

Can ceramic or vinyl tiles be put over linoleum?

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Two viewers have linoleum tile floors. Jerry from Regina, Saskatchewan wants to put ceramic tiles over top while Roni from Bellevue, Alberta would like to cover them with vinyl. Any potential problems?

In both cases the existing tiles must be stuck down solidly to the floor. And in both cases you must clean off any wax, as nothing will stick to wax.

If the tiles are older than 1982 they could possibly have asbestos in them and you should avoid creating any dust. So to give the glue a bite, take a knife and score the tiles deeply, but not enough to create dust. If the floor is more recent than 1982 there is no chance it will have any asbestos, so you sand the tiles to take off the shine and give the glue a bite. The easiest is to use a belt sander with 60 or 80 grit paper.

One question about vinyl was: will the colour from the linoleum bleed through the vinyl floor? No. The colours in linoleum are very solid and they stay put. You must, however, worry about any spaces between tiles or other uneven parts of the floor as they will eventually show through the vinyl flooring. Use a cement-based floor leveler to fill any cracks. Use pre-glued vinyl tiles or standard gluing procedures for sheet vinyl.

For the ceramic tiles, ask the dealer who is selling you the tiles to give you an appropriate adhesive to match both the linoleum base and the ceramic tiles. One nice thing about installing the ceramic tiles is that you don't have to fill in the little cracks -- the adhesive will do that for you.

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