

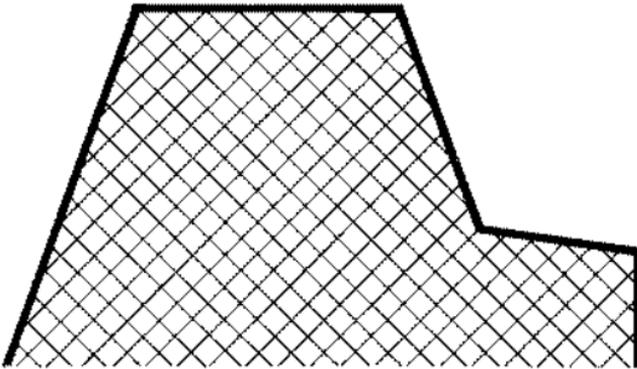
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Floor and wall finishes

Floor finishes for kitchens should be waterproof, hardwearing, non-slip when wet, easy to clean, acid- and alkali-proof and easy on the feet. Under traditional range cookers they should also be fireproof. They are better if they are pale in colour to reflect light, and slightly patterned to conceal grime.

Sheet materials have few joints so are easy to keep clean and are likely to be more waterproof – but tiles have the advantage of being easier to fit round awkward shapes and can be individually replaced if damaged.

In rooms which are not square, tiles laid on the diagonal disguise the fact that the walls are not parallel.

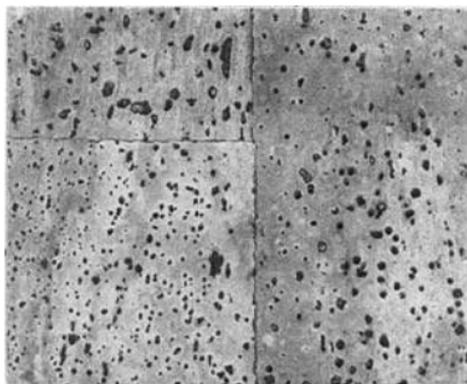


Tiles laid diagonally in a non-orthogonal location

It is preferable to use specialist flooring contractors who will advise on suitability of materials for the purpose, including details of any substrates, fixing, surface sealants or polishes. All flooring should be fixed and finished according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Timber floor finishes are NOT suitable for kitchens, even if well sealed, as water will eventually get underneath the seal and lift it off allowing the wood below to swell and discolour.

Described below are floor finishes which are suitable for domestic kitchen use. They divide basically into *soft* floor finishes which have the benefit of being quiet and kinder to feet, and *hard* floor finishes which are more durable but can be cold, noisy and hard on the feet. Hard finishes may also be more suitable for solid rather than suspended floors.



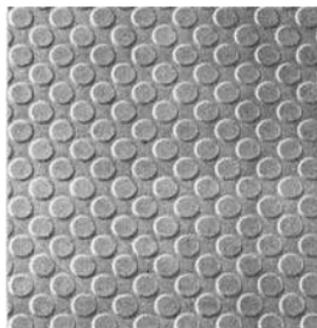
Cork tile – vinyl faced
300 × 300 × 3.2 mm – by Wicanders



Vinyl tile – 'Stones'
305 × 305 × 2 mm
by Harvey Maria



Linoleum tiles
500 × 500 × 2.5 mm
by Forbo-Nairn



Rubber stud tiles
503 × 503 × 3.2 mm
by Freudenberg

Floor tiles – soft

Soft floors

Vinyl flooring

Available in sheet or tile form with a vast choice of designs ranging from plain colours through random patterns to often very creditable imitations of natural materials. Generally vinyl floors are easy to keep clean with sweeping and washing. Some incorporate carborundum to make a lightly textured non-slip finish. These should be sealed to make them easier to clean.

typical sizes: 2 m rolls and $600 \times 600 \times 2$ mm tiles.

Linoleum flooring

Linoleum is made from predominantly natural materials: linseed oil, rosin, wood flour and chalk backed with jute. It is environmentally friendly as it is largely emission free and non-allergenic. Its resilience makes it kind to feet, quiet and hard wearing.

typical sizes: 2 m rolls and $500 \times 500 \times 2.5$ mm tiles.

Cork tiles – vinyl faced

This is one of the most practical and handsome floor finishes for a kitchen. It has the warmth, resilience and beauty of cork with the protection of a 0.5 mm clear vinyl sheet bonded on top as the wear layer. The random pattern of natural cork disguises dirt so effectively that the need for cleaning is only felt when one hears the sugar crunch underfoot, making it the perfect floor for the less than house-proud cook.

typical sizes: $300 \times 300 \times 3.2$ mm tiles and
 $900 \times 295 \times 12$ mm interlocking planks where
 the cork is bonded to high density fibreboard with
 an insulating layer of cork to the underside.

Sources: Armstrong, Forbo-Nairn, Freudenberg, Harvey Maria, Wicanders

Hard floors

Quarry tiles

Burnt clay tiles, typically red, heather, buff or black in colour, very dense and unglazed but less than 3% absorption. Also slip-resistant, scratch-hardy, easy to wash and keep clean particularly if finished with a proprietary clear acrylic polymer sealant which provides a satin gloss.

typical sizes: $150 \times 150 \times 12.5$ mm square and octagonal
 $194 \times 94 \times 12.5$ mm rectangular
 $194 \times 194 \times 12.5$ and 18 mm
 $225 \times 225 \times 18$ mm

The tiles are made with different surfaces: *plain*, *carborundum*, *shot-faced* (fine pimples), *studded*, giving varying degrees of non-slipperiness. There are special square tiles with *bull-nosed* edges to one or two sides and 100 mm high *coved* skirting tiles.

Slate tiles

Slate is durable, resistant to alkali, fade-proof, waterproof and non-combustible.

The tile finish should be *riven* to be non-slip.

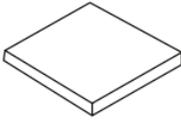
It is hard and cold and, like all stone flooring, best with under-floor heating.

Being dark it will show up light-coloured spills but it is handsome and very hard wearing.

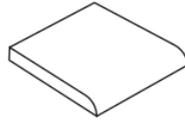
It helps to seal the tiles for easier cleaning.

typical sizes: $300 \times 150 \times 12$ mm
 $300 \times 300 \times 12$ mm
 $400 \times 200 \times 12$ mm
 $500 \times 500 \times 12$ mm
 $600 \times 600 \times 12$ mm

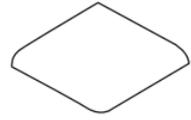
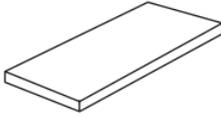
Source: Welsh Slate

Standard

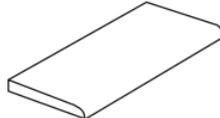
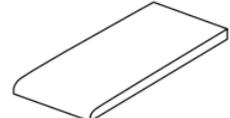
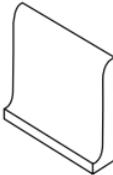
Plain



RE round edge

REX double
round edge

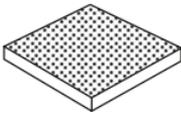
Plain

REL round edge
to longsideRES round edge
to shortside**Skirting**CBRT covered base
roundtop

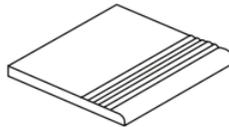
External angle



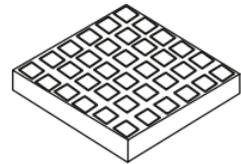
Internal angle

Anti-slip

Carborundum



Steptread



Studded

Quarry tiles – typical patterns by – Dennis Ruabon**Ceramic tiles**

Ceramic floor tiles can be glazed or unglazed.

If glazed they should have a lightly textured surface to make them more slip resistant and easy to clean.

Unglazed tiles should be *fully vitrified* which indicates they are practically non-porous, and should be sealed to make them easier to keep clean.

typical sizes: 150 × 150 × 8.5 mm
 200 × 200 × 8.5 mm
 200 × 200 × 12 mm
 300 × 300 × 8.5 mm
 400 × 400 × 10 mm

Limestone tiles

Limestone is available in many light colours for floor tiles. They are particularly attractive when used with a limestone worktop.

Choose the denser and least porous varieties for kitchen use. Tiles should be laid with white joints and finished with an appropriate sealant.

typical sizes: 305 × 305, 400 × 400, 600 × 600 mm

thickness: 10, 12, 15 and 20 mm

Source: Kirkstone Quarries

Terrazzo

A composite material developed in Italy where it is known as 'conglomerata' which has been used for floors since Roman times. It is made up of marble and other stone chippings set in a pigmented cement mix.

Terrazzo is only suitable for solid floors as the tiles are laid in mortar on a semi-dry concrete sub-base and ground and polished *in situ*.

It is good looking, hygienic with a variety of colours to order as each batch is purpose made.

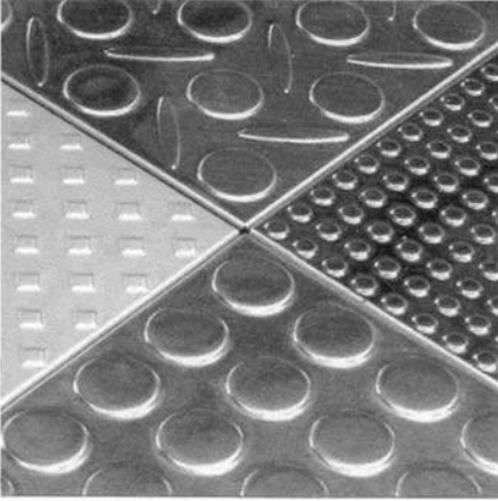
As it is sealed at the time of laying, it needs no polishing and is easy to clean with water and a neutral detergent. The matrix may be slightly etched if acids and alkalis are not wiped off. After many years, it can be re-ground, grouted and polished.

Large areas can be laid wet with brass dividing strips, but for small kitchen areas, tiles are more appropriate.

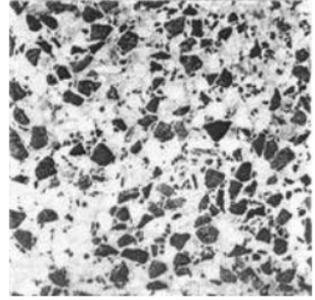
Tile sizes: 300 × 300 × 28 mm

400 × 400 × 33 mm

Source: Quiligotti



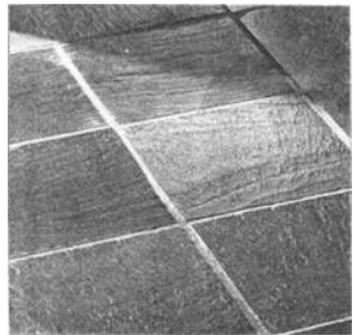
Stainless Steel and aluminium tiles
300 × 300 bonded to various thicknesses of
tongued and grooved ply or MDF
by Metex Flooring



Terrazzo tiles
300 × 300 × 28 mm
by Quiligotti



Limestone tiles – honed finish
400 × 400 × 12 mm
by Kirkstone Quarries



Slate floor tiles – riven finish
300 × 300 × 12 mm
by Welsh Slate

Floor tiles – hard

Stainless steel and aluminium flooring

Stainless steel and aluminium make a striking and durable floor finish for a kitchen.

The metals are available in various textures, some resembling chequer plate, which is necessary to make it non-slip.

Stainless steel is more hard wearing and costs about a third more than aluminium.

The finish can be *satın*, *brushed* or *bright*.

Aluminium must be *hard anodised*.

The finish can be *brushed*, *matt* or *shining*.

Both metals are available in sheet form, but tiles are easier to lay in small and awkward shaped areas. The metal is bonded on to MDF or marine ply with tongued and grooved joints which can be cut like a ceramic tile with a diamond tipped saw.

Tile size: 300 × 300 × 0.7 mm bonded on to 9, 12 or 15 mm tongued and grooved ply or MDF.

There are other stainless steel and aluminium tiles which are not bonded to a board but which can be stuck down to a substrate with a double-sided adhesive viscose sheet.

Tile size: 500 × 500 × 1.5 mm

The metals are not affected by acids, but bleach can dull the surface.

Normal cleaning is sweeping and washing.

Stubborn dirt can be removed with a product which is similar to a car-screen wash which removes dirt without leaving a greasy film.

Sources: Metex, THG International

Wall finishes

Kitchen walls have to cope with condensation and grease even when an efficient extractor fan is installed.

Walls behind hobs get particularly greasy.

Walls and window cills behind sinks are liable to get splashed.

Therefore these wall surfaces particularly between the work-top and wall cupboards and for at least 300 mm high above worktops elsewhere, should be protected with easy-to-clean materials such as:

ceramic tiles, mosaic, stainless steel sheet, plastic laminate-faced board, gloss-varnished timber matchboarding.

The latter should be protected with a sheet of laminated glass or stainless steel behind the hob as it may scorch.

For walls elsewhere, above tall cabinets for instance, gloss paint is easier to wash and longer lasting than matt emulsion.