

**Cork**

Cork – used for flooring and wall finishes – is durable and comes from sustainably managed forests. Bark is carefully stripped from the trunks of the cork oak at approximately nine year intervals (without damaging the tree) and ground into granules. The granules are then compressed with special glues at high pressures and temperatures into sheets, planks and tiles.

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Extraction and manufacture	
<b>Impact of extraction</b>	Cork is sourced from sustainably managed trees, often in a natural park environment.
<b>Energy use</b>	Embodied energy data is not available.
<b>By-products/emissions</b>	Cork is a natural product. Binders used in reconstituted cork and factory-applied finishes may give off VOC emissions.
Sourcing	
<b>Material sources</b>	Cork products are imported typically from Spain and Portugal.
<b>Availability</b>	Cork is readily available in a range of thicknesses and factory-applied finishes.
<b>Cost</b>	Up-front costs are relatively high, both for the cork products and for the finishes used with them.
<b>Transport to site</b>	Cork is relatively light to transport.
Construction/installation	
<b>Health and safety during construction/installation</b>	Cork is hypoallergenic. However, dust is a problem when sanding and recoating. Coatings and adhesives may release volatile compounds.
<b>Ease of construction/installation</b>	Cork is easy to install.
<b>Adaptability</b>	Cork that is adhered to a substrate will be difficult to re-use.
Performance	
<b>Health and safety during life of building</b>	Adhesives and coatings may emit volatile compounds after installation – select low VOC rates adhesives and coatings.
<b>Structural capability</b>	Nil
<b>Durability*</b>	25+ years in domestic use.
<b>Maintenance rating</b>	Cork may be left unfinished in dry areas (they will require a light sand every 5 -6 years). Cork should be sealed in wet areas and high wear areas (and where spills are likely), in which case it will require sanding and recoating every 7-10 years.
<b>Moisture resistance</b>	Good – cork is impermeable.
<b>Rot, mould and corrosion</b>	Cork is resistant to rot and moulds.

<b>Thermal performance</b>	Cork assists with thermal insulation but is not part of Building Code compliance for thermal insulation of floors. It has no thermal mass.
<b>Sound insulation</b>	Cork adds a level of noise reduction – the amount depends on thickness and wall or floor construction.
<b>Fire performance</b>	Cork won't burn.
<b>Waste disposal/recycling/re-use</b>	
<b>Re-use</b>	Cork that has been adhered to a substrate will be difficult to remove intact.
<b>Recycling</b>	Cork can be recycled if a facility exists to accept it.
<b>Waste disposal</b>	Cork is a natural product which will slowly decompose.

\* with normal maintenance