



## Going Green with Hardwood Floors...

### What you need to know!

Your choice of flooring material will affect everyone in your home for decades and have substantial impacts on the environment at large. Adults, children and pets will walk on them, play on them, sit on them, wear them down and breathe anything they emit for many years.

Flooring and wall materials cover the largest square surface area in your home or office. Combine the impact that building materials have on human health with the quantity of flooring inside your home or office, and it's clear that flooring greatly influences the quality of your indoor environment.

### What to look for when considering "green" flooring...

Given the plethora of green flooring options, you don't have to sacrifice quality and aesthetics for a healthy, eco-friendly floor. For a home with kids and pets, Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)-certified wood is recommended.

FSC is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to promote environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable forest management around the world. Many brands offer rapidly renewable bamboo, a variety of hardwoods and cork – all durable and nontoxic floor coverings – that can contain FSC certification.

Finishes, binders, and the allergens that collect in some flooring materials are the major culprits that affect indoor air quality. With wood or bamboo, it is suggested that you choose pre-finished flooring with little or no groove between plank joints (these can be dirt magnets in a busy household). By choosing a factory-finished floor, you greatly reduce toxins and minimize off-gassing in your home. If you want to apply a topcoat for added protection in high-traffic or moisture-prone areas, it is recommended that you use a low-VOC, water-based finish (talk with a D-Lux Hardwood Floors expert about this option).

### Flooring options that withstand the test of time...

All wood and bamboo floors are likely to dent and scratch under typical use. Therefore the industry has developed a rating system that quantifies a wood species' resistance to denting, called Janka Ball, that ranges from American cherry (950 pounds) at the softer end, to Brazilian cherry (2,820 pounds) and strand-woven bamboo (3,000+ pounds) at the harder end.

Data aside, the true test is what works for your use and your aesthetic. For example a mother might want to throw her son's Tonka truck at a sample of tropical bamboo flooring to decide if it's the right floor for their home (which is unlikely).

If possible, test a sample of a species you are considering, not just for its tolerance to denting, but also for your tolerance to its post-dent appearance. You might decide on a softer wood floor, like cherry or pine, because you want a more rustic, distressed look that continues to gain character over time.

### Beware...

Regardless of the material you choose, when looking for a green flooring option follow the brands that are FSC-certified. As a builder or for commercial use, The U.S. Green Building Council only recognizes FSC certification as evidence of the sustainability of a non-recycled wood product.

To verify that a wood product is FSC-certified, demand the Chain of Custody certification and request an invoiced receipt detailing the FSC status of each product on an individual line-item basis. If the line-item doesn't say "FSC-certified," the material is not truly certified. Watch out for imitation, because some brands' products are FSC-certified and some are not.

If you have questions concerning the certification process or which brands carry FSC-certified products, contact the experts at D-Lux Hardwood Flooring.