

# HINTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

## Flooring Fundamentals

(NAPSA)—Upgrading the floors in your house can help you improve the look of your home while boosting its value.

So what's popular in flooring these days? Look for vibrant colors, plush textures, customized frosted tiles, exotic hardwoods, and rugs that are works of art in themselves. Stone is popular as well, as are “green” products including cork, bamboo and linoleum.

Fortunately, there's no need to be floored by all of your options. Try these tips from renowned interior designer Rebecca Cole, host of Discovery Home Channel's “Surprise by Design,” and spokesperson for the World Floor Covering Association (WFCA)—a group that offers unbiased floor covering information on all types of flooring coverings.

- **Make A Plan**—Flooring can be expensive and one mistake can ruin everything, so it pays to do some homework and have a plan. The Internet offers endless information that can be helpful in creating a flooring design scheme, choosing the right kind of flooring, and coming up with effective tools and ideas for working within a set budget. For instance, [www.wfca.org](http://www.wfca.org) lets users access a virtual design center complete with a room designer tool and a feature called “My Workbook” that allows users to design looks using different kinds of floor coverings—users can even save their plans and ideas. The site also has information on virtually every type of flooring, from tile to carpet, as well as tips on choosing a highly qualified flooring retailer.

- **Know Your Style**—You can



Photo of Virginia Vintage® Johns Island courtesy of Anderson Hardwood Floors.

also use [wfca.org](http://wfca.org) to access the “What I Like” tool. Users view a number of pictures of kitchens, bathrooms, accessories and decor, and click which styles they like best. The site then generates a list of flooring suggestions based on an individual's determined tastes.

- **Use Your Space**—Each space is unique and there are more choices today than ever before. The [wfca.org](http://wfca.org) Web site offers examples and solutions to specific problems. For instance, don't forget to plan for a threshold cover when transitioning from one room to another, especially if there are height changes. Also, a tip if you want to make a small space seem larger: Try installing tile or wood on the diagonal and select lighter colors that have a consistent texture that will visually expand the space.

- **Before You Buy**—In addition to helping you match your particular style with the flooring that best suits your taste and

needs, the site also offers specifics on the pros and cons of each flooring type. For example, if you're putting flooring in a high-traffic area—especially rooms used by active kids—look for easy-to-clean flooring, soft materials and surfaces with no hard edges. When using carpet, consider looped pile or tightly twisted textures with stain resistance. You may also want to check out durable carpets such as textured, frieze, Berber, cut or pattern. These styles will help disguise the appearance of footprints and, if it is an issue, some color palates even minimize the appearance of dirt. If you are in the market for hard surfaces, say for a bathroom, consider tile or slip-resistant vinyl flooring. Bamboo is also a good option as it is water resistant.

If you love the look of hardwood and/or stone but do not want to incur the expense of surfacing a whole room, try complementing just your front hall. This approach offers high impact resistance and elegance and adds value to your home all at a fraction of the cost of surfacing a whole room. The overall key is to make smart buying decisions and, at the same time, match your new floor to your decorating tastes.

For more information and a complete look at the latest flooring styles, or to find a WFCA retail member in your area, visit [www.wfca.org](http://www.wfca.org). The Web site provides a number of tools and resources that can help improve your floor shopping experience.