

# Take to the Floor

*Don't be a floor bore. Lavish attention on what's underfoot with our guide to the best flooring solutions, as well as new trends.*

## Words

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Gone are the days when carpet was the first choice for floors - now there's a dazzling variety of coverings from classic wood and laminates through to ceramics, stone or practical vinyl.

The style you choose should be the start of your decorating scheme, as a good flooring will outlast several changes of decor in the course of its lifespan.

Ideally, flooring should make a statement but not dominate your room. Soft and hardwood flooring are popular options, and they can range from simple stripped floorboards through to solid wood flooring. Carpet is soft and luxurious and there's a massive array of styles on offer, while rugs provide spectacular focal points.

The key to success in selecting your floor covering is to choose the most suitable material for your room. Consider cost, maintenance, durability, comfort and style.

Don't be floored by the choice available. Follow our guide to the options from hard and practical to cosy-toe soft.

## Stone & Tiles

This flooring has always been particularly good for busy areas such as hallways, kitchens and bathrooms, but is featuring in other areas as the popularity of beautiful stones like limestone

continues to grow.

Look out for slate which is back in fashion.

Bisazza's tile ranges are stunning and not surprisingly the choice of interior designers, but if they're out of your budget simply use them as inspiration. It's dazzling monochrome Vienna Nero starts at £231 a metre, and Embroidery Red from £349.

Fired Earth's selection is just as desirable. Conjure memories of holidays with its Island Pebble flooring in Moluku Sand, which is in four finishes. It costs £98.70 a square metre. Its Encaustic tiles come in tasty shades - aubergine, olive, verdigris, and are £93.71 a square metre.

Checkalow boast a range of Italian floor tiles at factory gate prices, and Ikea features their tiles in their showrooms. They're London based but do have a website.

## Wood

A good quality hardwood floor, well made and well laid, will become an integral part of a home. Increasingly people are spending more on a solid floor which they regard as an investment, but look-alike laminates are getting ever more sophisticated in finish and design.

Fired Earth's solid wood flooring ticks all the boxes on quality. Its selection is extensive but a