



BACKGROUND INFORMATION
Use at Will
July 2005

Media Contact: Nancy Deptolla
262/ 236-4175
nbdeptolla@sbcglobal.net

Locate a Dealer: 866/ 976-6374
Website: www.dricore.com

Why Most Finished Basements Don't Have Wood Subfloors

Go into any finished basement -- be it a modest rec room in a 1960s ranch or a posh home theatre in brand new 5,000 sq. ft. suburban manor house -- in virtually every case, the finished floor will have been installed directly on top of the concrete. No matter what the finished floor material, the surface underfoot feels cold and hard.

Most people don't like it, but they aren't aware of any other options or consider them too expensive or otherwise undesirable.

Installing a Conventional Subfloor Is a Lot of Work

One solution is to lay a subfloor. But laying a subfloor with conventional construction methods is complex and time-consuming. Most contractors don't offer it to their clients, and as a do-it-yourself project it is complex and time consuming. Consider what's required:

First you'll need to go shopping. On the list will be 4' x 8' sheets of ½" plywood, pressure-treated 2" x 4" "sleepers," construction adhesive, boxes of special fasteners to anchor the sleepers into the concrete, sheets of rigid foam insulation, large rolls of polyethylene sheeting to use as a vapor barrier, rolls of special tape to seal the seams of the vapor barrier together, boxes of wood screws to attach the plywood to the sleepers, and wood glue to fasten the tongue and groove plywood seams together.

Gather the tools -- hammer, circular saw, power drill or powder-actuated nail driver, tape measure, level, chalk line and stapler -- and carry everything -- including those big sheets of plywood and the 2 x 4's -- down the basement stairs.

More...

Page 2/ Why Basements Don't Have Wood Subfloors

Now -- finally -- you are ready to begin. You'll need to lay out the "sleepers" 16 inches apart and fasten them to the concrete with a combination of construction adhesive and concrete nails or screws. (Some contractors dislike this approach because driving fasteners into the concrete can crack the floor and allow even more moisture or worse, radon gas, to enter the basement.)

Next, cut the foam insulation to fit and insert in the spaces between the 2 x 4's. Unroll the moisture barrier and staple it to the 2 x 4's. (Some handymen prefer to lay down the vapor barrier first, to keep the 2 x 4's from coming into contact with the damp concrete. The vapor barrier is slippery and you'll need to smooth it out and hold it in position while you lay out the 2 x 4's and fasten them.)

Finally you'll install the plywood -- arranging the sheets, measuring and cutting as needed, gluing the tongue and groove seams and fastening them to the 2 x 4's with nails or screws. The finished subfloor could reduce basement headroom by 2-1/4 to 5 inches.

No wonder then that almost no one installs conventional wood subfloors on concrete. It is a multi-step, time-consuming process that requires special tools and incurs the risk to damaging the concrete floor underneath. Installing the components directly on the concrete also traps moisture that could lead to mold growth and musty odors.

Why a DRICore® Subfloor is the Better Choice

Contrast that to the DRICore modular subfloor system, which can be installed in less than half the time. The DRICore system consists of easy-to-handle 2' x 2' engineered wood panels bonded to a rigid moisture-resistant polyethylene sheet with a molded-in grid on the underside. The panels are press-fit together without nails or glue to create a "floating" floor. In most applications, only minimal anchoring to the concrete is required.

The grid raises the panel off the concrete and creates an airspace between the concrete and the wood subfloor that acts as a thermal break to prevent transmission of cold from the concrete. The space permits air circulation, which helps dry up condensation on the concrete and allows it to breathe. The space also keeps the wood core from coming into contact with the damp concrete. The panels have a comfortable, resilient feel and a thin profile for minimal impact on precious basement headroom.