concrete Subfloor	15	Working around Vents.....	38
Inspecting and Leveling Your Subfloor.....	17	Working around Fireplaces and Brickwork.....	38
Acclimatize Your Cork Flooring	20	Using End Molding for Carpet Transitions	39
Removing Molding and Doors	20	Using Flush Reducer for Vinyl Transitions	40
Undercutting Door Casings	20	Using Overlap Reducer for Vinyl Transitions	40
More Tips for a Successful Installation.....	21	Installing Cork on Stairs	41
Installing A Floating Cork Floor.....	23	Completing the Job.....	42
Tools and Materials	23	Installing Wall Base and Quarter Round Trim.....	42
Installation Tips and Tricks	24	Caulking Trim in Wet Areas.....	43
Pre-Installation Steps	24	Copyright and Usage Information	44
Installing the Underlayment.....	24	Legal Disclaimer and Liability Release	45
Installing the First Row of Floating Cork.....	25		
Installing the Rest of the Floating Cork Floor	26		

INSTALLATION OPTIONS

Cork flooring is quickly gaining popularity as a durable, all-natural, renewable alternative to traditional hardwood flooring. In this section, we'll be going over the basic installation options including:

- **Installation Methods for Cork Flooring**
- **Veneered Cork Plank and Tile Composition**
- **Density Options**
- **Acceptable Installation Areas and Subfloors**
- **Radiant Heat System Considerations**

Installation Methods for Cork Flooring

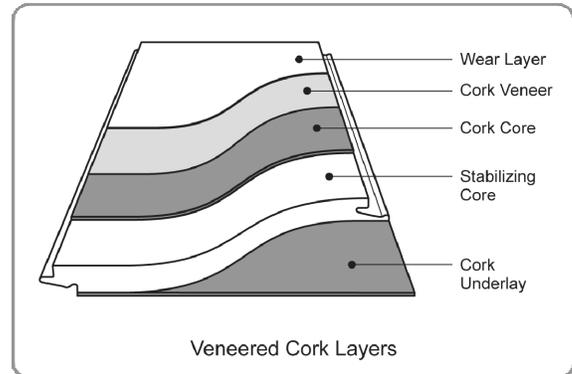
When installing your cork flooring, you can choose one of two installation methods depending on the type of cork flooring you purchased:

- **Glued Down Cork Tiles** – Cork tiles are glued to the subfloor with a quality flooring adhesive. Generally, tiles are 12" x 12" and 3/16" thick; however, larger sizes, different shapes and varying thicknesses are also available. Cork tiles are available in three types:
 - **Solid** – Tiles made entirely of cork. Cork tiles come as unfinished or pre-finished with a durable wear layer. Solid cork tiles range in thickness from 5mm to 8mm.
 - **Veneered** – Manufactured tiles that have thin layer (usually 1/8" thick) of cork veneer covered by a durable wear layer. Veneered cork tiles are usually not recommended for high traffic areas as the veneered layer may wear through.
 - **Mosaic Cork Tiles** – Mosaic cork tiles are made from reclaimed wine corks mounted in decorative patterns on large sheets of special backing paper which are then cut into tiles. Mosaic tiles are installed with a special type of waterproofing mortar and grout (more like ceramic tile) which makes this type of cork ideal for wet areas.
- **Floated Cork Planks** – Cork planks (or in some cases cork tiles) are milled with tongues and grooves like traditional hardwood flooring and are designed to be installed as a floating floor. Most products click and lock together (much like laminate). Installing a click lock floating floor is the easiest way to install a beautiful cork floor yourself.

Veneered Cork Plank and Tile Composition

Unlike solid cork tiles which are made entirely of cork, cork planks (and veneered cork tiles) are manufactured much like laminate. The flooring is made up of between three and five layers.

- **Underlayment** – Many products begin with a low-density, flexible underlayment (such as foam or a thin layer of uncompressed cork). This layer provides sound insulation as well as some additional cushioning.
- **Stabilizing Core** – The stabilizing core is the foundation of the flooring. This layer is made from water resistant Medium Density Fiberboard (MDF) or High Density Fiberboard (HDF). The core is milled so that it extends out past the veneer layer on all edges to form the tongues and grooves.
- **Cork Core** – Many higher-end products have a solid cork core above the stabilizing core. The cork core provides additional cushioning and sound insulation.
- **Compressed Cork Veneer** – A dense, compressed cork veneer is the layer that provides the color and pattern for your flooring. The veneer layer ranges in thickness with the standard being 4mm (5/32"). Thicker veneer layers tend to last longer and wear better.
- **Wear Layer** – A transparent wear layer covers the entire veneer layer to protect it from damage and wear. Normally, urethane, acrylic varnish or other type of surface finish is used.



Wear Layer Options

Wear layers are made from 3 main materials. Generally, the thicker the wear layer the longer the cork flooring will last. Always consider the amount of traffic in your installation area when choosing between the different types of wear layers.

Common wear layer materials include:

- **Water-Based Urethane** – These are tough finishes made from polyurethane. While urethane finishes are durable, scratch-resistant and low-maintenance, small particles such as sand can cause surface scratches. Generally, urethane finishes last a long time and can be sanded and refinished when needed. Urethane finished cork flooring is the most popular wear layer option today.

- **Wax** – Wax requires significantly more maintenance and care (plus specialized equipment) but this type of finish will last as long as your floor does. The quality of wax you use directly affects the long-term durability of your floor. Applying 100% all-natural wax on your floor every 6-12 months is the best choice. Unlike urethane finishes, a waxed floor can be rebuffered and re-waxed without removing the previous layers of wax. Additionally, surface scratches on individual tiles can be removed by simply buffing and re-waxing that tile.
- **UV Cured Acrylic** – This type of finish contains small amounts of urethane and is cured using ultraviolet light. While very glossy, UV cured acrylic finishes are soft, easily scratched and susceptible to cracking. To refinish, you must remove all the existing finish then reapply.

Most pre-finished cork products come with one or more wear layers already applied. However, after your cork floor is installed, you may need to apply one more coats of finish over your entire floor (depending on your manufacturer's recommendations). This final coat of finish seals the entire floor (including the micro-seams between planks/tiles) from moisture. This helps improve the long-term durability of your flooring.

Refinishing Options

Solid cork floors as well as veneered cork planks and tiles can be refinished (if needed) over the life of the floor. For each type, be sure to follow your manufacturer's sanding recommendations as you can only sand the floor to a certain point above the tongue and groove. If you sand any closer to the tongue and groove, you may affect the stability of the flooring. Since veneered cork flooring does not have as thick of a layer of cork, you may not be able to refinish a veneered cork floor as many times as a solid cork floor.

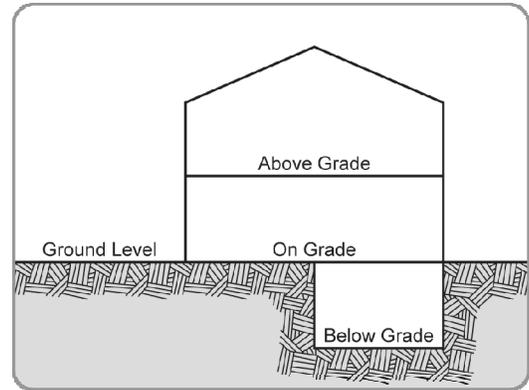
Density Options

Cork flooring comes in a variety of densities. When choosing your cork, make sure you choose a product that has the correct density for the traffic level in your installation area. For cork flooring, density is measured by weight per cubic foot. For low traffic rooms such as bedrooms, a low density 28 pound cork is usually sufficient. For moderate to high traffic areas (such as entryways, kitchens, living rooms or dining rooms), you should choose a product that is 30-34 pounds per cubic foot. These products will last longer and hold up better long-term.

✓ **TIP:** Low traffic areas such as guest rooms or bedrooms will still benefit from having a higher density cork flooring product.

Acceptable Installation Areas and Subfloors

Cork can be installed in most On Grade and Above Grade installation areas. Generally, Below Grade areas are not recommended unless specifically approved by your manufacturer. Cork is also an excellent choice for kitchens as it is resilient and comfortable to stand upon for long periods of time. Cork should only be installed in bathrooms or other wet areas if specifically approved by your manufacturer.



NOTE: While cork itself is water resistant, water that is splashed on the floor can seep between tiles or plank joints. This may cause the cork or stabilizing core to expand or cup.

Cork tiles can be glued to the following types of subfloors:

- **Concrete** – Concrete subfloors must be level, clean, dry and flat. You should perform the proper moisture tests (Polyethylene, Calcium Chloride and/or pH Alkalinity) prior to installation. Additionally, you must ensure the adhesive is compatible with concrete subfloors. Concrete slabs must be at least 30 days old to ensure the moisture in the slab has evaporated.
- **Wood** – Wood subfloors must be flat, clean, level, smooth and dry. Wood subfloors should be made of APA exterior grade plywood.



NOTE: APA plywood is underlayment grade plywood that has a fully sanded face and an exterior and/or exposure 1 classification. Generally, this type of plywood is sold as 1/4", 3/8" or 1/2".

Cork planks can be installed as a floating floor over the following types of subfloors:

- **Concrete** – Concrete subfloors must be level, clean, dry and flat. You should perform the proper moisture tests (Polyethylene, Calcium Chloride and/or pH Alkalinity) prior to installation. Concrete slabs must be at least 30 days old.
- **Wood** – Wood subfloors must be flat, clean, level, smooth and dry. Wood subfloors should be made of APA exterior grade plywood.
- **Existing Flooring** – Existing linoleum, vinyl, tile, hardwood or stone must be in good condition and fully adhered to the subfloor. You must remove any damaged or loose flooring prior to installing your new cork flooring. Do not install floating floors over soft surfaces such as carpet.

✓ **TIP:** Be aware of asbestos if you are removing existing flooring. Some older flooring products contain asbestos which can contaminate your home or office if removed. If you find asbestos in your existing flooring, do not remove it. Instead install a suitable plywood underlayment above your existing flooring.

Radiant Heat System Considerations

Cork can be installed over a variety of radiant heat systems if approved by your manufacturer. Radiant heat systems heat homes from beneath the flooring. There are three main types of radiant heat systems:

- **Radiant air** where air heats the flooring. Because air is a poor conductor of heat, this method is not very cost effective for most homes.
- **Electric radiant** where electric currents provide the heat. These types of systems usually come as mats that are embedded into or laid beneath the subfloor.

✓ **TIP:** Electric radiant heat mats are the easiest to work with when doing a remodel. Since the matting is thin, it is laid on the subfloor then covered with thinset mortar before installing your flooring.

- **Hydronic radiant systems** (also called liquid systems) where heated water is pushed through tubing or piping laid in a concrete slab or below a subfloor.

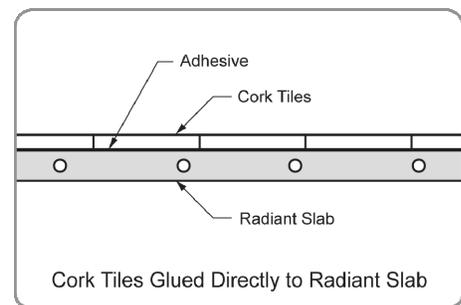
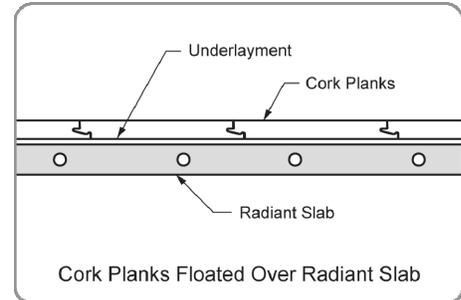
Each of these systems can be installed by two different methods:

- **Wet** installation where the piping is installed directly in a lightweight concrete or in a concrete slab above the subfloor.
- **Dry** installation where the piping is installed between two layers of plywood or attached directly below the subfloor. When installed between layers of plywood, aluminum diffusers are may be used to distribute the heat evenly throughout the subfloor. When installed below a subfloor, reflective insulation is often used to direct heat upward.

Always check with your retailer or manufacturer to ensure the type of cork flooring you choose can be installed over a radiant heat system. Radiant heating affects the temperature, moisture and humidity of the cork. Over time, these factors can cause problems if your cork was not designed to be installed over a radiant heating system.

In addition to your flooring manufacturer's instructions, you should also keep these things in mind:

- Always follow your manufacturer's temperature recommendations both before and during your installation.
- Keep the subfloor surface temperature below 82° F.
- The overall temperature of the room must not vary more than 15° F during the year. The relative humidity should stay between 35% and 65% year round.



PLANNING YOUR INSTALLATION

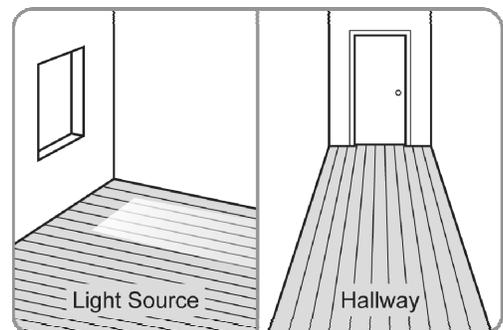
You've figured out the best installation options for your specific type of cork flooring and now it's time to start planning. During the planning phase, you will:

- **Determine the Layout**
- **Factor in Waste**
- **Estimate Installation Time**
- **Allow for Expansion and Contraction**
- **Using an Underlayment**
- **Special Considerations for Floating Floors**
- **Install Safely**

Determine the Layout

The layout of your cork flooring largely depends upon the dimensions of the room and the main incoming light sources. If you are installing cork tiles, consider the light sources and entry points in your room especially if you will be creating a pattern. Orient your pattern or layout so that it complements the way traffic and light flow in and out of the room.

If you are installing cork planks, orient them so they are parallel to any incoming light sources (left image). For small or narrow areas, orient planks so they are parallel with the longest wall (right image). If possible, try to install your cork flooring so that it is perpendicular to floor joists. This provides the floor with extra stability. However, if faced with a decision, installing the cork flooring parallel to the incoming light source is more important and aesthetically pleasing than the added stability.



Factor in Waste

Waste is a part of any flooring project and is due to things such as:

- Odd shapes in the room that you must work around
- Installation mistakes
- Type of cork installation (horizontal vs. diagonal vs. patterns)

Non-professional installers should account for a waste factor of between 7%-15% for standard, horizontal cork plank or tile installations. If you are installing your cork diagonally or creating a design, factor in 20% or more for waste as more complex designs require more specialized cuts (and thus more waste). If you need more help determining how much cork flooring you need, use the Advanced Estimator tool on FindAnyFloor.com.

Be sure to factor waste into your original purchase. Over the life of the floor you may need to replace planks or tiles that get damaged from use. Since retailers continually add and discontinue the types of cork products they offer, there is no guarantee that your flooring retailer will carry your exact cork flooring or color in the future. Keep in mind, if you can get your exact flooring at a later date, the dye lot color of your new purchase may not exactly match the dye lot color of your initial purchase. Play it safe and **always have extra cork flooring at the end of your project.**



NOTE: When purchasing your cork flooring, always pay attention to the dye lot. All your cork tiles or planks should come from the same dye lot to ensure they are the exact same color. If you have to purchase boxes from different dye lots, use flooring planks or tiles from each dye lot as you install so that the color variations are evenly distributed across your floor.

Estimate Installation Time

The time it takes to install your cork floor depends on a number of factors including:

- **Experience level:** If this is your first time installing cork flooring, it may take you longer than someone who has already done one or more installations.
- **Room complexity:** Simple rooms and designs will generally take less time to complete than complex patterns in large rooms.
- **Assistance available:** You may find the job will go quicker with an extra person to help. However, having too much help can also hinder your progress.
- **Amount of planning:** In general, the more planning you do, the less time your cork flooring project will take.

Allow for Expansion and Contraction

Cork floors, like hardwood or bamboo, expand and contract throughout the year because of seasonal temperature and humidity changes. While cork is slightly more stable than traditional hardwood, your floor may still expand and contract even if you maintain consistent temperature levels with air conditioning and heating. When installing your cork floor, you should leave an adequate expansion and contraction perimeter to ensure your floor has room to move without buckling or cupping.

Always follow your manufacturer's recommendations when determining your expansion perimeter as requirements may vary depending on your type of cork. For many installations, a 1/4" or 3/8" expansion/contraction perimeter is acceptable. Don't worry; you'll cover this gap with shoe base and quarter round once you've completed your installation. If you are installing cork flooring in a large room or you live in a more humid area (such as near an ocean or golf course), you may want to talk with a flooring professional to ensure the standard expansion perimeter is adequate for your area. Large floors may also require expansion joints installed at regular intervals.

Using an Underlayment

Underlayments are important for most flooring products as they help to protect the flooring as well as provide a cushioning and sound abatement layer. Since cork is a natural shock absorber and sound barrier, many manufacturers only require some sort of moisture barrier between the subfloor and your cork floor.

For floating floors, you can use 6mm plastic sheeting (also called polyethylene sheeting or film). For glue down installations above concrete subfloors, seal the subfloor with an approved sealer before beginning your installation, if recommended by your manufacturer. Always ensure the sealer you use is compatible with your flooring adhesive and approved by your flooring manufacturer to ensure you do not void the warranty.

If you're installing a floating floor with cork tiles or planks that does not have a pre-attached underlayment or if you're looking to add more cushioning or a better sound barrier, you can install an additional underlayment between your moisture barrier and your cork flooring.

 **NOTE:** The "softness" of an underlayment is not felt the same for cork floors as it is for carpet. Before installing an underlayment, check with your manufacturer for recommendations. Not all underlayments work beneath all cork floors. Also, doubling up foam underlayments for extra "softness or cushioning" is NOT recommended. The extra cushioning can create too much movement between the plank joints which will cause board separation, floor squeaking or damage to the flooring. Instead, opt for a higher quality underlayment.

Cork

A cork underlayment is the best choice for sound control and cushioning under cork flooring. Cork underlayments can be used above wood and concrete subfloors and come in a variety of thicknesses with the typical being ¼" and ½".

Standard Foam

Most professionals consider standard foam underlayments to be entry-level underlayments as they only provide a minimal sound barrier and shock absorption layer. Foam underlayments can be used over both wood and concrete subfloors and come in a variety of types, densities and brands.

Combination Foam/Film

Combination foam/film has all the same characteristics of standard foam with the added benefit of having a built in moisture barrier. Combination foam/film is used the same way as standard foam without the need to lay an additional moisture barrier.

Upgraded Foam Underlayments

Upgraded foam underlayments are a good compromise between cork and standard foam or combination foam/film. Upgraded foam is made from high-density foam so it is thicker and provides a better sound barrier than standard foam; however, upgraded foam is may still not be as good as cork. Upgraded foam can be used in the same installation areas as standard and combination foam. Some upgraded foam products come with a moisture barrier while others do not, so be sure to check with your retailer before you purchase the product.

Special Considerations for Floating Floors

If you are installing a floating floor, there are a few additional items you should consider during your planning phase.

The Importance of the First and Last Row

Since floating floors are not adhered to the subfloor, the first and last rows act as the foundation for your entire floor. Thus, it's essential to take more time when installing these rows to ensure the rest of your floor goes down straight and level. If the first row is not straight or the expansion spacing is off, the rest of the floor will have the same problems.

Your starter row should be along the longest wall parallel to the main incoming light source. Many professional installers choose to work from left to right, but do what is most comfortable for you. Also, always consider your "exits" when choosing your starting area. Try to plan the installation so that you do not have to walk on the uncompleted floor to get in and out of the room.

Your last row is just as important as the first row as it holds everything against the starter row. When you reach your ending row, you may have to cut your cork planks lengthwise to fit between the newly installed floor and the wall. For some installation areas, this results in a very narrow board in the ending row. In order to avoid this issue, you can calculate the number of planks you'll need to complete the whole floor.

1. Measure the room width. _____
 2. Subtract the expansion/contraction spacing. - _____
 3. Divide the width of the room by the width of the cork plank. ÷ _____
- Total Planks = _____

If your Total Planks is a whole number, you will not have to cut any cork planks for your first and last row. If your Total Planks is not a whole number, divide the remainder by 2 to determine the width for your first and last rows.

Example:

Total room width		132" (11')
Minus expansion width	-	.75" (3/8" on either side of the room)
Divided by plank width	÷	12"
Total planks needed	=	10.9 (rounded up)

You need 10 full cork planks and one cork plank that is 11" wide. Since you have two rows that should be equal length, your first and last row plank would each be 5 1/2" wide. Thus you end up needing 10 full width boards and two 5 1/2" wide planks.

Remember, this is **NOT** the total amount of flooring you need. This is just the number of boards you'll need for that section of your room. Always purchase 10-15% more flooring than you need to account for waste, mistakes and damaged planks.

✓ **TIP:** Having the first and last row the exact same width is a personal preference. Most professionals agree that this only needs to be done if these two rows will be VERY different, such as the first row being 12" wide and the last row being 2" or less.

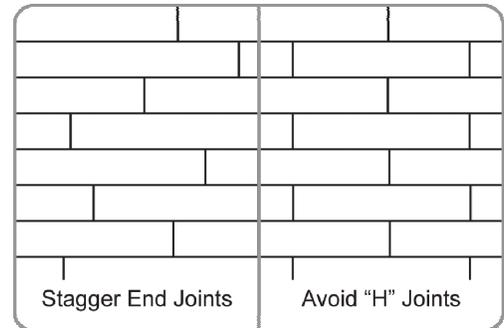
When determining your first and last row widths, always follow your manufacturer's guidelines for minimum plank widths. Some cork products cannot be cut to the small widths needed to accommodate equal first and last rows. If this is the case for your installation and product, use your best judgment during your installation or talk with a flooring professional.

First and Last Row Exceptions

All walls come in varying degrees of straightness. In general, inner walls tend to be straighter than outside walls; however, much of this depends on when and how your home was built. If you are working along a wall that is not perfectly straight (especially if it is your starting or ending row), scribe fit your cork planks so that they match the contours of the wall. You can also use this method to work around odd shapes or obstacles in your room. Always remember, your goal is to install a straight, square floor even if the walls are not perfectly straight and square.

Stagger All Joints just like the Pros Do

During your cork plank installation, always stagger all end joints for a more natural-looking, stable and professional installation. Ensure the length of each plank is at least 10" long, especially when starting new rows. Starting each new row with a slightly different length plank will help ensure the rest of the row is staggered differently than surrounding rows.



NOTE: If installing cork tiles, align tiles so that they are in-line with one another (similar to ceramic or vinyl tiles). Cork tile joints should NOT be staggered unless that is part of your overall design.

Install Safely

When installing your cork flooring, follow these basic guidelines to ensure a safe working environment.

- Read and follow all of your manufacturer's guidelines throughout your installation.
- Wear the proper shoes and clothing.
- Wear OSHA approved safety goggles and hearing protection when needed.
- Wear other personal protective equipment such as shin guards, knee pads, respirators and/or gloves, when necessary or recommended by the manufacturer.
- Do not work under the influence of alcohol, drugs or any other medications that may impair your ability to make sound decisions.
- Keep your work area clear from excess debris and clutter. Not only are these safety hazards, but these items could damage your new cork flooring.
- Make sure the room has adequate lighting and good ventilation.

- Ensure the electrical power to the area can support all the electric tools you are using. Never overload outlets.
- Have a first aid kit on hand or know where one is located.
- Use all machinery and tools as intended by the manufacturer with all safety guards in place.

PREPARING FOR INSTALLATION

Installation day is almost here! Now it's time to prepare your subfloor and installation area for your new cork flooring. To prepare for your installation, you will be:

- **Moisture Testing Your Concrete Subfloor**
- **Inspecting and Leveling Your Subfloor**
- **Acclimatize Your Cork Flooring**
- **Removing Molding and Doors**
- **Undercutting Door Casings**
- **More Tips for a Successful Installation**

Moisture Testing Your Concrete Subfloor

Moisture testing is an extremely important part of the installation process if your cork will be glued directly to a concrete slab (especially new concrete slabs). Wet concrete can cause issues with your adhesive as well as can seep up and damage your new cork floor. There are three types of moisture tests you can perform on your concrete slab for glue down installations: Polyethylene Moisture test, Calcium Chloride test and pH Alkalinity test.

✓ **TIP:** Some professionals feel that performing Calcium Chloride and pH Alkalinity tests are overkill for long-time existing slabs that have no existing moisture issues. The polyethylene moisture test is an easy and inexpensive way to check for excessive moisture. Some professionals also perform a moisture test with a 3% solution of phenophalen in alcohol (available at your local drug store or pharmacy). In various places in your slab, chip away a 1/8" deep, quarter-size piece of concrete. Apply two droplets of the solution in each area. If your slab is too moist, the solution will turn red. Remember to fill in these chipped areas with self-leveling compound once your test is complete.

If you are installing cork flooring above a wood subfloor and are concerned about the moisture content, purchase a moisture meter and take readings from various areas. In general, follow your manufacturer's recommendations for subfloor moisture levels.

Polyethylene Moisture Test

The Polyethylene Moisture test is an easy way to perform a moisture test on a slab that is 30 days old or more. Duct tape a couple 12 inch by 12 inch pieces of polyethylene (clear plastic sheeting or a clear garbage bag) in various places to the concrete slab for 24-48 hours. When taping, be sure the squares are taped all the way around so no air can escape.

If the concrete darkens or any condensation forms on the plastic, your slab may have excess moisture issues. Perform a Calcium Chloride and pH Alkalinity test to further analyze the moisture content of your slab.



NOTE: Even if you have a successful polyethylene test, you should consider a Calcium Chloride and pH Alkalinity test to ensure it is safe to install your new cork floor.

Calcium Chloride and pH Alkalinity Tests

Calcium Chloride and pH Alkalinity tests are far more accurate than polyethylene tests. Supplies for these tests can be purchased online or at stores that specialize in concrete tools and/or flooring. These tests measure the moisture emissions and the alkalinity of the concrete slab. Always perform each test according to the manufacturer's instructions and refer to your flooring manufacturer's guidelines for acceptable ranges. General acceptable ranges include:

- **Calcium Chloride** – Less than 3 pounds per 1,000 sq ft per 24 hours.
- **pH Alkalinity** – Less than 10 on the pH scale.

If either of these tests exceeds the recommended limits, you should seal your concrete subfloor with an appropriate sealer as recommended by your cork flooring manufacturer. Always check with the sealer manufacturer to be sure the concrete sealer will not interfere with the adhesive you'll be using if you are installing your cork with the glue down method. Concrete sealers can be purchased at your local flooring retailer or any home improvement store. Once the sealer has cured, you should re-test to ensure moisture levels are within acceptable limits.

If after sealing your concrete you are still having moisture issues, talk to a flooring professional for additional guidelines and testing procedures.

Inspecting and Leveling Your Subfloor

Once your subfloor has passed all moisture tests, it's time for a detailed inspection. A flat, or level, subfloor is one that is free from all large dips and valleys. While small imperfections are most often hidden (especially under floating floors) large holes, bumps and high spots will make your cork floor difficult to install and may affect the integrity and stability of your floor. Before you begin finding your imperfections, sweep the floor clean and sink any nails below the subfloor. Ensure any oil, grease, paint, wax or adhesives are completely removed before installing your cork.

Finding the Imperfections

Most manufacturers recommend that your subfloor not have a variance of more than 1/8" over a 10' section of subfloor. An easy way to find imperfections in both concrete and wood subfloors begins with 8-10' piece of straight lumber.

Start at one end of the room and lay the straightest side of the lumber down on the subfloor. From ground level, look to see if there are any gaps between the lumber and the subfloor. (You can also place a flashlight on the floor and see if any light filters under the lumber.) Press on the lumber to see if it rocks or tips to one side. Mark the subfloor at each high or low spot.

Leveling Low Spots in Concrete Subfloors

If you found low spots in your concrete subfloor, you'll fill them with a self-leveling polymer-modified portland cement compound (also called floor patch or embossing leveler). Self-leveling compounds are like quick set concrete. However, you should NEVER use regular cement products as they do not set and cure fast enough or gypsum-based products as they are not strong enough. Only choose self leveling compounds recommended by your flooring manufacturer that have quick drying times. These can be purchased at a variety of flooring or home improvement stores. You'll apply the leveling compound with a straight edged finishing trowel. You can patch certain areas or apply across the whole floor as needed.



NOTE: Using patching products that are not specifically recommended for your flooring may void the manufacturer's warranty. Play it safe and always choose a product that is recommended by your flooring manufacturer even if it is more expensive than other products.

1. Prepare the leveling compound in a bucket according to the manufacturer's instructions. Make sure you are outside or in an area where it won't matter if some of the compound splashes out of the bucket.

Use a paddle-type drill attachment (available from most home improvement stores) to mix the compound to be similar in consistency to a milkshake. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions when mixing. Some recommend adding the water after the compound is added while others recommend adding water before.

 **NOTE:** Because these products set so quickly, do not prepare the compound until you are ready to begin using the product on your floor.

✓ **TIP:** Mix only small batches of compound at a time so it does not dry in the bucket or on tools before it is all used up.

2. Place your lumber at the edge of the place you will be leveling. Pour some of the leveling compound on the subfloor. Use a trowel to fill in all the low areas. Quickly move the lumber across the area you just leveled to ensure it is flat. If it is not, add more compound. If the area is too high, scrape away compound.

✓ **TIP:** This part of the process works best with two people – one person working with the compound and one person working with the straight lumber.

3. Work quickly across the floor filling in all the low spots. Use the lumber to ensure each spot is flat. If you run out of compound, clean up the bucket and tools then mix another small batch.
4. Once all the low spots are filled, re-assess all the areas you just leveled with your lumber. If you still find low areas, mix another batch of compound and add more on top of the dried compound.
5. Wait for the compound to dry and cure COMPLETELY before installing your cork.

Leveling High Spots in Concrete Subfloors

If you found high spots in your concrete floor, use a grinder or sander to level them. If you don't own one of these machines, you can rent one from most equipment rental stores. When grinding, always wear a respirator as concrete produces a lot of dust. You can also spray the slab down with water before you begin to help control dust. If you are working on an addition to a home, make sure everything is sealed tightly with plastic and taped completely shut. Cover and tape all AC intake vents so that concrete particles are not distributed throughout your home via the ventilation system.

✓ **TIP:** Concrete dust will get everywhere (including closed cupboards or drawers) because the particles are so fine. Be sure to tape everything up tightly! You can also help disperse the dust by placing a box fan in a window to pull air from inside the home outward.

Leveling a Wood Subfloor

Before you begin leveling your wood subfloor, screw down any loose or squeaky places with coarse-headed screws. You should also consider screwing down sections that are in high-traffic areas for reinforcement. Once everything is secured, you're ready to move onto leveling the subfloor.

Leveling a wood subfloor is often more challenging than concrete subfloors, especially if the wood subfloor is not flat because of high spots over joists (also called crowned joists). If the high spot over a crowned joist is relatively low, you may be able to sand down the area enough to make it flat. If the crowned joist is high and there are exceptionally low areas between joists, use a self-leveling compound to level the floor. All the preparation and application steps are the same as for concrete subfloors. If your floor has excess sagging, check beneath the subfloor. You may be able to correct some sagging by installing wood supports between the joists below the subfloor.

Acclimatize Your Cork Flooring

Prior to your installation, you must allow your cork flooring (and any molding or trim) to acclimatize to your installation area for between 24 and 72 hours or as recommended by your manufacturer. Keep the installation area at a normal living temperature (between 60-85 degrees with a relative humidity of between 45%-70%) using either heating or A/C during this time. Layout each box of cork flooring in the center of the room away from windows, doors and vents and out of direct sunlight. Unwrap any plastic coverings around each box of flooring and follow all of your manufacturer's specific acclimatization recommendations. Some manufacturer's recommending opening all boxes or removing the planks/tiles from each box.

Removing Molding and Doors

Use a crow or pull bar to carefully remove all existing baseboard and quarter round molding in your installation area. If you plan on reusing this molding, take care during removal. Small nicks can usually be filled, sanded and re-painted. However, large holes or broken pieces should be discarded and replaced. It's also a good idea to remove all doors, especially those leading into closets or pantries.

Undercutting Door Casings

For a more professional looking installation, you should undercut all door casings after you remove the existing flooring and before you begin installing your new cork flooring. This ensures you do not have excess wood chips or saw dust in your installation area.

To undercut door casings, you'll need a scrap piece of flooring, a pencil, a scrap piece of underlayment (if needed) and your saw (a handsaw or special saw for cutting door casings). Always use the finest blade possible when undercutting door casings so that the saw does not split or mar the wood. NEVER use a saws-all or skill saw as these saws may be difficult to control for these types of cuts.

1. Use the scrap piece of flooring (and your underlayment) to bring your saw up to the right height of the door casing.
2. Use a pencil to draw a line at the top of the cork/underlayment. This is how much you'll be cutting off the bottom of the door casing so that the cork flooring will fit underneath it.
3. Use the saw to cut the door casing along the line you drew. Keep your scrap piece of cork/underlayment in place to help ensure you make a straight cut.

Now when you reach a door casing, you can slide the cork planks or tiles under the casing and flush with the wall.

More Tips for a Successful Installation

Keep these tips in mind as you install your new cork flooring:

- **Use Planks/Tiles from Multiple Packages:** Most professional installers recommend using planks or tiles from 3 to 5 different boxes at any given time. This ensures the natural color variations in the cork are distributed evenly throughout your floor. Using flooring from various packages is especially important if you had to purchase planks or tiles from different dye lots. Some installer will also open all packages and mix up the flooring before the installation so that planks/tiles from all boxes are used throughout the floor. ALWAYS inspect each plank or tile before you install it. Do not install flooring that has obvious defects.



NOTE: Be careful if you choose to mix up planks/tiles from all boxes to ensure you do not scratch the surface of your new flooring.

- **Cutting Planks:** When cutting cork planks or tiles, always saw with the teeth of the saw cutting down into the face or the top of the plank or tile. Sawing this way helps to protect the surface of the flooring. Additionally, use a carbide tipped blade to ensure you make smooth cuts. If you are using a miter saw, make sure the saw is up to speed before cutting your cork to ensure clean cuts.

✓ **TIP:** You can also use blue painters tape to tape the area that will be cut. This type of tape allows you to mark where you need to cut without writing directly on the flooring. Painters masking tape also helps protect the finish from splintering or fracturing during the cutting process. If you don't have blue painters tape, use a pencil to mark your cuts. The pencil mark should wipe off; however, do a test on a scrap piece of cork before using this method.

- **Keeping the Installation Area Clean:** Use a vacuum cleaner or broom to keep your installation area clean. Saw dust and wood chips can damage your new floor's finish or create an uneven subfloor.
- **Storing Tools during Installation:** Do not store your tools directly on your newly installed cork floor as they may damage or scratch the surface. Instead, place your tools on a piece of plywood, cardboard or clean cotton drop cloth. Never slide your tools across your bare cork floor.

- **Work from Left to Right:** Most installers and manufacturer's recommend working from left to right. However, some installations flow better working from right to left or from your finished rows toward the subfloor. Always refer to your flooring manufacturer's recommendations when deciding how to install your cork floor.
- **Use Waste Planks/Tiles:** You can use discolored or slightly damaged planks or tiles in areas such as closets or pantries where the color variations might not be noticed as much.

INSTALLING A FLOATING CORK FLOOR

Today, the majority of floating cork floor installations use a click lock system (also called a glueless system). Planks fit tightly together then click and lock into place (much like Lego blocks). Glueless floating cork floors are popular because they are relatively easy to install and require no special tools or heavy duty adhesives. Glueless cork floors predominately utilize planks although some manufacturers sell click lock cork tiles.

△ IMPORTANT: There are a variety of styles of click lock flooring that vary by manufacturer. ALWAYS follow the instructions provided by your flooring manufacturer when installing a glueless cork floor. Only use these instructions as a reference if your manufacturer did not provide their own installation instructions or if your manufacturer's instructions are vague.

Tools and Materials

You will need the following tools and materials:

- 4' or 6' Level
- Broom
- Carpenter's square
- Chalk line
- Cork flooring
- Crow, pull and/or power bar
- Electric and/or hand saw, jig saw, table saw or circular saw with a carbide tipped blade
- Foam roller
- Hammer
- Pencil
- Plastic sheeting
- Safety goggles and mask
- Soft rubber mallet
- Spacers/wedges
- Tape measure
- Tapping block or clean piece of scrap wood
- Top coat finish (if required)
- Underlayment (if desired)
- Utility knife

*This is not an all inclusive list. Your tools and materials may vary based on your specific installation needs.

Installation Tips and Tricks

Use these tips and tricks to help ensure you have a successful floating cork installation:

- Always follow your manufacturer's guidelines and leave an adequate expansion/contraction perimeter.
- Always use a tapping block to move planks into position. Do not hit cork flooring directly as it may fracture or damage the flooring edge. Good tapping blocks can be a piece of trim or an extra, clean piece of cork. Always follow your manufacturer's guidelines when tapping. Some cork should not be tapped into place as it will damage the locking mechanism.
- You may have to cut planks to fit at the end of each row. Use the remainder of that plank to begin the next row as long as the piece meets the minimum required length (usually 10") and allows for proper staggering.

Pre-Installation Steps

Prior to installation, follow all the information in the **Preparing for Installation** section beginning on page 15. This includes:

- **Moisture Testing Your Concrete Subfloor** (page 15)
- **Inspecting and Leveling Your Subfloor** (page 17)
- **Acclimatize Your Cork Flooring** (page 20)
- **Removing Molding and Doors** (page 20)
- **Undercutting Door Casings** (page 20)

Installing the Underlayment

Installing a 6mm polyethylene moisture barrier is the first step in your flooring process. You may also want install to a sound abatement and cushioning underlayment if your cork flooring does not already have one pre-attached.

1. Lay out sheets of polyethylene sheeting across the whole subfloor. Sheeting should extend up walls 2". (You'll trim this once your floor is installed.) Overlap sheets 8" and secure with waterproof tape (such as duct tape).
2. Roll out and a cork or foam underlayment above the sheeting, if desired. The underlayment should be flush with all walls and not overlap. Tape all seams to hold sheets together. Avoid laying the underlayment seams directly on top of the moisture barrier seams.

Installing the First Row of Floating Cork

Now that you've got your moisture barrier and underlayment in place, you can begin installing your first row of cork flooring.

1. Starting on the longest wall, measure out from the wall in at least two places to allow for your expansion/contraction space. Mark each spot. Snap a chalk line across the marks to form a straight line.



NOTE: Many professionals recommend starting your first row on the most visible wall. This way if the room is not perfectly square, the cut edge of the flooring will be hidden by furniture, appliances or cabinets.

2. Lay out the first row of flooring end to end but DO NOT click together yet. Follow your manufacturer's recommendations when choosing to face the tongue or groove toward the wall. For some products, the tongue is faced toward the wall while for others the groove is faced toward the wall.

Remember that not all walls are straight and square. Use a chalk line, level and blocks or wedges to help you get this first row completely straight. Cut cork planks where needed to ensure the floor is straight, even if the walls are not.



TIP: In some cases, you may need to "scribe fit" the first row of cork to fit imperfections along the starting wall. To do this, place a spacer or a small block of wood between a pencil and the wall above your cork. Slide the spacer along keeping the pencil tight to the spacer and the spacer tight to the wall. The pencil will leave a line on the planks matching the contours of the wall. Use a circular saw or jigsaw to cut along this line so that your first row matches the wall contours perfectly. Remember to factor in your expansion spacing, and be careful not to cut too much off of the first row as it may upset your predetermined layout.

If your first and last row planks are less than a full plank width, cut all your first row planks to the correct width before evaluating the fit. (For more information, see **The Importance of the First and Last Row** on page 11).

3. Once you are satisfied with the fit of the first row, begin clicking and locking the cork planks into place. Planks should fit tightly together to form an almost seamless floor.

4. Continue working your way across the floor installing the first row and placing spacers along walls. Take time to measure every foot or so to ensure your expansion/contraction spacing is adequate and equal throughout the whole length of the first row.

Remember: Take more time with this first row as it is the foundation for the rest of the floor.

5. When you get to the last plank in the first row, measure the size plank you need factoring in adequate expansion/contraction space then cut a plank to fit. Use a pull bar (if needed) to install the cut plank along the wall. Click and lock the last piece in starter row and place a spacer between the wall and the plank.

If the remainder of the plank you cut is 10" or longer, use it to start the next row.

6. Use a tape measure and level to re-measure your starter row and expansion spacing. If you're satisfied with the fit, you're ready to continue installing your floor.

If you're not satisfied with the fit, remove and re-install the planks where necessary.

Installing the Rest of the Floating Cork Floor

Once your starter row is complete, the rest of your cork floor will begin taking shape.

1. Use a short or partial cork plank to begin your second row if it is 10" or longer. If your plank is less than 10", cut a full plank exactly in half and use one half to start the second (or subsequent) row.

Click and lock this plank to those in the first row. Gently tap the boards together using a tapping block to ensure a tight fit, if recommended.

2. Continue working across the floor from left to right fitting and locking the cork together along each row.

Remember to:

- Use cork from multiple packages to vary colors throughout your floor.
- Install spacers along all walls at the recommended intervals.
- Stagger joints where needed so the floor has a random pattern.
- Stop and measure to ensure the floor is going down level and straight.
- Do not tap cork planks into place unless recommended by the manufacturer. Some products require that boards be inserted at an angle then locked together. Tapping can damage the locking mechanism.

Installing the Last Row of Floating Cork

You've reached the last row and your new cork floor is almost complete.

1. Measure in at least two places the space you have left between the wall and the edge of the new floor. Mark each spot. Subtract your expansion/contraction space. This measurement should be close to the width of your first row (if you cut the first row to be approximately the same width as your last row).

Snap a chalk line across the marks to form a straight line.

2. Roughly layout the cork to identify how many you will need to complete the last row. Cut all planks to the correct width, if needed.
3. Lay out the last row of flooring end to end but DO NOT lock together yet. Remember that not all walls are straight and square. Like with your first row, cut planks where needed to ensure the floor is straight even if the walls are not.
4. Once you are satisfied with the fit of the last row, use a pull bar (if necessary) to fit planks between the installed floor and the wall then begin clicking and locking the cork into place. Place a spacer between the wall and the last row.
5. Continue working your way down the row installing planks and placing spacers along the wall. Take time to measure every foot or so to ensure your expansion/contraction spacing is adequate and equal throughout the whole length of the last row.

Like with the first row, take more time with the last row as it holds the rest of the floor against the first row.

6. Once all planks are installed, use a tape measure and level to re-measure your last row and expansion spacing. If you're satisfied with the fit, your floor is complete!

If you're not satisfied with the fit, remove and re-install the planks where necessary.

Applying a Top Coat Finish

Some floating cork floors require you to apply a top coat finish to seal all seams between planks. The steps below are provided to supplement those provided by your manufacturer. ALWAYS follow your manufacturer's specific instructions if this is required for your type of cork floor. Not applying a top coat finish if required may void your warranty.

1. Sweep and vacuum your newly installed floor.
2. Using a 3/8" foam roller, roll the manufacturer recommended finish across your cork floor. Use one long sweep stroke to apply a thick coat of finish. Overlap roller paths slightly to ensure all areas are completely covered. Do not over-roll as the finish will bubble.
3. Allow the finish to dry for 4 hours before walking upon the new floor. (Tread lightly after 4 hours as the finish has not dried completely.)

The floor will take about 24 hours to dry completely and approximately 8 days to cure and achieve its final hardness. During the curing time, do not walk upon the floor with rubber-soled shoes as they may smudge the finish. Do not cover the newly finished floor with plastic or carpet until it has cured completely.

Setting Times for Glueless Cork Floors

If your floating click lock cork does not need to be finished, you can begin using it as soon as you install the last plank.

If your cork requires a top coat finish, allow it to cure completely. Then trim the plastic sheeting along walls. Leave about a 1/2" above the flooring to help protect the flooring. You'll cover this when you install your wall base.

INSTALLING GLUED DOWN CORK TILES

Solid and veneered cork tiles are generally glued directly to the subfloor rather than installed as a floating floor. This type of installation is usually more time consuming and messy; however, glued cork tiles are durable and an excellent choice for high traffic areas.

 **NOTE:** These instructions are not meant for installing mosaic cork tiles. Mosaic cork tiles require a special type of mortar and grout. Always follow your manufacturer's specific installation instructions for mosaic cork tiles or consider hiring a professional installer.

Tools and Materials

You will need the following tools and materials:

- 4' or 6' Level
- 75-100 lb roller
- Adhesive
- Broom
- Carpenter's square
- Chalk line
- Cork flooring
- Electric and/or hand saw, jig saw, table saw or circular saw with a carbide tipped blade
- Foam roller
- Gloves
- Hammer
- Paint brush and roller or trowel (for adhesive)
- Pencil
- Safety goggles and mask
- Soft rubber mallet
- Spacers/wedges
- Sponges
- Tape measure
- Tapping block or clean piece of scrap wood
- Top coat finish (if required)
- Utility knife

*This is not an all inclusive list. Your tools and materials may vary based on your specific installation needs.

Installation Tips and Tricks

Use these tips and tricks to help ensure you have a successful cork tile installation:

- Always follow your manufacturer's guidelines and leave an adequate expansion/contraction perimeter.
- Use cork from multiple packages to vary colors throughout your floor.
- Cut cork tiles with a sharp utility knife or straight edge.

Pre-Installation Steps

Prior to installation, follow all the information in the **Preparing for Installation** section beginning on page 15. This includes:

- **Moisture Testing Your Concrete Subfloor** (page 15)
- **Inspecting and Leveling Your Subfloor** (page 17)
- **Acclimatize Your Cork Flooring** (page 20)
- **Removing Molding and Doors** (page 20)
- **Undercutting Door Casings** (page 20)

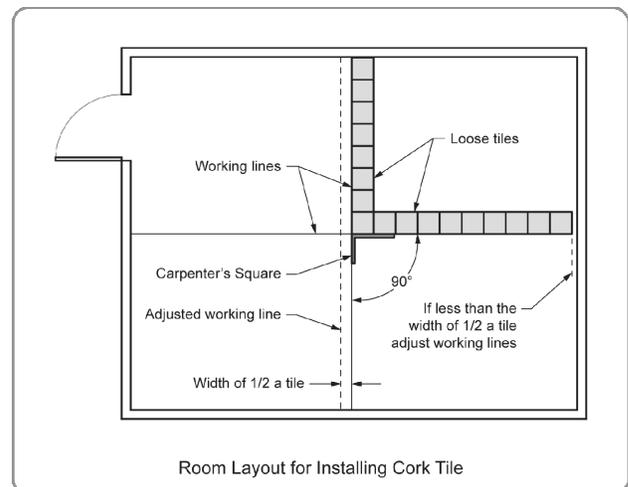
Creating a Guideline Grid

When installing cork tiles, you'll begin in the middle of the room and work your way towards the walls. You'll first find the center of the room then create a guideline grid to ensure all tiles are installed in line with each other.

1. Snap a chalk line between the center points of each opposite wall. The place on the floor where the chalk lines intersect is the center of the room.

Make sure the quadrants are nearly perfect squares.

2. Layout a row of loose cork tiles in all directions at the intersection point. If you are creating a pattern, lay out a whole section of the pattern.



3. Evaluate whether the center intersection point is a good starting place.

If you end up with small cuts along each wall (less than ½”), move your starting point down by a ½ cork tile width for each wall (if necessary). Re-snap your chalk line and lay out your loose cork tiles again to re-evaluate the placement.

4. Once you're satisfied with your center point, divide the main four quadrants into smaller sections (if you're working in a large room). Doing this makes it easier to install straight cork tiles section by section. Snap chalk lines to outline each area within each quadrant.
5. Once you're satisfied with your guideline grid, gather up and set aside all tiles. You're now ready to begin gluing the tiles to the subfloor.

✓ **TIP:** If you're creating a pattern, you can leave an example of your pattern laid out in one grid quadrant to help guide you as you install your cork tile in a separate quadrant.

Gluing Tiles to the Subfloor

The type of adhesive you use for your cork installation largely depends upon your manufacturer's recommendations. Some adhesives are troweled out onto the subfloor and tiles are immediately set into it (considered the wet-set method).

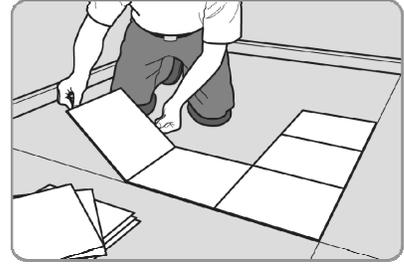
For other adhesives, you'll trowel out or spread the adhesive with a nap roller then allow it to dry for 20-30 minutes (considered the dry-set method). Once the glue is dry and tacky, you'll set the tiles into the adhesive on the subfloor. Generally, adhesive-backed cork tiles use the dry set method over the wet set method.

Always follow your flooring manufacturer's recommendations when choosing an adhesive. During your installation, follow **ALL** the adhesive manufacturer's instructions for trowel type, spread rate and open working time.

1. Apply the adhesive onto the subfloor following all the manufacturer's instructions. Use a trowel or a paint brush to apply the adhesive along walls and a paint roller to apply to the main part of the floor. Apply adhesive over the chalk lines as you work in each quadrant. (Most adhesives dry clear so you'll still be able to see your grid.)
2. If using the **dry set** method, allow the adhesive to dry according to the manufacturer's guidelines.

If using the **wet set** method, continue to step 3.

3. Beginning at the center intersection point, install the first cork tile so it aligns with the two main chalk lines in the center of the room.
4. Place another cork tile next to the first one in one direction of the room then on the opposite side in the other direction. Tiles should be snug but not overlapping.



If using the wet set method, some manufacturers recommend sliding the tile into the adhesive to eliminate air bubbles below tiles. Immediately, wipe away any adhesive that seeps up from joints with a damp rag or sponge.

If using the dry set method, place tiles exactly where they should go. Once placed, tiles will not move unless they are pried away from the subfloor.

Once set in the adhesive, use a rubber mallet to firmly tap each tile to ensure it is securely in contact with the adhesive. This is especially important around corners and along walls.

5. When you reach a wall, scribe fit the cork tile.
 - Place a full cork tile directly on top of the one you just installed near the wall.
 - Place a second cork tile on top of the other two butted up against the wall. (Factor in your expansion spacing.)
 - Use a pencil to mark the inner edge of the top cork tile on the middle one.
 - Remove the middle one and cut along the line. The cut tile should now be the exact width you need for your installation area.



6. Once the first quadrant is completed, roll that quadrant with a 75-100 pound roller as directed by your manufacturer.
7. Repeat steps 1 through 5. Work your way around the room quadrant by quadrant until the floor is completed.
8. Roll the entire floor again with a roller as recommended by your flooring manufacturer. Roll several times along the length and width of the room.

Letting the Floor Set

Follow your flooring and adhesive manufacturers' drying time recommendations (usually 24 hours). This drying time is critical for the floor to set correctly. During this time, do not walk upon or move furniture back into the room.

Applying a Top Coat Finish

Most glued cork tiles floors require a top coat finish of either polyurethane or wax. Some finishes can be applied once the floor has dried, while other finishes require you wait 5-7 days before applying. The steps below are provided to supplement those provided by your manufacturer. ALWAYS follow your manufacturer's specific instructions. Not applying a top coat finish if required may void your warranty.

1. Sweep and vacuum your newly installed floor.
2. For urethane sealers, use a 3/8" foam roller to roll the finish across your cork floor. Use one long sweeping stroke to apply a thick coat of finish. Overlap roller paths slightly to ensure all areas are completely covered. Do not over-roll as the finish will bubble.

Most wax finishes should be applied by hand. Follow all the manufacturer's recommendations when applying wax finishes.

3. Allow the urethane finish to dry for 4 hours before walking upon the new floor. (Tread lightly after 4 hours as the finish has not dried completely.) The finish will completely dry in about 24 hours and take approximately 8 days to cure and achieve the final hardness. During the curing time, do not walk upon the floor with rubber-soled shoes as they may smudge the finish. Do not cover the newly finished floor with plastic or carpet until the finish has cured completely.

If you applied a wax finish, follow the manufacturer's drying time guidelines.

4. Once your floor has cured, trim the plastic sheeting along walls. Leave about a 1/2" above the flooring to help protect the flooring. You'll cover this when you install your wall base.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCE INSTALLATIONS

You've probably begun your installation and run into an obstacle or are ready to install your transitions. In this section, we'll discuss:

- **Types of Transitions**
- **Using T-Molding for Interior Doorways**
- **Using End Molding for Exterior Doorways**
- **Working around Vents**
- **Working around Fireplaces and Brickwork**
- **Using End Molding for Carpet Transitions**
- **Using Flush Reducer for Vinyl Transitions**
- **Using Overlap Reducer for Vinyl Transitions**
- **Installing Cork on Stairs**

Types of Transitions

There are a variety transition pieces to help you when working around doorways or between different types of flooring. These items come in a variety of colors and styles to match or compliment your cork floor.

- **T-Molding:** This molding is used between cork floors and exterior doorway thresholds. It can also be used to transition a cork floor to another similar height flooring surface.
- **Reducer Strip:** This transition piece is used to join cork floors to flooring that is a different height such as vinyl, tile or carpeting.
- **End (or Threshold) Molding or Square Nose (Universal Edge):** This type of floor trim is used to separate and transition between carpet, fireplaces, brickwork, sliding doors or any other outside door threshold.
- **Floor Vents:** Vent covers designed to coordinate with your cork.

Like with your flooring, molding comes in a variety of natural color variations. When choosing your molding, be sure to match the color and grain to your cork floor. Prior to installation, choose the pieces of molding you want to install and compare them to the coloring in the floor. Install moldings that are complimentary to the floor's color variations in each installation area.

Transition Installation Methods

Transitions can be installed two different ways:

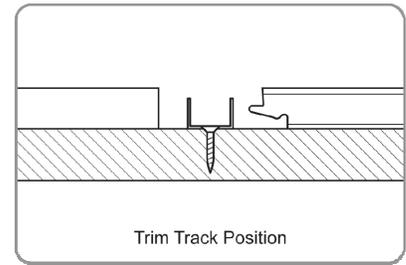
- **Using adhesive.** With this method, you glue the transition to the subfloor (or in some cases to the flooring) using a non-water based adhesive. This is the most common way transitions are installed around cork floors.

 **NOTE:** This manual provides instructions for installing transitions with adhesive.

- **Using trim tracks.** With this method, you nail or screw a trim track to the subfloor then slide and lock the transition into place over the track. The following steps provide a basic overview of how to install transitions using trim tracks.

1. Measure your transition.
2. Position the transition approximately where you want to install it.

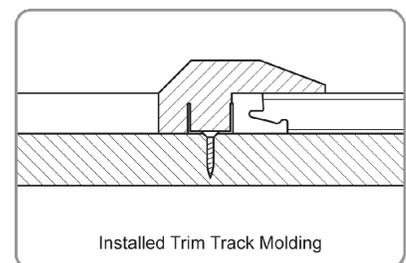
Lift the transition straight up and use a pencil to mark the subfloor where the track should be placed. The grooves on the back indicate where the track will be inserted into the channel.



3. For wood subfloors, screw the track to the floor using 4 x 1/2" screws.

For concrete subfloors, attach the track to the floor using concrete nails or cement adhesive.

4. Working from right to left, position the transition to fit into the track on the floor. Gently push the piece onto the track until the entire thing is installed.



Cutting and Handling Transition Molding

Many professionals recommend using a miter saw with a carbon tipped blade to cut your transition molding to ensure you get clean, smooth cuts. When sawing, cut into the pre-finished side first to avoid chipping the finish.

During your installation, always handle your transition molding carefully (especially pre-finished moldings) to ensure you do not scratch, dent or chip the finish. If you are nailing the transition to the walls or subfloor, most professionals recommend pre-drilling holes to help ensure the molding does not split or crack. Additionally, do not nail too closely to the end of the molding to avoid splitting.

When installing transitions around a floating cork floor, do not nail through the cork as the floor must remain floating. When placing trim tracks or nails around the flooring, always leave an expansion perimeter between the track and the edge of the flooring. If you nail through or too closely to the floating cork, the floor will not be able to expand and contract correctly and may buckle or cup over time.

Using T-Molding for Interior Doorways

When installing cork through interior doorways you have two options:

- Install the flooring so that it is “laced in” or laid continuously from one room to another. This looks more professional if both rooms have the same type of flooring but can be extremely difficult to do.
- Install T-molding in the threshold to provide a transition to the next room. (Many professional installers highly recommend using T-molding in any doorway that is less than 6’ wide.) You’ll also use T-molding to transition to another similar height flooring surface such as hardwood or bamboo.

For large floating cork floor installations (40ft or more), T-molding is also used to provide expansion joints.

When installing T-molding, always factor in adequate expansion space between the molding and the flooring. There should be at least 1 1/8” gap between the two flooring surfaces.

1. Measure and cut your T-molding to fit snugly in the door frame.
2. Position the T-molding approximately where you want it between the cork flooring and the other flooring surface to ensure it fits properly BEFORE securing it.
3. Apply a thin line of adhesive on one side of the T-molding.

4. Attach the molding to cork flooring and press down firmly to ensure a tight bond. The molding should overlap the other flooring at least a $\frac{1}{4}$ inch. Do NOT glue the molding to the flooring on the other side of the doorway as both floors may need room to expand and contract beneath the molding.

✓ **TIP:** If installing T-molding between cork and another flooring type (such as ceramic tile) glue the molding to the other flooring type so the cork floor has room to expand and contract without affecting the position of the molding.

⚠ **IMPORTANT:** Never glue the molding directly to the subfloor as the space between the top of the floor and the bottom of the molding is needed for expansion/contraction.

Using End Molding for Exterior Doorways

End molding (also called threshold molding) is used along exterior doorways or to transition to a similar height flooring surface such as tile or high pile carpet. End molding can also be used around fixed objects like fireplaces and brickwork.

1. Measure and cut your end molding to fit snugly in the door frame.
2. Apply a thin line of adhesive on one side of the end molding.
3. Position and attach the end molding to the subfloor between the cork flooring and exterior doorway. The molding should butt up against the exterior doorway and overlap the cork floor by $\frac{1}{2}$ " to $\frac{3}{4}$ ".

⚠ **IMPORTANT:** Do not attach the molding directly to the cork as the floor needs room to expand and contract below the molding.

Working around Vents

Working around vents, piping and other fixed objects is a necessary part of installing any floor. Since each object is unique, measure and cut carefully. Always leave an expansion/contraction gap between the object and the flooring. You'll cover these gaps with vent covers, pipe rings or molding. When installing, have a vent cover on hand to ensure the lip of the cover or molding is wide enough to adequately cover the expansion gap.

Working around Fireplaces and Brickwork

There are two ways to install cork flooring around fireplaces and brickwork:

- Install the flooring flush to the brickwork and add end molding to hide expansion spaces.
- Undercut the brickwork and install the cork flooring underneath using the brickwork to hide all expansion spaces.

Installing Flush to Brickwork

Installing cork flooring flush to brickwork is much like installing flooring up to walls or doorways.

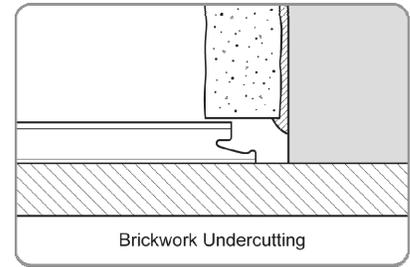
1. Measure and cut your end molding to fit along the fireplace or brickwork. Be sure to factor in your expansion spacing.
2. Apply a thin line of adhesive on one side of the end molding.
3. Position and attach the end molding to the subfloor between the cork floor and fireplace/brickwork. The molding should butt up against the brickwork and overlap the cork floor by $\frac{1}{2}$ " to $\frac{3}{4}$ ".

△ IMPORTANT: Do not attach the molding directly to the cork floor as the floor needs room to expand and contract below the molding.

Undercutting Brickwork

Undercutting brickwork (much like undercutting door casings) provides for a more seamless and professional looking floor.

1. Use the scrap piece of cork flooring to bring your saw up to the right height beside the brickwork. Make sure to account for your underlayment in the total height, if needed.



Use a pencil to mark or draw a line at the top of the flooring/underlayment. This is how much you'll be cutting off the bottom of the brickwork so that the flooring will fit underneath it.

2. Determine how deep to make your cut. You should allow for up to a 1/2" of flooring under the brickwork plus your expansion space.
3. Use the saw to cut along the line you drew.

✓ **TIP:** Consider wearing a respirator while cutting so you do not inhale fine particles of dust.

Now when you reach the brickwork or fireplace, you can cut your cork flooring to fit under the brickwork.

Using End Molding for Carpet Transitions

End molding is used to transition between cork flooring and carpet. You should re-tack carpet at all points where it meets your new cork floor for a more professional look and to ensure the carpet does not come loose during use.

1. Measure and cut your end molding to fit snugly along the edge of the carpet (between the carpet and cork).
2. Apply a thin line of adhesive on one side of the end molding.
3. Position and attach the end molding to the subfloor between the cork floor and carpet. The molding should butt up against the carpet and overlap the cork floor by 1/2" to 3/4".

⚠ **IMPORTANT:** Do not attach the molding directly to the cork floor as the floor needs room to expand and contract below the molding.

Using Flush Reducer for Vinyl Transitions

Flush reducer is used to transition from cork floors to vinyl, linoleum, concrete or any floor that is lower than your cork floor. You can also use flush reducer if your cork floor is parallel to the lower surface since the tongue of the cork will line up with the groove of the flush reducer.

✓ **TIP:** You can use overlap reducer if your cork floor is perpendicular to the vinyl.

1. Measure and cut your flush reducer to fit snugly along the edge of the vinyl (between the vinyl and cork).
2. Apply a thin line of adhesive on the bottom edge of the flush reducer. If recommended by your flooring manufacturer, glue the tongue of the flooring to the groove of the reducer.
3. Fit the tongue of the flooring into the groove of the reducer. Position and attach the reducer to the subfloor between the cork flooring and the vinyl. The molding should butt up against the vinyl and be flush with the cork floor.
4. Apply painters tape along the full length of the seam between the molding and the cork floor to hold the molding in place until the adhesive sets completely.

Using Overlap Reducer for Vinyl Transitions

Overlap reducer is most often used in floating installations to transition from cork floors to vinyl, linoleum, concrete or any flooring that is lower than your cork floor. Overlap reducer can be used when your cork floor is perpendicular to the lower surface since there is no tongue and groove to line up to like with flush reducer.

1. Measure and cut your overlap reducer to fit snugly along the edge of the vinyl (between the vinyl and cork floor).
2. Apply a thin line of adhesive on the bottom edge of the overlap reducer.
3. Position and attach the reducer to the subfloor between the cork and vinyl floors. The molding should butt up against the vinyl and be flush with the cork floor.
4. Apply painters tape along the full length of the seam between the reducer and the cork floor to hold the molding in place until the adhesive sets completely.

Installing Cork on Stairs

Most manufacturers do NOT recommend installing cork flooring on stairs for safety reasons. The cork may compress and break from repeated use. Plus, cork flooring is slick even when dry and may cause slipping hazards. Rubber or metal stair treads can be used in some cases; however, these are quite expensive and should only be installed by an experienced professional. Cork moldings made especially for stairs are also difficult to obtain and install.

COMPLETING THE JOB

Congratulations! You're almost done installing your cork floor. All that's left to do is:

- **Installing Wall Base and Quarter Round Trim**
- **Caulking Trim in Wet Areas**

Installing Wall Base and Quarter Round Trim

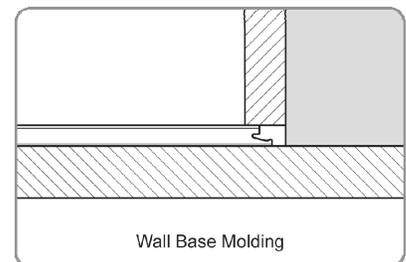
You'll install trim along all walls and around obstacles to hide the expansion spacing and give the room a finished look. The most common types of trim include:

- **Wall Base:** This molding is placed along the bottom of the wall. Wall base can also be used under cabinets.
- **Quarter Round:** This molding is placed along wall base above the flooring. It can also be used under cabinets if wall base is too large or at the bottom of stairs for aesthetics.

Base shoe molding can be used instead of wall base in areas where wall base will not fit (such as under cabinets).

1. Measure and cut the wall base and quarter round trim for your installation area.
2. Using construction adhesive, apply a thin, wavy line down the length of the wall base molding.
3. Gently press the wall base molding against the wall. Nail the molding to the wall at an angle every 16". Do not nail or glue to the cork.

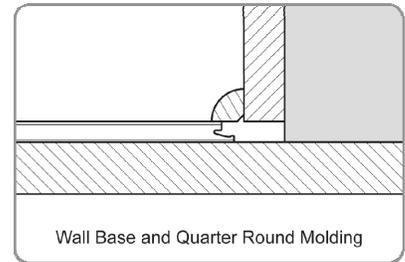
✓ **TIP:** Always nail the wall base to the wall at an angle. If you nail straight into the wall, the nails may not hold well into the drywall.



4. Apply a thin, wavy line of adhesive down the length of the quarter round molding.

5. Gently press the quarter round molding to the bottom of the wall base molding so it fits snugly against the flooring. Nail the molding to the wall at an angle every 16". Do not nail or glue to the cork flooring.

✓ **TIP:** Always nail the wall base to the wall at an angle. If you nail straight into the wall, the nails may not hold well into the drywall.



Caulking Trim in Wet Areas

If you installed cork flooring in wet areas, such as bathrooms or kitchens, you should caulk all areas where:

- Wall base/shoe base meets the wall.
- Quarter round meets wall base/shoe base.

Caulking is especially important around the edges of bathtubs, showers and dishwashers to ensure that water does not leak down the edge of wall and behind the molding. Water that seeps to your subfloor can damage your cork flooring as well as your subfloor.

COPYRIGHT AND USAGE INFORMATION

This document is copyrighted by Bayside USA, LLC d/b/a FindAnyFloor.com ("FindAnyFloor.com"). Reproduction, copying, or redistribution (in full or in part) of this document is strictly prohibited without the express written permission of FindAnyFloor.com. This document may not be linked to directly from another webpage (i.e. "hot-linked" or "inline linked") without the express written permission of FindAnyFloor.com. Permission for any of the above is granted only when certain limited criteria are met.

To request such permission please completely fill out the web form located at:

<http://www.findanyfloor.com/copyrightpermission.html>

You will need to include all of the following information in your request:

1. The content you wish to use (e.g. the entire document).
2. Where and how it will be used (e.g. as a hand out in a retail flooring store).
3. Where and how copies will be distributed and to what audience (e.g. at a retail flooring store provided to customers)
4. How many copies will be produced and distributed, and for how long you wish to distribute copies.
5. When you intend to publish, and your deadline for a response.
6. Other materials that will be associated with our content. (e.g. store advertising)
7. Your name, title, company, address, email address, and phone number
8. An example or mockup of the intended use.

We will need all of the above in order to evaluate your request. Please be aware that we may not be able to meet all requested deadlines. We reserve the right to refuse permission to copy, distribute, broadcast, or publish any of our copyrighted material.

Thank you for your cooperation.

LEGAL DISCLAIMER AND LIABILITY RELEASE

The instructions, guides, and other information accessible from FindAnyFloor.com are provided for informational purposes only and we make no guarantees about the completeness, accuracy, or fitness for any particular purpose of any of the information. We accept no responsibility for how you or anyone else may use the information. We accept no responsibility for any injury, loss, claim, or damage arising out of or in any way connected with the information presented herein. Individuals should always contact a professional, their retailer, or the manufacturer for specific instructions and information on a particular type of flooring, proper installation, and care procedures.