

Floor Tiles that drain

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I went to the store and bought a box of really nifty 100 percent recycled vinyl interlocking floor tiles, the kind that stand up above a concrete floor and let the water drain through and under. I needed them to keep boxes off of a basement floor where there was occasional moisture -- and I ended up making myself a floor mat for standing at the shop bench too. But before I was even finished putting them together for my floor, I found myself standing there staring at the unfolded cardboard box that they came in.

This was one of the most complicated boxes I have ever seen, with tabs all over the place and windows and hidden pockets and... So I began to ask myself: What kind of a mind thinks up these boxes, and actually designs the cuts? So given the power of television, I called the company and arranged to take our cameras into the box design company to see just how it is done.

When I was in school and we did this kind of folding stuff with sheet metal, we did all of our trial-and-error with paper and razor blades. Not any more. You still need a draftsman, but now they are drafting inside the computer, and when they want to test a design, they have the 3D computer program fold it all up for them. And then if they want to test a box, they simply tell the cutting table to cut out a real box. I discovered there's almost no more mystery -- once I got on the inside.

By the way, the tiles are really great. You can roll them up, or unhook them and box them away. You can cut them however you like. Just about anyplace you want a draining soft floor (shop, garage, basement, boat, swimming pool) you could use these tiles really well. They were called Enviro-Tiles when I first wrote this entry. Now they are called Multy-Tiles. A bit harder to find in 2014 but I did find them at Home Depot.

I also use them extensively in the basement to keep boxes off of the concrete, avoiding moisture accumulation in the cardboard. I even put them on cold walls where I don't want things to touch the wall -- like storage spaces or the closet at the main entrance that has one very cold wall and wet coats! I loose 3/8" of closet space and avoid all kind of mold problems.

Oh, sometimes they are hard to find at the hardware store. For some reason they don't seem to stock them with the rugs where I would expect, but more often with the basement products. Ask before deciding that they don't carry them as most renovation centres do carry them.

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