

Vinyl buying guide

Popular, hardwearing vinyl

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

Vinyl is water-resistant, provides great insulation and is available in a wide variety of designs, colours and choice of qualities, suiting all budgets.

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.



[Miami - Nightlife](#)

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 100% 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 hallways and entrances
- Vinyl makes spillage clean-up quick and easy, important for use in busy kitchens
- A thick cushioned vinyl provides lots of comfort underfoot, making it a relaxing choice for the lounge or even bedroom
- 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 is rated R10 or higher. This will begin with an R (known in the industry as a Ramp Test) and shows how slippery a floorcovering will be when wet.



[Harlem Iconic - Capri Chevron](#)

What type of vinyl do I need?

There are several points to consider when choosing your vinyl floor.

Backing

There are several backings available for vinyl floors, and which one is best for you depends on your circumstances and budget.

Cushion - Cushion backed vinyl is probably what you picture when you first think of a vinyl floor. This is where the vinyl is created from a high density foam, which includes small air bubbles, giving it a cushioned feeling underfoot. This

means it is quite comfortable and forgiving, when compared to other flooring types such as laminate.

Because of the trapped air bubbles, cushion backed vinyl can also provide you with both sound and thermal insulation, which is particularly useful for rooms upstairs or for use in flats or apartments.

In addition, the manufacturing process for cushion vinyl is simpler than textile backed vinyl, and this means it is often a more budget friendly option.

Textile - Textile backed vinyl includes a woven layer within its backing, and for this reason it is usually known for being a more hardwearing option. However, because of the additional step in the manufacturing process, it is often also a more expensive choice.

That being said, because it is more hardwearing it often comes with the longest wear warranties – in fact some of our textile backed vinyl even come with a lifetime wear warranty!

We often find our retailer and fitters prefer textile backed vinyl, as they know customers are usually very happy with their choice.



[Harlem Iconic - Leonardo Indigo](#)

Thickness

Lifestyle Floors vinyls range from 2.0mm to 4.0mm 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 Lifestyle Floors floorcoverings is the wear warranty that we have allocated to a range.

The total thickness of vinyl plays a large part in determining how comfortable and sturdy the vinyl is underfoot. A thick cushioned vinyl will be more comfortable to stand on for long periods of time, and this can be 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 cooking and entertaining, 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 Lifestyle Floors retailer, as the level of subfloor preparation needed depends on so many factors.

Wear layer

The wear layer is the clear, protective layer that sits atop of your vinyl floor. It offers protection against scuffs, foot steps and stains and spills.

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 sheet 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, and even mosaic and abstract designs for those really looking to push the design boundaries.

Modern vinyl can be incredibly realistic, particularly with more premium, high-quality ranges. The best way to really assess the quality of the design is to see it with your own eyes, which you are able to do at any Lifestyle Floors retailer with a vinyl stand, or by ordering free samples from our website.

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 Lifestyle Floors 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 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 vinyl is 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.



[Harlem Iconic - Leonardo Tone](#)

Construction

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

Starting with the bottom layer, the layers include:

- Felt backing (on textile backed vinyl only) This provides extra stability to the floor, and may help it to look good for longer
- A foam, cushioned core - This provides the comfort associated with vinyl, making it softer and less tiresome to stand on for long periods of time.
- 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 wear layer that protects your floor, meaning it can stay looking great even through the demands of a busy, demanding home



[Kansas - Bronson Vibrant](#)

Start off on the right foot

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

The good news is that Lifestyle Floors retailers will offer an installation service, allowing you to have your floor professionally fitted, and any subfloor preparation needed will be taken care of during this process.

Before installation, your 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 and may even damage your floor. Therefore, your retailer may recommend screeding, laying plywood, or an alternative subfloor preparation to ensure lumps and bumps are removed, and your floorcovering will remain in freshly laid condition.

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 Lifestyle Floors 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 the retailer is laying on wood, they should secure all loose boards, hammer down any protruding nails and sand down any high spots. Alternatively, the subfloor could be covered with plywood.



[Lincoln - Witherbee](#)

Keep it looking good

Vinyl is renowned for 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, demanding home.

Regularly use a soft brush to sweep or a vacuum to keep your vinyl floor clean. 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 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 staining.

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.

As with any floor, it's important to avoid dragging furniture over 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.



[Baroque - Amadora Chalk](#)

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, demanding 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



[Lincoln - Belmont](#)

Wear and stain warranties

Real peace of mind

Our warranties ensure your floorcovering will be protected to suit your requirements and your budget. With a range of warranties from five years to a lifetime, you can choose a floorcovering that's right for you. Lifestyle Floors warranties cover the wear of our resilient flooring, including laminate, LVT and vinyl and staining of our carpets.

Wear warranty

Within the wear warranty period, Lifestyle Floors guarantees against any hidden defect that may adversely affect the life of the product.

Warranty conditions

- The vinyl must be professionally fitted to BS 52325 standards.
- The warranty covers domestic use in your single family home in the UK or Channel Islands and you are unable to transfer this warranty without prior

written authority from Lifestyle Floors.

- You need to closely follow our cleaning and maintenance instructions, available in this guide.
- The stain warranty does not cover damage due to application of chemicals or the use of cleaning methods which are not recommended in this guide; or where there is evidence of heavy soiling, abuse or neglect.
- The floor covering should be protected against the risk of piercing caused by furniture or objects with pointed legs, feet or sharp edges. The use of plastic or felt protection devices is recommended.

Warranty exclusions

- Damage due to abnormal use
- Damage due to the use of the floor in an outside/external location
- The absence of standard protection methods for the floor covering (such as non-rubber doormats, sealed access doors etc.) where necessary
- Damage resulting from poor fitting or poor preparation of the underlying surface
- Damage caused by sharp or slicing material
- Damage caused by the presence of damp in the underlying surface
- Stains caused by rugs, rubber or latex materials
- Minimal variations in colour, shape or texture between samples or brochure illustrations and the actual floor covering
- Damage caused by moving furniture without appropriate protective measures
- Failure to maintain the floor in line with the recommendations in the vinyl cleaning guide

For more buying and warranty guides visit www.lifestyle-floors.co.uk/help-centre