

## Choosing the Right Floor Finish for Underfloor Heating

*Why your floor covering matters more than many people realise*

Underfloor heating performance is affected not just by the heating system itself, but also by the floor finish placed above it. Some floor finishes allow heat to pass through more easily, while others can slow heat transfer and reduce efficiency.

### **Why floor finish matters**

The floor finish acts as the top layer between the heating system and the room. If that layer resists heat flow too much, the room may take longer to warm up and the system may need to work harder.

### **Floor finishes that often work well**

#### **Tile and stone**

These are among the most common and effective finishes for underfloor heating because they transfer heat well and provide a solid, durable surface.

#### **Engineered wood**

This can work well when it is suitable for underfloor heating and installed in line with the manufacturer's guidance.

#### **Vinyl and LVT**

Many vinyl and luxury vinyl tile products can be used with underfloor heating, but temperature limits and product suitability should always be checked.

#### **Laminate**

Some laminate products are compatible with underfloor heating, though the combined resistance of underlay and floor covering needs to be considered.

### **Floor finishes that need more caution**

#### **Solid timber**

Natural movement in solid timber means it may be less suitable than engineered wood in some heating applications.

#### **Thick carpet and underlay**

These can reduce heat transfer if the combined thermal resistance is too high.

### **Key things to check**

Before choosing a finish, look at:

- Manufacturer approval for underfloor heating
- Maximum floor surface temperature limits
- Thermal resistance of the floor build-up
- Installation method



- Expansion and movement requirements
- Adhesive compatibility where relevant

### **Common mistake**

A lot of attention goes into choosing the heating system, then the floor finish gets chosen later based on looks alone. That can be a costly mistake. A beautiful floor that strangles the heat output is not exactly peak project management.

### **Best approach**

Choose the floor finish as part of the full heating and floor build-up strategy. That means thinking about:

- The room use
- The heating system
- The build-up available
- The desired finish
- The performance target

### **Final thought**

The best floor finish for underfloor heating is one that balances appearance, practicality, and thermal performance. Always check compatibility early, not after the heating system has already been chosen.

