

## Vinyl buying and care guide

Vinyl flooring is a popular choice for family homes and it is easy to see why.

It is water-resistant, provides great insulation and is available in a wide variety of designs, colours and choice of qualities!

A great value, affordable and hardwearing option, vinyl is available in almost any design or pattern, from natural wood- and stone-effect finishes to unusual, innovative and quirky designs, perfect for creating a statement floor.

## Which room?

Because of its water-resistant qualities and ease of cleaning, vinyl flooring is an ideal choice for bathrooms, kitchens, utility rooms and conservatories. However, because it is not completely waterproof it isn't appropriate for wet rooms.

As well as its popularity in bathrooms, vinyl is a fantastic choice for almost any room in the house thanks to its unique characteristics:

- It provides sound insulation, making it great for upstairs rooms or use in apartments
- Its low maintenance requirements are valued by busy families
- The waterproof wear layer is not only brilliant for bathrooms but also muddy hallways and entrances
- Vinyl makes spillage clean up quick and easy, important for use in family kitchens
- A thick cushioned vinyl provides lots of comfort underfoot, making it a relaxing choice for the lounge, or even bedrooms
- The ease of clean-up is invaluable in kids' rooms. A vinyl floor means they can be creative without the fear of mess!
- In dining rooms vinyl makes it easy to clean up spills, which is especially valued by those with young children!

If you are installing vinyl in a bathroom, it's important to check the slip resistance rating. This will begin with an R, and shows how slippery a floorcovering will be when wet.

## What type of vinyl do I need?

### Thickness

Everyroom's vinyls range from 2.6mm to 5.0mm thick. Lots of people assume that the thicker the vinyl, the more hardwearing it is, but this isn't correct. It is generally the wear layer that determines how hardwearing a vinyl is; you can read more about wear layers below. However, a better indicator with Everyroom floorcoverings is the wear warranty that we have allocated to a range.

Instead, the total thickness of a vinyl plays a large part in determining how comfortable and sturdy the vinyl is underfoot. A thick cushioned vinyl will prove much less fatiguing than a thin one, and this is totally independent to how hardwearing it is.

Therefore, when choosing your vinyl floor, it is important to think about how it will be used, and the footfall you expect in this room. If you like to spend your evenings in the kitchen baking up a storm, you probably want to prioritise a thick vinyl in your kitchen.

In addition, a thicker vinyl may be more able to compensate for a less-than-perfect subfloor, up to a point. This is something that you should always discuss with your chosen retailer, as the level of subfloor preparation needed depends on so many factors.

## Wear layer

The thickness of the wear layer is the predominant factor that determines how hardwearing your vinyl floor will be. In general, the thicker the wear layer, the more resistant your floor will be to scratches and scrapes, and so you can generally expect these floors to have longer wear warranties.

## Design

One of the best things about vinyl is the seemingly unlimited design opportunities. A quick glance over just a few vinyl ranges will present you with an incredible choice of wood and tile effect designs, as well as overall effects such as concrete.

## Slip resistance

The slip resistance rating is tested using a special machine, where the angle is gradually increased until the subject slips. The higher the angle required for slip to occur, the greater the slip resistance.

**R9** - The lowest rating of any vinyl, R9 is safe for use in dry areas that are rarely exposed to water, such as hallways or dining rooms.

**R10** - R10 is generally recommended for kitchens and bathrooms. If you choose to use an R10 rated floor in a bathroom, it is very important to use a bathmat when stepping out of the shower or bath. R10 rated floors are also popular in living rooms and hallways, as these are likely to encounter spills or rainwater.

**R11** - R11 floorcoverings are generally considered safe for wet and dry environments, meaning they are very popular for kitchen and bathroom use, although the use of a bath mat is recommended in bathrooms.

In addition, R11 vinyls are often suitable for some commercial settings.

**R12** - A popular choice for kitchens and bathrooms, including some commercial wet areas such as communal showers. R12 tiles are generally considered safe in flat areas.

**R13** - This is the highest rating for anti-slip flooring, and is more often seen on floor tiles, which may be used around wet areas such as patios, swimming pools, Jacuzzis and saunas and commercial kitchens.

## Construction

Vinyl is constructed by pressing several layers between heated rollers, which compress each layer together to form a solid and robust product, suitable to be a long lasting investment in your home.

From the bottom up, these layers are:

- **A foam, cushioned core** - This provides the comfort associated with vinyl, making it less fatiguing underfoot
- **Vinyl compound** - The primary component of your vinyl floor, which provides extra structure and stability
- **Printed layer, which may be printed during the construction process itself** - The exciting part! The printed layer contains the all-important design, which could be wood, tile, an all-over design or even an abstract or mosaic!
- **A hardwearing, clear wear layer** - The main layer that protects your floor, meaning it can stay looking great even through the demands of a busy family life!

## Start off on the right foot

Subfloor preparation is crucial when laying any floorcovering, and vinyl floors are no exception.

Always have your floor professionally fitted, and any subfloor preparation needed will be taken care of during this process.

Before installation, your fitter or retailer should ensure that your subfloor is flat and even, and remedy any defects if required. This is because the smoother your subfloor, the better your vinyl flooring will look. Vinyl is relatively soft and flexible, and this means that any imperfections and contours could show through, and even damage your floor. Your subfloor may require screeding, laying plywood, or an alternative subfloor preparation, to ensure lumps and bumps are removed, and your floorcovering will last well for years to come.

If laying on concrete, the moisture levels should also be checked, if readings are too high then a damp proof membrane may also be required.

All Everyroom vinyl is available in 2m, 3m, or 4m widths to ensure you can choose your perfect floor with little wastage. Although vinyl flooring can be laid with underfloor heating, this should be switched off for 48 hours beforehand and afterwards.

If laying on wood secure all loose boards, hammer down any protruding nails and sand down any high spots. Alternatively, the subfloor could be covered with plywood.

## Keep it looking good

Vinyl is well known as being easy to care for and fuss free. Because it is waterproof from above, cleaning and maintenance couldn't be easier, meaning it can readily cope with lots of foot traffic and all the mess that can be part of a busy family home.

Regularly use a soft brush or vacuum your vinyl floor to keep it clean, and mop it with a non-bleaching floor cleaner when required to ensure it is sanitary. Never use abrasive scourers as this could compromise the wear layer, or even scratch and permanently dull the surface. Bicarbonate of soda is great for gently lifting any marks or stains.

Another top tip is to use non-rubber barrier mats at doorways, which will help to keep out the vast majority of dust and dirt, making maintenance and cleaning even easier. However, never use rubber mats on vinyl floors. This can cause a chemical reaction, which could lead to a permanent and irreversible yellow stain.

As simple as vinyl is to care for, it is important to remember that it is a soft surface, which means that it could be damaged by sharp and heavy objects. We recommend removing stiletto heels before walking on vinyl, and it's worth fitting protectors to narrow furniture legs, as this will help to alleviate some of the pressure on the floor.

It's also important to avoid dragging furniture over vinyl flooring, not only could it mark the vinyl, but it could also cause it to lift up at the edges. If you must, then use an old piece of carpet to protect your vinyl – and be sure to sweep and vacuum the floor to remove any debris that could scratch the surface. Always keep your vinyl floor away from fires and naked flames.

Although vinyl floors are waterproof from above, this does mean that liquids can puddle on the surface. Any puddles should be cleaned up promptly to avoid slip hazards, as well as water marks. If you do end up with a stain, warm water and soap is usually enough to remove it.

## Life's little accidents

Although maintenance and cleaning of vinyl floors couldn't be easier, no matter how careful you are spills often can't be avoided in busy family homes.

To prevent stains, try to clean up any spills or accidents as soon as you can. Most spillages and stains can be cleaned off a vinyl floor quickly and easily, but occasionally some may be more stubborn. For example, those that have dried onto the surface may become hard to remove with just soap and water.

If you do have a stain:

- Use a damp white cloth or towel to clean the surface with warm water
- Use a non-bleaching vinyl floor cleaner to rub into the stain, which should help lift the stain.
- If it persists, try bicarbonate of soda or a diluted bleach solution – remember to test on an inconspicuous area first. Bicarbonate of soda is particularly useful for cleaning yellow stains.

If you have a hard substance like chewing gum or wax you could try using ice cubes to make them more brittle, and then they will be able to be scraped up more easily.

Always check that any products you use are safe for vinyl floors, and that they are suitable for use with children or pets if you have these in your home. No matter how tempting it might be, never use abrasive scourers on your vinyl floor as these could cause permanent damage to the surface. Harsh solvents such as acetone or lacquer thinner should also be avoided as they can permanently soften the vinyl surface, leading to further damage during future use.