

# Homeowner Shares Her #1 Hack and Other Top Tips for Replacing Floors Without Moving Out

Remodeling and Renovation Tips

by Liz Taylor | Posted on December 12, 2023



You've selected the wood, got your estimates, and picked the best contractor to replace your old flooring. Now, how exactly do you go about replacing floors without moving out?

This is the challenge Diane Galow Hertel of Oshkosh, Wisconsin, faced when getting new hickory wood floors in the central part of the home she shares with her husband and their golden retriever, Finley. Both have busy careers — she's an elementary school principal and he's an attorney — so they wanted to keep their home livable while also protecting their belongings from damage.

By using creative problem-solving strategies and renting a **16-foot PODS storage container**, they got the job done with minimal disruption. Diane shares how they did it.



## Tell Us About Your New Flooring Project.

We replaced almost 2,100 square feet of oak and travertine tile with natural hickory flooring. This included the most high-traffic areas of our home — the kitchen, great room, formal dining room, bar area, and some hallways. First, our contractor, **Badger Hardwood Flooring**, had to remove all the old oak and tile. Then they had to install the hickory, sand it, and stain it. We have a large 6,000-square-foot home — we'll eventually do two more phases.

## Did You Have an Escape Plan?

We knew it would be a painful process, so we decided the best thing to do was to go on vacation. It needed to be around the school holidays, so we worked with our contractor on the timing. He had craftsmen interested in working and staying busy during that time. So we went on a beach vacation to Florida.

**Right. When You Live in Wisconsin, Florida's a Great Place To Go in December.**

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## Was the Job Done by the Time You Got Back?

No, it took three weeks, from start to finish, with our contractor working around the clock. But we knew that from the beginning.

## What Made You Decide To Rent a PODS Container for Remodeling Storage?

We wanted our house to be livable when we got back from vacation. Without some other type of storage, the rooms that weren't being done would be piled high, from floor to ceiling, with furniture. We have ample garage space, but if you think of mice or getting an oil stain ... it's not the cleanest environment. I didn't want my good furniture sitting in a garage.

We talked about a self-storage unit for some of our more expensive furniture, but the idea of hiring a company to move it made no sense. Plus, you never know what you're getting when you get a storage facility or how clean it will be.

Once I thought of renting a PODS container and checked into it, that was a no-brainer — a stroke of genius.

## What Did Your Husband Think?

He was skeptical at first. But the container was clean, we could lock it, and having it made the process easy and effortless.

Afterward, he said, "Ok, in the next two phases, we'll be getting the PODS container back."



## How Did You Manage Moving the Furniture?

Extremely helpful neighbors assisted us, and we, of course, got pizza and beer. The day the container was delivered, we emptied everything. It's so easy; you just march back and forth. After the floors were finished, all our things were there, ready to return to where they belonged.

## How Did the Timing Work Out?

Perfectly. Since the project took three weeks and PODS rentals are a month at a time, we took less than one month from delivery to final pickup.

## What About Your Dog?

I was so concerned about Finley. He came to Florida with us, but that way, he didn't panic when we got back. He had ample places to roam and feel comfortable.



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## Diane's Top 10 Hacks for Getting Ready for New Flooring

When we asked Diane what advice she'd offer others for **surviving home remodeling**, like new flooring and other projects, she had plenty of helpful tips based on her experience. Here are her top ten:

### 1. Use a Portable Storage Container.

It's a no-brainer. Having a clean and secure place to keep your belongings just steps away makes replacing floors without moving out much more manageable to survive, as you don't have to deal with clutter and disorder on top of everything else.

**Q: Can you replace flooring without removing all furniture?**

**A:** Unfortunately, if you're replacing hardwood floors or prepping for any type of new flooring, you will need to clear the room — or rooms — where the work will take place. If you have spaces that aren't getting new floors, you can use these for storage, but you'll need temporary storage for a whole-home project..

### 2. Note Your Current Flooring Type.

Before you start replacing your flooring, check if your current material is made of vinyl or asphalt. If you have an older home, your flooring may have asbestos. While this isn't necessarily dangerous, you will want a contractor who has experience working with asbestos-based products. This is important because the old flooring material will need to be removed and disposed of safely.

### 3. Create a Budget.

The best part of a home project is seeing the final product. What's arguably less fun is seeing the final bill. No one likes sticker shock, so it's good to prepare a budget beforehand and discuss your preferred price with your contractor.

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To help you find a reasonable range, it helps to know the cost of replacing hardwood floors. The materials typically cost around \$3 to \$10 per square foot, but that doesn't account for the cost of labor. Adding that in, you can expect to pay around \$6 to \$18 per square foot.

**Q: Is it worth replacing hardwood floors?**

**A:** Hardwood flooring can add value to your home, as it's frequently a "must have" for homebuyers. In addition to this perk, it's durable, easy to clean, and aesthetically appealing. Installing hardwood flooring, though, can be expensive and disruptive to your daily life. Despite this, most people who go through replacing hardwood flooring are happy with the results.

## 4. Create a Workspace.

Whether you're doing the work yourself or calling in the professionals, you'll need a designated workspace for tools and materials that's outside of the area where your new floors are being replaced. This could be your garage, porch, or driveway. Clear any obstacles between the new flooring zone and the workspace to make navigation easier.



## 5. Go Away on Vacation.

Escape all the noise and dust by taking a break while most or all of the work gets done. You don't have to go out of town, either. Plan a staycation in your city and see what it's like to be a tourist in your own town.

At this point, you may wonder, "Can you live in a house while replacing hardwood floors?" You absolutely can. Going on vacation is simply the easiest way to get out of the house while the work is being done. However, people go through replacing floors while living in the house all the time. If you want to take this route, **the PODS Blog** has advice and tips for **making the process as stress-free as possible**.

## 6. Plan the Timing With Your Contractor.

One of the most important things to consider when replacing flooring is timing. Make sure your contractor knows your plan and is committed to the schedule. If you're trying to estimate how long your project will take, consider that replacing hardwood floors takes an average of two days per 1,000 square feet.

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**Did you know?** No two hardwood floors are alike. This is because no two trees are the same, and real wood has different wood grain textures, patterns, colors, and more. Laminate flooring, however, comes with a pre-designed pattern to make it look like real wood, and this pattern is often repeated.

## 7. Remember Your Pets.

Keep pets calm by ensuring they have room to roam without piles of furniture and other obstructions. If that's not possible when replacing hardwood floors in your home, consider boarding them or having them stay with a friend.



## 8. Clear Away Any Clutter.

Pack up all books, accessories, and other knick-knacks that may be lying around on furniture or inside bookcases in advance, so furniture is easy to move quickly. Not to add more to your plate, but this is an excellent opportunity to **declutter your home** before breaking out the boxes. Why pack up things that you no longer want or need?

## 9. Enlist Neighbors or Friends To Help Move Furniture.

Replacing hardwood floors requires a lot of planning — and we're going to add one more line item to your list. Don't worry, though, this one is fun, and it'll help you with some literal heavy lifting. Plan a moving party for the friends and/or family who are going to help you move your furniture before the floor replacement work begins. That way, they get some treats in return for their free labor.

## 10. Do the Project in Phases.

Especially if you're replacing hardwood floors in a large home, it helps to do it in chunks — both for budgeting and timing, so you have an area clear for living. We recommend starting with higher-traffic rooms or areas to ensure you finish your most-used parts of your home first.

*Looking for more tips on managing remodeling projects? You may be interested in these:*

- [Ultimate Home Remodeling Checklist](#)

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*Liz Taylor is a freelance writer based in Tampa who enjoys getting out and exploring the Gulf Coast.*

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