

Installation:

Emerging Trend: Combining Decorative Wall Base and LVT/LVP Flooring on Walls to Create a Unique, Modern Look

By Jeremy Robertson, Fishman Flooring Solutions



Tarkett uses advanced technology to assist those customers who need to visualize color options and the unique look that can be achieved when the floor and walls of a room are blended together.

The only constant, it has been said, is change. That is certainly true when it comes to the flooring and flooring installation business. There is a steady stream of new and innovative products being introduced into the marketplace with architects, designers and others finding unique ways to bring value to end-users.

A case in point is the emerging trend to installing decorative (profiled) wall base in combination with luxury vinyl tile (LVT) or (LVP) plank on walls to create a unique look that cannot be achieved with traditional wallpaper and paint. The result is often a modern room where the floor blends with the wall.

Among the things fueling the trend is the growing desire of consumers to assert greater control over their personal and family health and wellness, which includes valuing environmentally-friendly products that are highly durable and do not require high levels of maintenance. Some products for walls are made entirely of natural

raw materials and LVT products, in general, are easily maintained and conducive to healthy lifestyles.

Range of Product Options

Forward looking product manufacturers are doing their best to fuel this emerging trend by giving the marketplace a variety of product options. On the wall base side, customers who want the wood-look and the flexibility can now select products to deal with wall imperfections and ease of maintenance.

Luxury vinyl manufacturers are now offering products being made specifically for use on walls. as a great alternative to traditional wall décor. Make sure to use a product with a warranty, an added level of protection if there are problems with the installation.

While LVT flooring products are increasingly used on walls, it is important to remember that many manufacturers do

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Tarkett's Lino Wall xf2

not yet provide a warranty for this type of use. Installers who install products that do not have warranties do so at their own risk. While most LVT products are not made to be installed on walls, there is very little risk if a quality LVT is used.

Wall Base Installation Challenges

For some, there is a learning curve to install profiled base, particularly with respect to corners. Installers must learn how to miter this type of base off at the corners as is done with wood. There are two tools available to installers to make the necessary angled cuts:

- A miter saw can be used to make corners when profiled base is used. It is important to go slowly when using a miter saw in order to avoid melting the ends of the base with a hot blade.
- A base cutter, which is a quick and efficient way to cut angles and get corners right.

Regular cove base can be purchased with preformed corners, saving both time and labor. If that is not the case, the cove base must be grooved or scored in order to bend the base to make the corner. This can be accomplished with either a knife or a hand groover designed for base. The groove or score should be no more than half the thickness of the material or the base will appear white when wrapped in the corner and it easily could split in two as well. Just like any skill, practice makes perfect.

Finally, it is critical to use the right amount of adhesive when installing wall base. This is best accomplished with a cove adhesive nozzle and cartridges or a trowel if bucket adhesive is used.

Applying LVT on Walls

When applying LVT on walls, there are three important

considerations. The first is ensuring that the wall is clean, sound and smooth. In some cases, sanding might be required to deal with any bumps or imperfections.

Second, determine whether the wall will require a latex primer, which depends on the type of paint or type of wall. A latex primer is recommended to avoid a bonding failure once the adhesive is applied.

The third consideration is the thickness of the LVT. An LVT that is too heavy can slide during installation. From experience and feedback, it appears that LVT that is 3 mm thick or less is the best option, along with the use of an aggressive, pressure-sensitive adhesive. Using a normal LVT trowel notch, such as 1/16 x 1/16 x 1/16 square notch on a porous substrate or 1/16 x 1/32 x 1/32 u-notch trowel for a non-porous substrate, will achieve excellent results. The adhesive should be allowed to flash before the LVT is laid into it. A hand roller can be used to push the LVT into the adhesive to initiate the bond.

New Revenue Stream for Installers

As the market increases for using LVT and planks on walls in combination with wall base, it can create a new revenue stream for professional flooring installers. The opportunity is there for the taking if installers focus on two things. First, understanding the range of LVT products, including planks, on the market today that are suitable for walls. Second, fine-tuning the skills required to install profiled base and cove base in corners, as well as LVT on walls.

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About the Author:

Jeremy Robertson is a territory business manager in Fishman Flooring Solutions' Carolinas Region. He can be reached at jeremy.robertson@fishman.com.