Pros and cons of linoleum flooring

Q: Could you please tell me how linoleum scores in the same categories: virtues, detractions, and resale?

A: You ask a great question, and one that is very relevant to the current trends of environmental responsibility. Linoleum has been around since about the time of the Civil War. It was very popular for flooring in this country up until the 1950s, when it began to be replaced by other hard-surface flooring such as sheet vinyl (made from PVC). It has seen a resurgence of popularity in recent years, due in large part to the renewable materials used in its manufacture.

Linoleum is primarily a combination of linseed oil, wood flour, cork powder, resins and ground limestone mixed with mineral pigments to provide color. In fact, the name comes from the Latin words "linum" (linseed) and "oleum" (oil). Linoleum is an extremely durable material, with a long-proven track record of reliability. It is very well suited for high-traffic areas, does not show nearly as many scratches or impact marks as most vinyl flooring, and is highly water-resistant.

It's a particularly good choice for kitchens, bathrooms, entries, laundry areas, and any other room subject to moisture and wear. Because of the nature of its blend of materials, linoleum also can be a very good choice for homes occupied by people with allergies. And as it gains again in popularity, you will find an increasing number of choices in colors and patterns.

On the downside, linoleum is a relatively hard and inflexible material in comparison to some types of sheet vinyl, and it is best suited to professional installation. For the do-it-yourselfer, there are linoleum tiles available that are easier to work with. There also can be some color variations, known as "blooming," in areas where the linoleum is covered and blocked from light, which is something worth checking with your dealer or installer about.

As far as resale value is concerned, it would have some of the same disadvantages as vinyl when comparing it to materials such as ceramic tile or hardwood. However, in my opinion it has a greater value than standard sheet vinyl, due to its "green" composition and hypoallergenic properties.

Q: I am getting ready to replace a Kenmore gas drop-in range with a Kenmore gas slide-in range. We kicked out the little strip of paneling or cabinet and had been told that the drop-in sits on a pedestal in the space, but when we removed that strip and could see under the range we could see that there is no pedestal and I have NO idea how the range is being held in that position. We are trying to prepare for when the installers come and aren't quite sure what to do now.

Can I tell whether the range is hardwired or not, before they come and pull the old one out? If I lift up the top of the stove I can see a plug of some sort back there, but I was not sure whether this is what everyone is referring to on the Web when they talk about the hard wire or plug. Is this even something that I need to worry about if I am replacing with another gas range?

A: A drop-in range is typically supported by a lip at the top of the range that rests on the countertop, and on a strip of wood at the bottom that extends between the two adjacent cabinets. Some types also have a pedestal or other support structure under the bottom as well, but that's not all that common. A slide-in range, on the other hand, sits on feet on the floor, and is adjusted so that the upper lip rests on or flush with the countertops.

A fully gas-powered range -- one that uses gas for both the cooktop and the oven -- will have a 120-volt plug that powers such things as the clock and any electronics. This will be a standard plug, and will not be hardwired in place (hardwired means it goes into a junction box and is connected with wire nuts inside the box, as opposed to having a plug).

Removing a drop-in range is mostly a matter of muscle power. Remove the oven door if possible (this makes the range a little lighter and a little easier to grip). Lift the range up and forward several inches, until you can reach the plug and the gas shutoff valve. Shut the gas, unplug the cord, and then lift the range the rest of the way out of the opening. This is definitely a two-person job, and you'll want to have something on the floor in front of the range to set it down on so you don't scratch the floor.

To replace the drop-in with a slide-in, you will need to remove the lower wooden support -- carefully so as not to damage the cabinets. Remove any other supports you might encounter. From there, it will be up to the installers to make sure that the gas line and electrical plug are in the right place for the new range, and to do any minor trimming and fitting if needed.

Source: Client Direct – Author: By Paul Bianchina
Compliments of the Tehama County Association of Realtors
8.28.09