



FEATURE MATERIAL
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A DRIcore® Subfloor Creates First-Class Living Space in Kansas City Daylight Basement

Many aging baby boomers are downsizing from sprawling family homes to more compact, maintenance-free, single family "villas" with integral lower level living spaces.

The only disadvantage to this arrangement is that while new construction methods and materials reduce the dampness in basements, even a carpet and pad can't completely disguise the pervasive chill and unforgiving surface of a concrete floor.

However, one Kansas City area couple found a solution with DRIcore®, an modular wood subfloor that was installed over the concrete and helped make their "daylight basement" as comfortable as the main floor of their new villa. Here's their story:

A Basement is a Basement is a Basement, Unless...

The couple, both professionals, accustomed to loads of living space and every comfort amenity -- had to balance their own stringent requirements for their new home with the options available to them in the development where they found their "dream" lot.

A key concern was that more than one third of the living space -- including a daughter's bedroom and bath, plus a spacious family room complete with baby grand piano and pool table -- would be below grade. The wife was worried about it being cold and uninviting.

Recalling her first visit to the lower level of the builder's model, the wife said, "It was beautiful, but it was still a basement. I kept thinking it has always felt cold in those homes and condos where some or all of the living space was on concrete."

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The couple assumed that their only option was to use thick carpet over extra thick padding. But that was before they heard about DRICore's modular subfloor system.

The DRICore Solution

"I read everything I could on DRICore's Web site and immediately thought 'This will work,'" said the wife.

DRICore consists of lightweight, 2' x 2' engineered wood panels bonded to a polyethylene moisture barrier with molded-in "cleats" that raise the panels off the floor to help manage basement moisture. The panels are joined together with a simple tongue-and-groove system. Because the panels expand and contract uniformly on all sides with seasonal changes in humidity, the subfloor won't warp or buckle.

"I liked the idea of the moisture barrier and an insulating air space between the concrete and the surface we'd be walking on," the wife said. "It would warm up the floor and keep any dampness away from the carpet and the furniture. Humidity isn't good for pianos and I was very concerned because the only place we'd have room for our piano was on the lower level."

"DRICore is a wood product so I knew it would have some 'give' and be more comfortable to walk on, too," she said.

Richard Teel, project manager for the builder, Tom French Construction Inc., also investigated DRICore and agreed that the installation looked simple. The decision was made to install DRICore throughout the 1,200 sq. ft. finished space on the lower level. The only exception was the bath, which was to have ceramic tile.

The fact that a variety of finish floors could be installed over DRICore also was a plus. "We planned to carpet most of the space," the wife said. "But we wanted to install oak flooring in the refreshment center/kitchenette to match the finish of the wood flooring on the main level. We were delighted to learn that we could do both."

The DRICore was installed after the villa's lower level was drywalled. It took the two-man crew just one full day to install the DRICore throughout the 1,200 sq. ft. space. "Every piece was uniform, and the installation went very smoothly," Teel said.

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The Finished Project

Recounting the couple's efforts to make the lower level more like the main floor, the wife said, "We increased the size of the windows, created an open staircase to the lower level and we have 9-foot ceilings, which lessens the impression that this is a basement. But putting in the DRICore is what really changed my whole perception of that space."

"Everyone who was in the house while it was under construction was very interested in the DRICore floor," she said. "And even now that the space is carpeted, when anyone comes into our lower level, they know there's something different. The floor has a good feel when you step on it. It was well worth the extra expense."

"The DRICore floor definitely is warmer and it has a little bit of 'give' to it so it feels more like a first floor," Teel said. "When we have a customer who is concerned about a warm floor, DRICore is something I'd like to offer to them."

The Bottom Line - An Affordable, Easy-to-Use Alternative

- **DRICore is a floating subfloor that does not require complex framing or anchoring sleepers to the concrete floor.** The heart of the DRICore system is engineered wood panels that are bonded to a polyethylene moisture barrier with molded-in cleats that raise the panels off the floor. The panels - in an easy-to-handle 2' x 2' size - are set down on the concrete floor and joined to one another with a simple tongue-and-groove system.
- **DRICore** accepts a variety of finish floor options including carpet, resilient vinyl, wood-look laminates and engineered hardwoods.
- **Total cost for DRICore and its installation in this 1,200 sq. ft lower level was approximately \$2,140 --** \$1,500 for the DRICore panels (about \$1.25 per sq. ft.) and about \$640 for the two-man crew who completed the installation in one eight-hour day.
- **Installing the DRICore floor accounted for a little more than one half of one percent of the total cost of the home,** or 67 cents of the \$112.97 per square foot cost.