

## Best flooring for a senior living community

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Choosing floor coverings for care facilities can be challenging. It's about more than just function and performance; it's about creating an ambience that helps residents feel comfortable and relaxed. The choice of floor covering should also help to improve infection control and create hygienic environments. At the same time, it's essential that finishes stand up to the daily demands of a live, operating care home.

Though the abilities of the people living in senior communities are varied, the flooring requirements are the same. No matter how able-bodied residents are, safety and accessibility are the top concerns. Safety must encompass accommodations for visual impairment, slip hazards, transition hazards (between material), and flammability.

Durability, ease of maintenance, and sustainability are significant considerations as well. When it comes to choosing among flooring recommendations for the elderly, mistakes made in material selection or flooring installation can be dangerous – even deadly. Thus, the best flooring for a senior living community is one that takes into account the specific needs of its residents

### Seven senior flooring options

With great influence from the hospitality industry senior flooring options have dramatically changed. Many flooring products are being installed to accommodate for various spaces. The challenge of evaluating senior flooring options is selecting a material with a homey feel that is functional, safe and durable since carts and wheelchairs can damage floor coverings over time

#### 1. Luxury vinyl tile

Stunning floors can be designed with luxury vinyl tile (LVT) and the use of water jet cutting technology. Along with modular products, there are numerous vinyl plank patterns that feature a wood-look. Some even have bevelled edges to enhance the plank effect. The advantages these products offer include high resiliency, high point loads to resist indentation, more sound absorption than vinyl composite tile (VCT) or porcelain tile, added comfort and super easy maintenance. Vinyl tiles easily pattern and can be water just cut prior to installation for more intricate patterns. And they are often manufacturing with antimicrobial additives.



#### 2. Rubber

Natural rubber tiles or rolled rubber flooring is another option for senior living communities. Rubber is a rapidly renewable resource, making it very durable and a good shock and sound absorber. Available in many colours, rubber has a natural finish that gets better over time. It is naturally antibacterial and requires very low maintenance. And like LVT, it can be pre-cut in intricate patterns using a water-jet technique.

### 3. Carpet

Carpeting still remains a dominant material in flooring for senior living communities. Healthcare carpet installers say the broadloom carpet is a cost effective option for offices and areas where replacement and heavy traffic is not such a big concern. Carpet tile has made it's entry in non-critical care spaces. It's fast becoming a favourite for its ease of installation and replacement, as well as the variety of patterns and colours. Plus, it's a natural acoustical conditioner, promoting speech privacy in large spaces.

### 4. Cork

Installers also recommend cork flooring. Like carpet, cork is shock absorbent and comfortable to stand on for long periods of time. Cork flooring has a 40-year life span when it is maintained properly. Plus, cork is all natural, biodegradable and renewable.

### 5. Terrazzo

Believe it or not, terrazzo flooring – once used extensively in healthcare facilities – is finding its way back into common spaces in senior living communities. This is primarily because it is so low maintenance. Simply sweep and mop occasionally: that's it! You've done the maintenance needed to keep up a terrazzo floor.

### 6. Linoleum

Available in both tile and sand rolled goods, linoleum can be water jet cut to create intricate patterns. It's naturally antibacterial and antistatic, as well as durable, flexible, and sound absorptive. Padded linoleum behaves very similarly to padded vinyl but it's not quite as stain resistant. Despite this, linoleum is still easy to clean, maintain, and disinfect.

### 7. Dual-stiffness flooring

Researchers reviewing falls that occurred in a nursing home from 2008 to 2010 discovered that 82 falls occurred on dual stiffness flooring (DSF) which is flooring that incorporates a layer of compressible material meant to cushion falls. No resident who fell on the DSF experienced a fracture. Of the 85 falls on regular flooring there were two fractures. "The fracture rate of 2.4 percent of falls on the regular floor is consistent with previous reports in the literature, whereas a zero percent rate found on the DSF floor is a clinically significant improvement," the researchers wrote.

Choosing the best flooring for a senior living community is essential to creating a safe and easy to manage environment. The options outlined in this article provide some great flooring recommendations for the elderly but ultimately the right flooring choice depends on the unique needs of a senior living community's residents.