

What you need to know about Strip Vinyl Flooring

1 Is a click lock strip vinyl floor waterproof?

Simple answer is NO. The vinyl strips themselves are largely impervious to ingress of water, but the locking system is not.

In practice, the click lock, that holds the planks together, is very thin and not strong enough to withstand the movement on the floor panels, caused by temperature changes. So when the click lock opens, even just slightly, it allows any surface water and humidity moisture to pass through the joint to below the planks.

2 What happens when water gets under a vinyl floor?

If water gets under a vinyl floor, especially between the click lock or round the edges, it becomes trapped below the surface and trapped moisture is not only smelly, but it's highly dangerous to health.

This is especially the case when the moisture develops mold spores under the surface of the vinyl, which can then be inhaled and not only irritate the lungs but they make it harder to breath.

Young children, the elderly, pregnant women, and people with asthma or any sort of chronic lung disease, are at serious risk with such conditions. People whose immune systems have been compromised, such as AIDS sufferers or people receiving chemotherapy for cancer and indeed anyone who is very allergic, is at serious risk if spoor mold is present.

Even if you believe that mold doesn't bother you, there is still a risk to health because over time you may become allergic to mold and develop symptoms such as watery or itchy eyes; runny or stuffy nose; sneezing, coughing, wheezing or a rash. There is no way to predict who might develop an allergy to mold. In general, it is best to avoid the risk.

If you or your family suffer have any of these symptoms, you should consider very carefully what floor covering you install in your home, especially if there is any possibility of damp or moisture.

3 Is there any danger using Vinyl as it's made using toxic PVC as the base material?

There are a number of studies available on the Internet and one in particular where Swedish researchers found levels of certain phthalates were higher in the urine of babies that had PVC flooring on their bedroom floor, than wood laminate.

Past research has also linked PVC Vinyl floors coverings to increased levels of phthalates in household dust, which, as highlighted earlier, in turn is linked to chronic health conditions like allergies and asthma. One study even found that infants who lived in bedrooms with vinyl floors were twice as likely to have autism as infants with wood laminate flooring.

4 Is Vinyl a durable floor surface?

Vinyl is a relatively soft flexible surface which is easily damaged. Manufacturers of vinyl strip flooring often coat the surface finish to protect them from dirt and scuffs, but vinyl is very still very easily damaged when compared with products like wood laminate. (Even the cheaper wood laminates are much more durable than vinyl and difficult to damage).

5 Does strip vinyl flooring expand and contract?

Strip vinyl is a floating floor surface and although it is not materially affected by changes in humidity, it is certainly affected by changes in temperature. Exposure to strong sunlight will cause strip vinyl to expand more than normal, and when this happens the floor pushes against the edges of the room, taking up some of the side expansion.

Conversely when the floor cools back to normal (or maybe below normal on a cold night) the vinyl strip will contract. The problem is that because the contraction is not uniform gaps will start to appear at the locking joints leaving an ugly gap, but worse still the floor is no longer 100% water resistant, and water can easily get below the surface leading to the more serious health issues highlighted above.

6 Is glue down vinyl a better option than strip click lock vinyl?

Large sheet glue down vinyl is a much safer option, if one wants a secure water resistant floor. However, special attention must be given to the quality of the sub floor surface, which needs to be very flat and smooth, otherwise every dent and imperfection in the sub floor will be reflected in the finished surface of the floor. Equally glue down sheet floor surfaces, if damaged, cannot be as easily repaired as one can with a strip floor. So there are pros and cons.

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