

HARD SURFACES



CERAMIC & PORCELAIN

Tiles provide you with a huge variety of patterns and colours that can create different effects depending on their configuration. Highly elaborate geometric patterned floors are synonymous with the generous proportions of Victorian and Edwardian homes and are ideal for adding a period feel – try a black and white chequerboard design with a decorative border in the kitchen, bathroom, hall or conservatory. Or for a bohemian look, opt for Mediterranean-style encaustic tiles – their muted shades of colour and natural patina will complement the pared-back charm of uneven walls and imperfections in older country properties. For a cost-effective and original look, create a patchwork of patterned tiles laid randomly – it's a great way to use stock ends of tiles from high-street retailers and would suit a plain scullery or industrial-style kitchen.

- Lay tiles on a subfloor that is level, structurally sound, clean and dry; preparation is key for best results.
- Always ensure you order at least ten per cent more than the surface area of the floor to allow for wastage (you will need to allow even more if you are using larger tiles or going for more decoratively patterned layouts).



WOOD

The warm tones and textural character of wood are a natural fit with a country interior. They may be a cost-effective option, too, if your original floorboards are in good condition. The current trend is for a 'distressed' aesthetic that retains the wear and tear, patina of paint and extreme weathering of the boards, but if you prefer a cleaner look, sand back and finish with wax or varnish. Alternatively, floor paint can enhance a room and a painted floor also allows for some creative stencilling. Engineered flooring provides a contemporary feel – for a modern Scandi country look, opt for wide boards in limed oak or maple, while if your home is an elegant period property, you can add sophistication with beautiful herringbone parquet. Hardwearing porcelain tiles are also now available that mimic distressed wooden boards but are more resilient (seen here on near right).

- Moisture causes wood to swell and warp, so avoid using it in rooms with high humidity levels such as bathrooms. Unless you can fit an extractor fan, keep the space well-ventilated and be prepared to mop up spills.
- Search salvage or reclamation yards to source replacement flooring matching the period of your home such as wide oak boards, English elm, pitch pine or herringbone parquet.

