

Can Radiant Heat Be Installed Under Your Existing Floor?

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Radiant heat is an excellent option for heating your house. The benefits come in three significant ways: greater comfort, annual energy savings, and ease of installation. But is it easy to

install radiant heat existing [wood floor](#)

<https://www.acecoloradosprings.com/departments/>? We answer that central question below.

First, let's look at how radiant heat works.

Radiant heating means that a hot element, either electric and hydronic, is installed under the floor. Usually, the element is thin slats or tubing and may involve a barrier mat. It's easy to install, providing you know what type of heating element you need. We'll talk about that below.

Electric radiant heat consists of heated wires installed in the floor that radiate heat upward; this is the most commonly used type for single, smaller rooms, especially bathrooms <http://www.macwoods.com/pros-cons-heated-flooring-bathroom>.

Hydronic radiant heating involves heated water being pushed through tubes under the floor. This method can be even more energy efficient than the electric kind, so it is usually installed in new houses from the start.

Is it in-floor heating energy and cost efficient?

You know all the energy that it takes to force or blow air into a room? It just isn't needed for radiant floor heating, so yes, it's very energy efficient. Furthermore, our feet are more sensitive to temperature so heat through the floor will warm us up even if the air is cold in the house. So it'll take a lot less energy and time to maintain a specific temperature on the floor, and you'll feel plenty cozy.

[Radiant heating is more efficient than forced-air heaters](#)

<https://blackdiamondtoday.com/article/comparing-forced-air-heating-radiant-options> because energy isn't wasted blowing through the ducts — this is a boon for people with allergies, too, because there aren't dust particles being flung around the room. Even better is that radiant heat can run off different energy sources like gas, oil, solar, and wood — or even a combination of those. Radiant heating systems that are paired with [energy efficient thermostats](#)

<http://www.acehardware.com/family/index.jsp?categoryId=1260927&sr=1&origkw=thermostat>

can take you even further in your money saving efforts.

So, can you install radiant heat under an existing floor?

If you can access your floor joists from under your house, then yes, you can install radiant heating under a floor <http://www.macwoods.com/radiant-heating-wood-floors> already in place. Under-joist radiant heating typically takes two forms: electric and hydronic. But with both methods, your radiant heat will be more beneficial when you have sound insulation and a reliable radiant product in place.

Which type of radiant heating is best for your floors?

For smaller rooms, radiant heat existing wood floor will be best served with electric heat. But for larger buildings with big-footprint rooms, you'll want to look into hydronic radiant heating. In the case of large rooms, electric radiant heating could end up being less energy-efficient than forced-air because of the spread a large space. Consider also whether you'll be moving from room-to-room frequently, or staying put in mostly one place, like your living room.

Facts to consider with electric and hydronic systems:

Under-joist radiant heating in most electric systems consists of thin panels that are installed up between the floor joists. Electric mat radiant heat can also be used, and it's great for installing between the subfloor and the actual floor.

Hydronic radiant heat, which runs off your home's water heater, consists of tubes installed under the subfloor. Usually, a radiant barrier is put below the tubes to ensure that the heat remains in the living space. The downside of this method is that if your home is enormous – like 3,000 square feet or more – you'll want to talk to a contractor to see if a boiler should replace your water heater. Can the age and size of your water handle the load (solar is another option to consider in this case)?

Final Thoughts

Both hydronic and electric radiant heating methods are excellent for existing flooring, but you'll want to take into consideration your room size and flow of living. There's no question radiant heat is a great option for homeowners (provided you understand your options) and in most cases, very energy-friendly! Radiant heating is an investment worth considering if you're going to be in your home for any length of time.

Tags: [radiant heat](#)