

Underfloor Heating vs Radiators

Which heating option may be the better fit for your home, extension, or renovation?

When choosing a heating system, two of the most common options are traditional radiators and underfloor heating. Both can work well, but each has strengths and weaknesses depending on the property, budget, and type of project.

Radiators

Radiators heat a room by warming the air around them. They are familiar, widely used, and generally easier to retrofit into existing homes.

Advantages of radiators

- Lower upfront installation cost in many cases
- Easier to replace or upgrade in existing systems
- Faster heat-up time
- Simple to zone room by room
- Well suited to many retrofit projects

Things to consider

- They take up wall space
- Heat can be less evenly distributed
- They often operate at higher water temperatures
- They may be less ideal for some low-temperature heating setups

Underfloor heating

Underfloor heating warms the room from the floor upwards. It spreads heat over a larger area and generally operates at lower temperatures.

Advantages of underfloor heating

- Even heat across the room
- More usable wall space
- Comfortable feel underfoot
- Can work well with heat pumps
- Hidden system with a clean finish

Things to consider

- Higher installation complexity
- Build-up height can be an issue
- Design and controls matter more
- Retrofitting can be more disruptive
- Response time may differ depending on floor build-up

Which is more efficient?

That depends on the system design and the property. Underfloor heating can be very efficient in well-insulated homes, especially when paired with low-temperature heat sources such as heat



pumps. Radiators can still perform very well, especially in existing homes where the system is already established and properly balanced.

Which is cheaper to install?

Radiators are often cheaper and easier to install in an existing property. Underfloor heating may cost more upfront, especially if floors need to be lifted or build-up needs careful planning.

Which is better for comfort?

Many people prefer the comfort of underfloor heating because the warmth is more evenly spread and there are fewer cold spots. Radiators can still provide excellent comfort, but the heat pattern is usually less even.

Best use cases

Radiators may suit:

- Existing homes
- Quick replacement projects
- Lower upfront budgets
- Rooms needing quick heat response

Underfloor heating may suit:

- New builds
- Extensions
- Major renovations
- Open-plan spaces
- Homes with heat pumps

Final thought

There is no universal winner. Radiators are practical, proven, and often more straightforward. Underfloor heating can offer a cleaner finish and better comfort, especially in the right build-up. The smart move is to choose the system that fits the property, the budget, and the way the space will be used.



