

What to Do Before Replacing Floors in a Renovation Project

Floor finishes often get the attention, but the base beneath them does the real work. Whether you are planning tiles, timber, vinyl, carpet, or laminate, the condition of the subfloor matters just as much as the final product.

Check what is already there

Start by identifying the existing floor construction. Is it concrete, timber, chipboard, suspended floorboards, a screed, or a mix of several materials? Renovation properties often contain patched areas, historic repairs, and different levels from room to room.

Look for movement and damage

Loose boards, cracked screeds, hollow spots, soft areas, rot, or uneven sections should be picked up before new finishes are installed. A nice new floor on top of a bad substrate is still a bad job, just with better photography.

Assess moisture properly

Moisture can affect adhesives, floor finishes, levelling compounds, timber products, and long-term performance. Ground floors, basements, old solid floors, and recently repaired areas should be assessed carefully before covering them up.

Check levels and thresholds

Renovation work often creates awkward floor level changes between rooms. Think ahead about transitions, door clearances, skirting details, appliances, and how the new floor build-up works with the rest of the property.

Consider insulation and underfloor heating

If the floor is being opened up, it may be a good time to improve thermal performance or install underfloor heating. This can affect the build-up, floor depth, finish selection, and programme, so it is worth planning early rather than adding it as an afterthought.

Match the preparation to the finish

Different floor finishes need different preparation standards. Tiles may need a stable, well-prepared base. Vinyl and LVT often require a very smooth surface. Timber flooring may need moisture control and a suitable underlay or board system. The finish you choose should influence the preparation strategy.

Allow for drying and curing

Levelling compounds, screeds, adhesives, primers, and repair products often need time before the next stage can go ahead. Rushing this part is a reliable way to create avoidable problems later.

Final thought

Floor replacement is not just about choosing a nice finish. It is about understanding the substrate, preparing it properly, and making sure the full floor build-up works for the property. Get that right and the finish stands a much better chance of lasting.

