

## **Cork: Nature's Gift to Flooring**

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Cork flooring has been enjoying a resurgence in popularity. Many people think cork is a relatively new and possibly unreliable flooring option. Yet, you can find examples of cork floors that were installed over 100 years ago in buildings.

Cork is an environmentally sound product. It also is a rapidly renewable resource.

Cork is actually the bark of the Cork Oak, which grows primarily in Portugal. Cork can only be harvested by hand to prevent harming the tree. No trees are cut down to harvest the bark, and cork trees produce new cork for re-harvest every nine years. A single cork tree can be harvested more than 20 times during its 250- to 300-year lifespan.

Cork has many attractive qualities. In your home, cork floors create a warm, comfortable, resilient surface that is gentle underfoot and quiet to walk on. Unlike harder surfaces, cork flooring reduces stress on the lower back, feet and joints. Cork is a healthy floor choice due to its natural ability to resist mold, mildew and allergens. Cork flooring is durable and requires no more maintenance than a prefinished hardwood floor.

As for installation, most cork flooring products now utilize the floating method, which allows the product to "click" together and float over your sub-floor. This eliminates the need for adhesives.

It's important, however, to have a flat and dry sub floor. That's why we recommend that consumers hire a professional installer to ensure the best installation.

Cork flooring design options have exploded in recent years. Products are available in tile to hardwood plank shapes. Colors range from the traditional cork look to the vibrant and bold. The wide range of colors and styles allow cork to be utilized in all types of decorating styles, from traditional to contemporary.

So check out the new looks of cork, one of nature's best building materials.

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MODA Floors & Interiors is a flooring and window coverings resource in Atlanta's West Midtown Design District.