



Flooring Options

garagecoatings.com

A beautiful floor provides a quality, easy to keep clean work surface and ups home resale value as well.

The words, “Honey, we need to clean the garage” is possibly the single-most feared request of any married man.

The boxes of stuff he promises to take to Goodwill, sell at a garage sale, and my personal favorite, “we’re going to need that someday,” sit forgotten, stacked in the garage, while the expensive SUV and MINI Cooper sit in the driveway, exposed to the elements.

Like going to the dentist, dealing with garage clutter is not something many of us look forward to. In fact, the American garage has become such a disaster that it has spawned an entire industry - Garage Flooring and Storage. The garage is the second largest space in our homes, and yet, we use it like as an off-site rental storage facility.

Having started on our own garage renovation with walls and cabinetry a few years ago, MC2 is going forward with a GarageWorks™ section in the hope of developing this as part of our editorial package across paper and e-zine, and in our GoMotoring.com site. It is our plan to grow the content into GarageWorks™, our second e-magazine, using our GarageWorks.com™ site. We’ll be showcasing Justin Krauss, a long-time garage industry insider, and MC2 contributing editor, Jeff Zurschmeide, who recently wrote a definitive book on building your own car-guy garage (see our review of Jeff’s book on page 14).

Where To Start

If you’re building a new home or remodeling (or just cleaning) your old one, the floor is obviously the best place

to start. Unfinished concrete is cold, dirty, stains easily, and does not provide the finished look and feel that an area occupying as much as 20 percent of our home deserves.

The first decision to make when it comes to your garage floor is do you wish to coat the floor with a liquid coating or do you want to cover it with one of the many garage floor coverings that are available? This decision goes hand-in-hand with the second decision. Are you going to do this project yourself or are you going to pay an installer?

At the risk of alienating some in the industry, even perhaps some of the vendors I work with day in and day out; I would propose that if you choose to use a coating such as an epoxy for your garage floor you should hire a professional and have the job properly done.

Like you, I have walked into the local big box retail store and seen the display posters of an attractive garage allegedly created by a \$39.95 DIY coating in a can. While tempting, years of experience tell me that if you manage to do the application properly you are likely going to fight hot tire lifting in the future. In the hot southwest, tires can sometimes stretch or “lift” inexpensive epoxy applications as they’re rarely applied thick enough to be lasting or in a professional manner.

The most important part of any epoxy floor is surface preparation and knowing the concrete moisture, with some floors having too high a moisture content for epoxy to be used. (We know this from our publisher’s garage.) If you decide to choose an epoxy garage floor, choose a high solids epoxy with an aliphatic urethane topcoat. Take your time

by Justin Krauss
with MC2 Staff

and research the better products on the market. Then, hire a professional to acid etch and/or mechanically grind your garage floor; clean it and properly install the garage floor epoxy.

If you really want something effective, hire a pro to polish your concrete floor, and then apply a sealant. Above that cost is Cyanoacrylate (usually grey) coating as used in some auto repair shops, and above that, the epoxy and Polyurea coatings that look as though you used kitchen-quality countertops for your garage flooring.

At Garage Coatings.com they have various coatings that have a granite-like appearance due to flakes embedded, with prices for a 2-car garage just over \$500 for their system. They tell us the key to a professional installation is the concrete floor preparation, and surface coating, as the DIY-type coating kits from the big box stores (about \$50 for a 1-MINI garage) have a likelihood of lifting when hot tires are turned on them, and that creates a real mess!

If you are a DIYer and are looking for a quality, attractive way to finish your garage floor, an excellent choice is a quality garage floor mat, such as the ones produced by Better Life Technology (BLT). They can be installed over the entire garage floor or just over a portion of it. The best known of the floormat companies, BLT, is a privately-held, family company in Emporia, KS., with mats in 10-foot widths (not something the foreign-made garage mats have successfully mastered as yet) in several sizes, patterns and colors. They can be loosely laid or adhered to the concrete floor for a permanent installation.

Many racing fans and garage enthusiasts are looking for something a little more exciting in their garage flooring. Garage floor tiles offer the ability to create your own custom garage floor and can usually be installed in under a day. American made products such as Motor Mat by Sport Court, Swisstrax, BLT Raceday PVC Tiles, and Racedeck, offer a quality garage flooring solutions. Norsk-Stor, while not an American Made product, has withstood the test of time and provides an alternative to the traditional garage floor tile. Recently, BLT launched a roll-out product that looks like floor tile, but is offered in rolls, much like their well-known garage flooring.

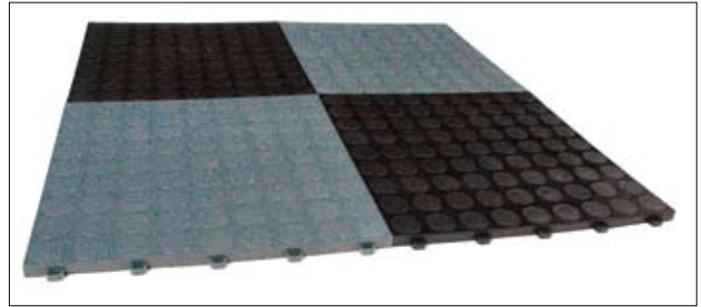
Similar, But Different

Garage floor mats and garage floor tiles are similar in a couple of respects. They can usually be installed in under a day and without the preparation, mess or smell of a garage floor epoxy. They are both available as DIY or professionally installed products, and they both offer a considerable range of patterns, styles, colors and prices. Garage floor tiles interlock every 12- to 24-inches, while garage floor mats are usually limited to one or two seams over the entire garage. Some manufacturers argue that tiles allow moisture to evaporate from underneath while garage floor mats could potentially trap it. The flip side of that argument is that seamless PVC flooring has been used in the commercial and even marine industry for years with few if any reports of trapped moisture. Proponents of garage floor mats claim that their product provides a quieter and more forgiving floor, while tile manufacturers point out that a variety of underlayments can be used to quiet the floor and provide additional cushion. Then there's the obvious: interlocking floor tiles swallow small screws and nuts. Floor mats don't.

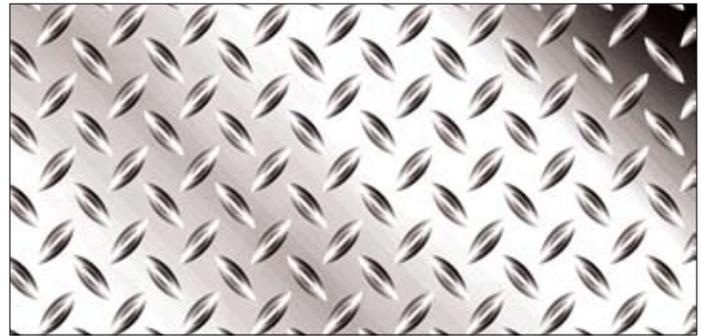
Better Life Technology PVC Peel and Stick garage floor tiles seem to provide the benefits of both products, the custom garage floor look that a tile offers, with the performance of a fully-adhered PVC product that is actually thicker than the garage floor mats. Norsk-Stor also offers a PVC product. Their product is a floating floor constructed of PVC. It features a puzzle-like locking mechanism and claims to be quieter and better engineered than some polypropylene tiles.

The best answer is to take your time and research the product that best fits your needs. While there are some in this industry who take a one-size-fits-all approach to garage flooring, it has been our experience that the best garage floor is a matter of what works best for you. **MCG**

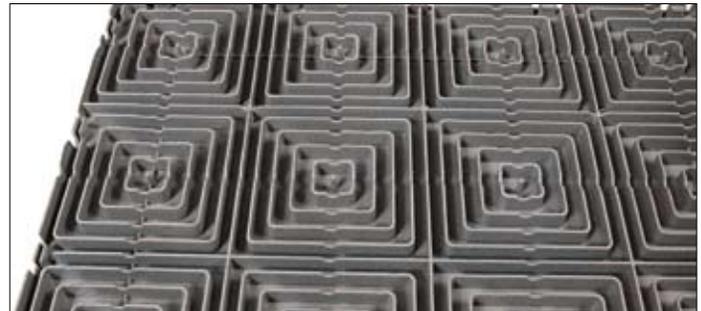
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Garage tiles interlock using various methods, this coin-patterned tile uses tabs to lock to one another. (photos: garageflooringllc.com)



This anti-skid pattern is similar to that used on plate steel. It can be teamed with durable metal cabinets of the same style.



The tile's underside have a lot of support built into them, as shown. The design also keeps moisture from collecting under the tile's surface by allowing it to evaporate.



Tile colors can be mixed and matched to create an attractive and unique floor covering to fit your personal tastes.

Justin Krauss is one of the owners of Garage Flooring, LLC and has over a decade of experience in the garage flooring and storage industry. Prior to Garage Flooring, LLC, he created one of the largest online distributors of garage flooring and storage. For more information on Garage Flooring LLC visit: www.garageflooringllc.com or call 800-956-4301.