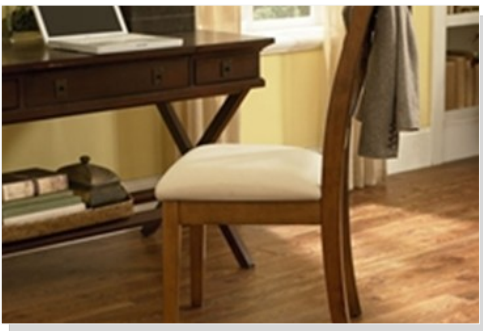


## *Choosing the Right Flooring*

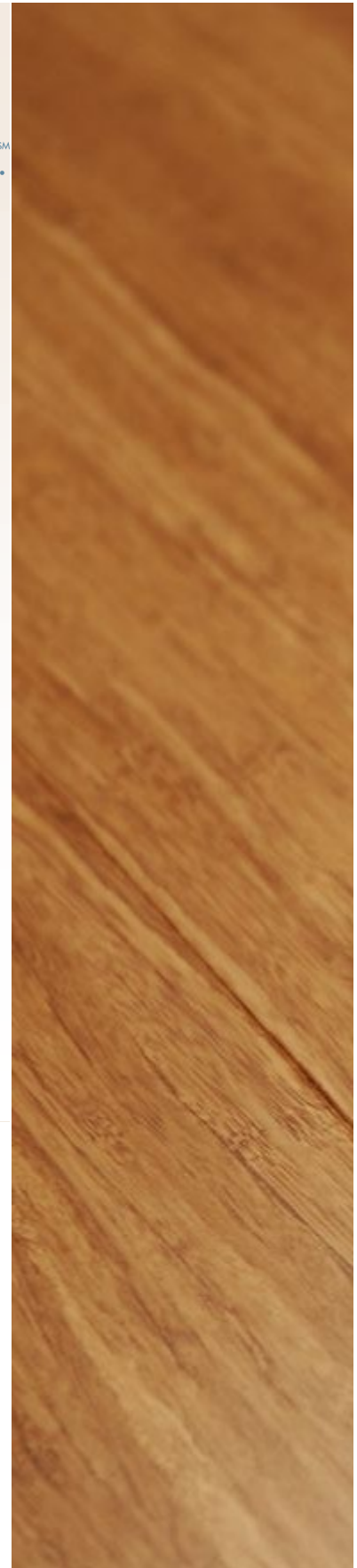
**C**hoosing the appropriate flooring for your kitchen can be challenging as there are many different types available in a wide range of prices. If you are working with a limited budget, determining how much you are willing to spend on flooring should be a decision you make before exploring all of your options. There are materials available that can create the look you are trying to achieve without “breaking the bank”. Here are some of the more popular choices for flooring.

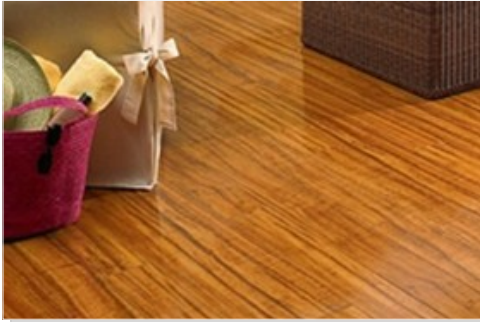
### Vinyl

Vinyl has been a very popular choice in kitchen flooring for a long time. It is affordable and the improvement of the ability to mimic natural materials such as wood, marble, slate granite and ceramic tile has made it more appealing. Vinyl is available in sheets or tiles. The sheet material comes as “inlaid” (the pattern goes throughout the wear layer of the vinyl) and “rotogravure” (the pattern is printed on a sheet). Both are then covered with a layer of wearing surface. A thicker wear surface will resist scuffs and stains well but can lose the gloss more quickly than a thinner urethane wear layer. You have options



for the thickness of cushion under the wear layer. The thicker cushion offers more comfort but can be dented easier by heavy objects. Vinyl tiles can be installed on suspended wood subfloors or over on-grade or below-grade concrete. They do not have a wear layer top coat but are durable and easy to clean.





## Laminate

Laminate flooring is another option with a more appealing price point. It typically imitates hardwood or ceramic tile and can often go over an existing floor which can save time and money. It consists of several layers of material bonded together under high pressure with a clear melamine top layer. This is followed by a plastic resin-impregnated paper layer with the wood grain or tile pattern printed on it. These are bonded to a structural fiberboard core backed by a layer of melamine. Installation is relatively easy and requires applying glue to the tongue-and-groove edges of each piece and pressing it into the abutting

piece on the floor without actually attaching it to the floor. The finished floor then “floats” above the substrate. It is hard wearing and easy to keep clean.

## Ceramic Tile

Ceramic tile is a very popular choice for kitchen flooring. It can withstand heavy wear and moisture doesn't bother it. The differences among raw materials, manufacturing methods and surface finishes make some types of tile more durable in heavy use areas than others. It is important to research this prior to choosing your tile. Ceramic tile offers wide design flexibility with many different color and size options not to mention many grout choices. Cleaning is easy and the only real maintenance is periodic grout sealing. The downside to ceramic tile is it is hard and cold to stand on.



## Hardwood

Hardwood flooring creates elegance and style and easily blends into any décor. One of the most attractive attributes of hardwood is the range of options in terms of finish, stain, surface and species. Hardwood is available prefinished and unfinished and there are advantages to both. Prefinished is convenient as there is no sanding or drying time required which saves time. Unfinished hardwood, which is finished after it is installed, will give you a more consistent and uniform finish and the even seal will mean more protection against moisture. Some hardwoods are planed at the mill leaving a smooth even surface. An option growing in popularity is a hand scraped surface in which the planks are worked by hand. This creates a more rustic, lived-in appearance. The more popular wood species used are Red and White Oak, American Cherry, Hard Maple and Brazilian Cherry, also known as Jatoba. With proper care and cleaning, hardwood floors will bring beauty to your home for years to come.



