



Cork: installation made simple

By Phillip McIntyre, Cork Imports Australia

In the June/July 2015 issue of *Flooring Magazine* we spoke a little about the renewability and sustainability characteristics of cork. In this issue we will explain how to install your new cork floor.

Installing a cork floor can be satisfying; however, there are a few things you need to know before you start.

- Firstly, you need to know what sub-floor you will be laying your cork tiles on. Cork tiles can be easily installed on a variety of pre-existing sub-floors such as concrete,

timber, ply and yellow tongue floors. Depending on your sub-floor the installation method is quite uniform and simple. Much like a solid or floating timber floor, it is important to conduct a moisture test if laying over concrete. The floors moisture reading must be under 5.5% before installing the cork.

This will help ensure you comply with strict Australian standards.

- Secondly, inspect your sub-floor making sure there are no irregularities and that it

is suitable for cork installation. Concrete floors should be clean, level and smooth. Simply fill any holes and sand filler level. If laying on a ply sub-floor, ensure the ply is not delaminating. If the joints on the ply floor are rough, a quick sand over the joining ply sheets will create a smooth even surface for the cork to adhere to. If installing on a timber or yellow tongue floor, ensure there is no cupping or loose boards for timber and the joints are not swollen for yellow tongue. If necessary,

the timber and yellow tongue floors may need a quick sand before installing a masonite underlay. Prior to any sanding a handy tip is to hang up dust sheets to minimise the spread of dust.

- Now that you are happy with your sub-floor, your third step is to carefully set out your floor. Ensure a start line is crossing the main line. Drop coloured chalk lines and double check measurements to ensure cuts are as large as possible. Once you have your chalked floor plan the next

step is to prime and glue your sub-floor.

Before you begin to apply adhesive on the floor it is a good idea to install your trims and reducing strips. Once these are installed apply your primer to the sub-floor and allow to dry. You can tell the primer is dry when it turns clear. (Note, you will still be able to see the chalk lines marked on the floor through the primer.)



Your floor is now primed and ready for the adhesive. Apply this to the sub-floor and allow to dry. The adhesive is white when applied; however, you will know it is dry when it turns clear like the primer.

Your floor is now ready for laying the cork tiles. Lay a line of tiles along the chalk line making sure no downward pressure is used. Lay the second line at right angles along the chalk line. When all the tiles are in place, apply

downward pressure. This will fix the tiles into the adhesive allowing no movement. As a tradies tip – do not apply downward pressure on the cork tile until you are certain you have the correct position for that tile as you will not easily be able to remove the tile once it is fixed to the floor.

Lay the tiles along the line staggering them so the installation looks like 'stepping stones'. As you lay tiles towards your doorways → 50



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← 49

or conjoining rooms a spacer tile can be used so your cut will be accurate. A spacer tile can be your normal cork tile turned upside down so the adhesive cannot stick to the sub-floor. Simply continue this method until all cork tile cuts are completed.

Once your cork floor is installed it is a good idea to clean up all rubbish and leave the site clean. This will help minimise dust and leave the jobsite clutter free ready for sanding and coating.

Finally, feel free to walk on your new cork floor, step back and marvel at your creation! ■



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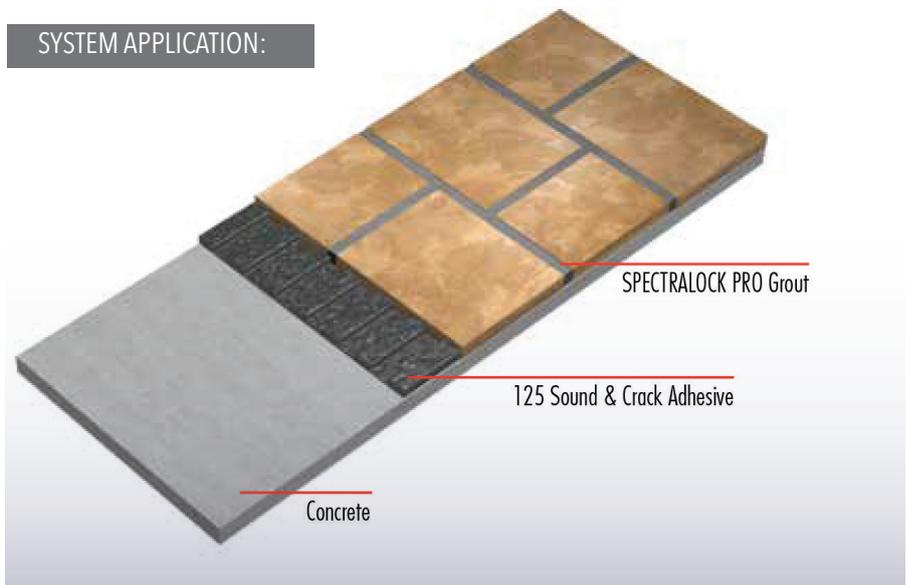
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