



What is cork flooring?

Cork flooring is a flooring material made out of the bark from cork oak trees. Due to the natural excellent characteristics of cork, it's suitable for most residential and even commercial situations.

Why use cork?

It's eco-friendly, easy to maintain, provides thermal and acoustic insulation, it's comfortable to walk on, provides a unique design, and is extremely durable.

Why is cork flooring such an environmentally conscious flooring choice?

Cork is one of the most renewable sources for flooring. Harvesting the cork oak for its bark is strictly regulated, limiting such harvesting into nine-year cycles. The individual cork oaks must be at least 25 years old before they are harvested and when they are, the health of those cork oaks must be ensured. The cork oak is harvested by hand, and remains unaffected by the harvesting process. The bark of the cork oak grows back, leaving the cork oak as healthy as ever.

Is cork flooring a new idea?

Cork flooring was first used popularly at the end of the 19th century. By the early 20th century, Frank Lloyd Wright was incorporating cork flooring in some of the public buildings he designed. Many of these buildings still feature these original cork floors.

How strong is cork flooring?

Cork flooring is resilient to pressure and compression. Cork flooring can be pressed and compressed up to 40% and still return back to its normal shape due to characteristics of the cellular structure of cork. It can withstand heavy foot traffic and the abuse of furniture leg pressure.

What's this I hear about cork flooring having a "memory"?

Because of its cellular nature, featuring millions of microscopic air pockets, cork withstand heavy pressure that only compresses the air within the cells. Cork begins to spring back when the pressure is removed, taking its original shape. This characteristic is called resiliency or "memory".

Where can I use cork flooring?

Cork flooring can be used in any type of room in your house or business. Cork naturally resists to water and insects. Kitchens are one of the most common places where cork flooring can be found since it's comfortable to stand on and easy to clean.

How long does cork flooring last?

When cork flooring is properly maintained it can out last the owner. This requires proper maintenance and cleaning of your cork floor. Stones, gravel and dirt can cause wear and tear if not removed from the surface for long periods of time. Don't use any strong cleaners on the floor either; this can actually weaken the properties of the cork.

Is cork flooring a good option for pets?

You are the best judge of your pet's behaviour. You know what the habits, activities, and potentially destructive actions of your pet better than anyone else.

Cork floors are coated with a finish that could be scratched by the claws of cats and dogs running on the floor. However, because cork is resilient and will move away from pressure, the surface will be less subject to abrasion than a similarly treated hardwood floor.

Good maintenance like the application of a polish will eliminate any tiny scratches that may be caused by pets. Keeping your pet's nails trimmed will help keep your floors looking beautiful.

Will cork flooring resist high heels and heavy furniture?

Cork itself is a very dense and compact product and is designed to withstand commercial traffic.

Cork has a lot of memory due to the air cells and recovers well from most objects. Like any floor, cork can be punctured by sharp objects and damaged by furniture feet. It is recommended that furniture with sharp or damaged legs have protective pads placed on them.

Is cork flooring water resistant?

The easy answer to this question is to think of a common product, the wine cork stopper. The reason that wine producers use cork is that it is an excellent repellent of moisture. A natural substance found in cork



called suberin, a waxy material that is a key component in the compositions of the cork cells, is responsible for the moisture-resistant nature of cork. Cork can last a long time without being damaged by water, however you should still clean up any standing water on cork flooring.

Is cork flooring sound resistant?

Cork is very good at noise reduction. Unlike other wood product floors you won't get any creaks as the wood ages and the step noise is reduced. Cork is actually used in some music recording environments as noise reduction material.

Is cork flooring fire resistant?

Cork in its natural state has resistance to fire; however depending on what type of finish you use it can affect the fire resistance ability of your cork flooring. Furthermore, when cork burns it does not release toxic gases.

Is cork flooring a good insulator?

Cork is an excellent natural thermal insulator. Cork floors stay warm even when installed over cold concrete floors. Cork underlay is used under ceramic tiles to increase the insulation capacity of that flooring type. You won't find any cold feet in the winter months with cork flooring.

Over which surfaces can I install my cork flooring?

Cork floating floors can virtually be installed over any type of surface if properly levelled, cleaned and dried.

For cork tiles, the sub-floor must be completely flat and smooth and free of all paints, dirt, oil, grease and other foreign materials. If you have carpeting, vinyl, sheet vinyl, rubber etc., it will need to be removed and either the floor will need to be sanded until smooth or a new plywood sub-floor be installed. If you have ceramic or stone tiles and they are secure and not loose, apply a patching cement over tiles making the surface free of all deflections, grout lines and tile cushioning.

Can I install a cork floor over radiant heat?

Cork is a natural insulator so just by having it the floor will be warm. If you want to install radiant heat, you have no problem. The floor may take slightly longer warm up but the heat will be retained efficiently. Floating floors tend to go through normal contraction and expansion as a unit since they are not attached to the sub-floor. Certain precautions need to be taken to minimize the contraction and expansion: The radiant heating system should be turned on for at least 4-5 days before installation, the floor panels need to be acclimated in the room for about 3 days prior to installation; a "vapour barrier" should be laid down between the sub-floor and the cork panels; the floor temperature should be maintained during installation at about 25 °C; surface temperature should never be above 28 °C.

Do cork floating floors require underlayment?

No. All Granorte's floating floors have an integrated cork underlay and do not require any other underlayment, just a vapour barrier in the form of a plastic (PE) sheet.

Are cork floors affected by moisture and temperature changes?

Just like wood, cork floors are subject to expansion and contraction due to climate. During heating season, moisture is lost and the tiles may contract slightly showing small spaces between the planks. When moisture levels increase, the tiles will expand.

Cork as a rule is more stable than wood flooring for the fact that when wood expands, it does so only in the direction of the grain. With cork, the expansion or contraction process is dispersed in all directions. With proper acclimation, installation and maintenance, any expansion/contraction will not be noticeable.

Will my cork floor fade in the light?

Yes, exposure to UV light as well as sunlight will cause colour variations to cork; typically cork will lighten. This is normal and not a manufacturing defect. Area rugs and large furniture will block light exposure and cause uneven coloration. To minimize, furnishings and floor coverings should be moved periodically. Covering large exposed windows will help as well.

Can I install a cork floor in a basement?

In basements there is a high probability of occasional moisture migration from the slab. Moisture can



cause glue-down tile to delaminate and cup. Therefore, tile is not recommended for this type of application.

For basements, we recommend the use of floating floors with a polyethylene (PE) film as a moisture barrier underneath.

Is cork flooring suitable for a kitchen?

Cork floors are fine for a kitchen. They are very comfortable to stand on and easy to maintain as well as hypoallergenic and sound absorbent.

It is recommended that after installation an additional coat of sealer be applied to the floor. This will prevent dirt and spills from penetrating through the joins.

Sweeping and damp mopping should be part of your regular maintenance program as grit could act as sandpaper and scratch your additional coat of sealer. If the floor starts to show signs of wear, simply apply another topcoat and this should bring back the original lustre to the floor.

Are cork floors suitable for a bathroom?

Floating floors are not recommended for a bathroom, however glue down tiles can be used.

Precautions should be taken to protect the floor from excessive spills and water. After installation of the tiles, it is important that you seal the perimeter of the room, prior to installing moulding or wall base. This will prevent water damage getting into the sub-floors or walls. It will be necessary to seal the floor with at least two coats of varnish.

I've heard that cork flooring is great for hallways. Why?

Cork flooring can be installed virtually anywhere, but because of its cellular nature it naturally absorbs sound. And this can have a significant quieting effect in areas, such as hallways or entryways, which are normally associated with echoes.

What makes cork flooring a good option when thinking about falling and impact?

Cork flooring is cushion-like, made as it is of about 50% air that is locked into the microscopic cells which act as natural shock absorbers. This can be quite beneficial when you've dropped dishes and glasses. It can also have a positive effect when accidental human falls occur. For areas used by children or the elderly, this can be a major benefit.

How do I decide whether to use parquet tiles or floating floors for my application?

FLOATING FLOORS:

For installations below grade, over a radiant floor heating system or when a sub-floor would require costly preparation to install tiles.

The up-front cost per square meter of material is higher for floating floors. However, this is often offset by a reduction in sub-floor preparation costs and decreased installation time.

Floating floors are easy to install.

PARQUET TILES:

Parquet tiles are the preferred material for bathroom installations.

The material cost for tiles is lower than that of floating floors. However, sub-floor preparation for parquet tile installation must be meticulously clean, level, and unblemished. This degree of preparation can be costly and time consuming.

Parquet tile may be mixed-and-matched to create borders or a checkerboard effect. They are easily cut to size allowing for more creative and decorative installation options.

If you have a large space or are covering several adjoining rooms and do not want to install expansion joints, Parquet tile will provide an uninterrupted floor surface.

I purchased a house that has cork floors, can they be refinished?

If the cork floor is of the solid type, you will need to contact a wood floor finisher and sand the floor down to bare cork in order for you to recoat with a sealer. If the cork floor is veneered, you should make a thorough cleaning of the floor that will remove intensive soiling and wax residues. After the floor has been thoroughly cleaned, it can slightly sanded (with a fine sandpaper or pad) and recoated.

Is cork underlayment a good choice for soundproofing?

Absolutely, 2mm, 4mm and 6mm cork is being widely used for sound reduction in buildings. It is a very economical and effective way to meet building codes for sound control. Furthermore it's a natural product.



Cork underlayment can be used under many types of floorings like laminate, wood floors, linoleum, vinyl, tiles and marble.

What is the warranty for floating floor and cork floor tiles?

All Granorte's cork floorings are covered by a 5 to 10 year limited wear warranty (depending if it is commercial or residential) and a lifetime structural warranty.

Which of the available surface coatings is suitable for which application?

Mainly, the main difference between the types of finishing is the visual aspect and the "feeling" of it. So, the choice has more to do with the personal taste of the user than any other question.

UV varnish – is a closed pore finish, smooth and very resistant to scratch.

Waterbased varnish – is an open pore finish, with a more "natural" look.

HardOil – Is a "oiled" surface. Natural look and feel, needs more maintenance.

What's "Uniclic"?

Uniclic is the Industry's leading glueless mechanical fixing system for floating floors. Granorte's floatings use this technology and we (as well as our customers) have the right to use the trademark worldwide.

How are cork floor tiles fixed?

Cork floor tiles must be glued directly to the floor. It should be used a recommended contact glue and proper installation guidelines should be followed. We have prepared simple instructions that will help to install your cork covering without any problem.

How do I clean and maintain cork flooring?

Our floorings are factory finished to the highest of standards so that little time will be spent on cleaning and maintenance. All that is required to maintain a cork floor is a regular vacuuming and light cleaning with a damp mop. Ammonia-based cleaners or chemicals must not be used to clean the floor.

A cork floor should be treated as any quality wood flooring. As durable as cork flooring is, it must be remembered that it is still a natural product.

To learn how easy it is to clean your cork flooring and how to properly maintain it, just view our cork floor clean and maintenance guide.

How often does a cork floor need to be refinished?

A well-maintained cork floor will last for decades. Depending on how much foot traffic the floor receives, you will need to apply a top coat of a recommended polish on a regular basis. This could be once every year or two in a residential location or several times a year in a busy retail location.

Are there any tips that help me to protect my cork flooring?

Yes, the following of these simple procedures will guaranty many years of enjoyment of your natural cork flooring:

Protectors should be installed under chair and table legs; when using furniture with wheels, the floor must be additionally protected by using mats; heavy furniture should have felt pads or non-staining glides or casters; steel wool or abrasives must not be used on the floor; a quality doormat at the entrance should be used to help protect the cork floor from outside grit and sand; adequate protection should be taken when moving appliances or large pieces of furniture around the floor; cork, as a natural product, may change colour when exposed to direct sunlight, so use blinds or curtains to minimize this effect.

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