

Adhere to flooring instructions

(AP) — The thought of installing sheet-vinyl flooring can be intimidating, especially when you consider that one or two mistakes can ruin the whole sheet. The problem is compounded by the fact that few rooms are truly square, and they have obstacles and offsets to accommodate.

How do professional installers keep from making costly mistakes? When a room is complicated, a pro will make a paper pattern of the room and transfer that pattern onto the vinyl. As such, the paper becomes a one-of-a-kind template and every wobble and bubble, every offset and obstacle is factored in before cutting. As a matter of fact, the Armstrong flooring people have come up with a goof-proof installation kit that allows you to do just that.

The first thing to decide is whether you'll take up the existing flooring. If your floor has suffered water damage and dry rot, or could simply use a layer of underlayment to make it more uniform, then make those corrections before installing new vinyl. Otherwise, you can lay your new vinyl directly on top of your old.

There are two types of vinyl for this kind of installation. One requires gluing the entire floor, the other just the perimeter. If your existing flooring has an embossed surface pattern, you'll need to fill these depressions with an embossing leveler. Without it, the old floor's pattern will show through your new flooring.

And because resilient flooring is designed to repel just about everything, you'll also need to degrease and prep the surface with an etching solution and primer.

Highlights of the installation begins with floor preparation. Remove the baseboard shoe molding with a small prybar. If your room is a bathroom, you'll also need to take up the toilet. Any caulk along a tub or cabinet must be sliced away with a razor blade or blade scraper. Next, cut the surface glass on the old flooring with etching liquid. Rubber gloves must be used because the liquid is very caustic. Once the etching has dried, apply two coats of primer. The second coat should be at right angles to the first.

To make your paper template, lay the paper sheets around the perimeter of the room, then fill in the middle and tape all the sheets together. To hold the paper in place, cut 1-inch triangular slots every couple of feet and lay tape across the slots. To scribe the exact perimeter of the floor, insert the ballpoint pen into the roller disc that comes in the Armstrong kit, and trace around the room.

Once the outline is complete, roll up the paper and lay it over the vinyl. Draw a outline directly onto the vinyl. Install a hook-shaped blade in the kit's transfer tool and then cut the vinyl by drawing the blade along the outline. Apply vinyl adhesive to the floor with the kit's notched applicator. Cover only half the room at a time.

Lower the vinyl sheet onto the adhesive, then roll the surface smooth using a flooring roller or kitchen rolling pin. Seal around the entire perimeter of the room — and around any plumbing fixtures with latex tub-and-tile caulk.

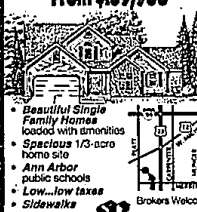
When laying vinyl next to carpet, use a metal tack strip. Nail the strip onto the vinyl and

bend it over the carpet. When laying vinyl next to hardwood flooring, buy a hardwood reducing strip and glue or nail it in place.

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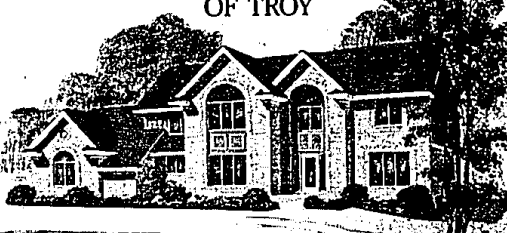
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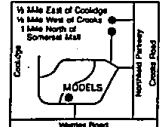
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