

NEW BRUNSWICK FLOORING

Materials Comparison

Comparing flooring types, brands, durability ratings,
and suitability for different rooms and NB climate
conditions

15 Expert Answers from Floor IQ

newbrunswickflooring.com/construction-brain

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Is hardwood or LVP a better investment for a New Brunswick home?

For most New Brunswick homes, engineered hardwood is the best overall investment, but LVP delivers better value dollar-for-dollar if you are prioritizing durability and low maintenance in NB's challenging Maritime climate. The answer depends on your budget, how long you plan to stay in the home, and whether you are willing to manage indoor humidity year-round.

Hardwood (solid or engineered) remains the gold standard for home value in the NB real estate market. Buyers in Fredericton, Moncton, and Saint John consistently pay more for homes with genuine hardwood floors. Solid hardwood runs \$8-\$14/sq ft fully installed in New Brunswick, while engineered hardwood comes in at \$6-\$14/sq ft fully installed. The investment advantage of hardwood is longevity — solid hardwood can be refinished 4-6 times over a 50-100 year lifespan, and engineered hardwood 1-3 times depending on wear layer thickness. Each refinishing cycle costs \$3-\$6/sq ft, far less than full replacement, effectively resetting the clock on your floor's appearance.

However, hardwood in NB demands ongoing humidity management. You will need to run a humidifier during the October-April heating season (maintaining 35-45% RH) and a dehumidifier or AC in summer to stay below 55-60% RH. Without this, NB's 30-50% annual humidity swing causes visible gapping in winter and potential cupping in summer, degrading both the appearance and value of your investment. Coastal NB homes near Saint John, Shediac, or the Bay of Fundy face even greater humidity challenges that make solid hardwood particularly risky.

LVP (SPC or WPC core) costs \$5-\$12/sq ft fully installed — slightly less than mid-range hardwood. Its investment advantage is zero sensitivity to NB's moisture conditions. LVP will not gap, cup, warp, or require humidity management. It is 100% waterproof, making it suitable for every room including basements and bathrooms where hardwood cannot go. Premium brands like COREtec, Mannington Adura, and Shaw Floorte offer remarkably realistic wood visuals that satisfy most homeowners. The downside is a 15-25 year lifespan with no refinishing option — when LVP wears out, it must be fully replaced.

The Math on a Typical NB Home

For a 1,000 sq ft main floor, here is how the numbers compare over 30 years. **Engineered hardwood** at \$10/sq ft installed (\$10,000) plus one refinishing at \$4/sq ft (\$4,000) totals roughly \$14,000. **Quality LVP** at \$7/sq ft installed (\$7,000) replaced once at the 20-year mark (\$7,000) totals roughly \$14,000. The lifetime costs are remarkably similar, but hardwood adds more measurable resale value.

The practical NB recommendation is to use engineered hardwood on main living floors where you can control humidity and where buyers will see and value it, and LVP in basements, bathrooms, kitchens, and any room with

direct moisture exposure. This mixed approach gives you the resale appeal of hardwood where it matters most while protecting against NB's moisture challenges in the rooms where they are most severe. For a typical NB home, this combined strategy runs \$8,000-\$15,000 for the main floor and \$3,500-\$7,000 for secondary areas.

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Q2

What is the difference between solid and engineered hardwood for NB conditions?

The fundamental difference is construction: solid hardwood is a single piece of wood (typically 3/4 inch thick), while engineered hardwood is a real wood wear layer bonded to multiple plywood or HDF layers beneath. This construction difference makes engineered hardwood dramatically more dimensionally stable in New Brunswick's Maritime climate — and that stability is the single most important factor for flooring performance in this province.

Solid hardwood expands and contracts as a single mass in response to humidity changes. In NB, where indoor relative humidity can swing from 20-30% in winter (forced-air heating) to 60-65% in summer (Maritime humidity), solid hardwood moves significantly across its width. A typical 3-1/4 inch red oak plank can expand or contract by 1-2mm seasonally. Across a 12-foot room, that cumulative movement creates visible winter gaps between planks and risks summer cupping or buckling if expansion gaps are insufficient. Solid hardwood demands nail-down installation over a wood subfloor — it cannot be installed over concrete and should never go below grade (basements). In the NB market, solid hardwood costs \$5-\$8/sq ft for materials (domestic species like oak, maple, birch) plus \$3-\$6/sq ft for professional nail-down installation, totalling \$8-\$14/sq ft fully installed.

Engineered hardwood resists humidity-driven movement because its cross-layered plywood core constrains the wood's natural expansion. Each layer is oriented perpendicular to the next, meaning the wood pulls against itself rather than moving freely. In NB conditions, engineered hardwood shows 50-70% less seasonal movement than solid, which means dramatically less gapping in winter and virtually no cupping risk in summer when paired with basic humidity management. Engineered can be installed floating, glued down, or nailed down — and crucially, it can be glued directly to concrete slabs, making it the only real hardwood option for NB basements (though I would still recommend LVP below grade for maximum moisture protection). Materials run \$4-\$9/sq ft with installation at \$2-\$5/sq ft, totalling \$6-\$14/sq ft fully installed.

Refinishing and Longevity

Solid hardwood's greatest advantage is refinishing potential. At 3/4 inch thick with roughly 5mm of usable wood above the tongue, solid hardwood can be sanded and refinished 4-6 times over its lifespan — potentially lasting 75-100 years in an NB home with proper humidity control. Each refinishing costs \$3-\$6/sq ft in New Brunswick and completely restores the floor's appearance.

Engineered hardwood's refinishing potential depends entirely on its wear layer thickness. Budget products with a 1-2mm veneer cannot be meaningfully refinished. Mid-range products with a 3-4mm wear layer allow 1-2 light sandings. Premium engineered with a 5-6mm wear layer can be refinished 2-3 times, approaching solid hardwood's longevity. When shopping for engineered hardwood in NB, invest in at least a 3mm wear layer — it is worth the premium for a product you can maintain long-term.

For most New Brunswick homes, engineered hardwood is the smarter choice. It handles the Maritime humidity swings that punish solid hardwood, offers flexible installation methods including over concrete, and premium products with thick wear layers deliver comparable longevity. Reserve solid hardwood for heritage restorations or homes with excellent year-round humidity control, and always maintain 35-55% indoor RH regardless of which product you choose.

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Q3

Laminate vs LVP — which is better for a New Brunswick home with kids and pets?

LVP (luxury vinyl plank) is the clear winner for New Brunswick homes with kids and pets — it is waterproof, softer underfoot, quieter, and more scratch-resistant than laminate, all while handling NB's Maritime moisture conditions without risk of core swelling. If you are choosing between these two for a busy family home, LVP should be your default unless budget is the single deciding factor.

Water resistance is the most critical difference in an NB home with children and pets. Standard laminate has an HDF (high-density fibreboard) core that absorbs water. A spilled sippy cup, a dog's wet paws after a walk in NB rain, or a puddle tracked in from spring snowmelt can seep into laminate seams and cause irreversible core swelling within hours. Once HDF swells, the plank is permanently damaged — it will not flatten when dry. LVP with an SPC (stone polymer composite) or WPC (wood polymer composite) core is 100% waterproof. Water can sit on it, seep into seams, or pool against it without causing any damage. In a province where your kids and dogs will track in snow, rain, mud, and salt for seven months of the year, this waterproof quality is not a luxury — it is essential.

Scratch and dent resistance favours LVP for pet households. Dog nails, dropped toys, and dragged furniture all test a floor's surface. Quality LVP has a flexible wear layer that absorbs minor impacts rather than chipping. Laminate's surface is a hard melamine photographic layer that resists scratches well initially but chips and cannot be repaired once damaged — and the exposed HDF core underneath absorbs moisture instantly. For homes with large dogs, look for LVP with a 20mil (0.5mm) or thicker wear layer for maximum scratch protection.

Comfort and noise also favour LVP, particularly for families. LVP is softer and warmer underfoot than laminate, which matters during NB's long winter when bare feet hit the floor on January mornings. LVP also produces less hollow clicking noise when walked on — laminate's rigid surface over a floating underlayment can sound loud and hollow, which amplifies in open-concept NB homes.

Cost Comparison in the NB Market

Laminate is the budget winner at \$4-\$8/sq ft fully installed versus \$5-\$12/sq ft for quality LVP. For a typical 900 sq ft NB main floor, that difference is roughly \$900-\$3,600. However, factor in the replacement cost when laminate fails from moisture damage — a common outcome in NB family homes — and LVP's higher upfront cost delivers better

long-term value. Quality LVP lasts 15-25 years even under heavy family use, while laminate in moisture-prone NB conditions often needs replacement in 10-15 years.

If budget is extremely tight, a water-resistant laminate with a sealed core (brands like Pergo WetProtect or RevWood) bridges some of the gap at \$5-\$7/sq ft installed. These products resist surface water for 24-72 hours but are not truly waterproof like SPC-core LVP.

The practical recommendation for NB families is SPC-core LVP with a 20mil wear layer throughout main living areas, and carpet in bedrooms for warmth and softness. Both materials are excellent DIY options — click-lock installation means you can save \$2-\$5/sq ft on labour if you are comfortable with a weekend project. For a free estimate from a local professional installer, New Brunswick Flooring can match you with flooring contractors through the New Brunswick Construction Network.

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Is porcelain tile worth the extra cost over ceramic for NB bathroom floors?

Yes, porcelain tile is absolutely worth the extra cost over ceramic for New Brunswick bathroom floors — the denser, less porous body of porcelain handles NB's high-humidity bathroom environment far better than ceramic and will last decades longer without degradation. The upfront premium of \$1-\$4/sq ft for materials is a small price for a floor that will not absorb moisture, stain, or crack from NB's temperature and humidity fluctuations.

The key difference is **porosity**. Porcelain tile has a water absorption rate below 0.5%, meaning it is effectively impervious to moisture. Ceramic tile absorbs 3-7% of its weight in water. In an NB bathroom — where Maritime humidity, shower steam, and winter condensation create a persistently damp environment — ceramic tile's higher absorption leads to several problems over time. Water penetrates the tile body through the unglazed edges and bottom, weakening the bond with the substrate, promoting mould growth beneath tiles, and in unheated NB bathrooms or powder rooms, creating freeze-thaw vulnerability that can crack ceramic tiles from the inside out.

Porcelain is also significantly harder and more wear-resistant. Most porcelain bathroom tiles rate PEI 4-5 (suitable for heavy residential and commercial traffic) versus PEI 1-3 for typical ceramic. This hardness means porcelain resists scratching, chipping, and surface wear that exposes the porous body beneath. In a province where residents track in sand, gravel, and road salt for months each winter, that surface durability matters even in a bathroom.

Cost Comparison for NB Bathrooms

For a typical NB bathroom floor of 60-100 sq ft, here is the real-world cost difference. **Ceramic tile** runs \$2-\$5/sq ft for materials plus \$6-\$12/sq ft for professional installation, totalling roughly \$600-\$1,700 for a 100 sq ft bathroom.

Porcelain tile runs \$3-\$8/sq ft for materials plus \$6-\$12/sq ft for installation (slightly more for harder porcelain that requires specialized cutting), totalling roughly \$900-\$2,000 for the same bathroom. The difference is \$200-\$400 for a floor that will outlast the ceramic option by 20-30 years.

Installation costs are similar because the labour-intensive part — substrate preparation, waterproofing membrane, levelling, and grouting — is identical regardless of the tile material. A good NB tile installer will spend 60-70% of their time on substrate prep, which is the foundation of a long-lasting tile floor in Maritime conditions. If you are paying \$6-\$12/sq ft for installation either way, spending the extra \$1-\$4/sq ft on a superior tile material is the obvious choice.

For NB bathroom floors specifically, choose porcelain with a **textured or matte finish rated R10 or higher for slip resistance**. Polished porcelain is dangerously slippery when wet. Large-format porcelain tiles (12x24 or larger)

are popular in NB bathrooms for a modern look with fewer grout lines, but they require a perfectly level substrate — budget an extra \$2-\$4/sq ft for self-levelling compound if your NB home has an older subfloor with dips and high spots.

One scenario where ceramic is acceptable: decorative wall tiles and backsplashes where water exposure is minimal and the tile is not bearing weight or foot traffic. For walls above the vanity or as an accent band, ceramic's lower cost and wider decorative range make it a reasonable choice. But for the bathroom floor in any New Brunswick home, porcelain is the only tile worth installing.

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Q5

What flooring type has the best resale value in the New Brunswick market?

Hardwood flooring — specifically engineered hardwood in oak or maple — delivers the strongest resale value in the New Brunswick real estate market, consistently returning 70-80% of its installed cost at sale and making homes sell faster than comparable listings with other flooring types. Real estate agents across Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John consistently report that buyers will pay a premium for genuine hardwood on main living floors.

The NB resale market values flooring in this general order: **hardwood (solid or engineered) > quality LVP > porcelain tile > laminate > carpet.** However, the condition of the flooring matters as much as the type. A beautifully maintained hardwood floor adds significant value, while a scratched, gapped hardwood floor with visible wear may actually detract from a listing. If you are installing flooring specifically for resale, consider both the material's perceived value and how well it will hold up in NB conditions between now and the sale.

Solid hardwood has the highest perceived value among NB buyers, but engineered hardwood is the smarter investment for resale because it maintains its appearance better through NB's humidity cycles. A home listed in winter with visible hardwood gapping (a common issue with solid hardwood in NB's dry heating season) creates a negative impression that undermines the material's resale premium. Engineered hardwood shows minimal seasonal movement and looks excellent year-round, making it the better choice for homeowners who may sell during any season. Budget \$6-\$14/sq ft fully installed for engineered hardwood in the NB market.

LVP has surged in buyer acceptance across New Brunswick, particularly in the under-\$400,000 market segment. Quality LVP in a realistic wood-look pattern is now seen as a modern, practical choice rather than a budget compromise. Buyers appreciate its waterproof quality and low maintenance. For investment properties, rental units, or homes priced in the entry-level market, LVP at \$5-\$12/sq ft fully installed may deliver a better return on investment than hardwood because the lower upfront cost leaves more margin at sale.

Room-by-Room Resale Strategy for NB

The highest-return approach in the NB market is a **mixed flooring strategy**: engineered hardwood on main living floors (living room, dining room, hallways), LVP or porcelain tile in kitchens and bathrooms, LVP in basements, and quality carpet in bedrooms. This strategy matches each room with its ideal material while presenting the hardwood that buyers value most in the spaces they see first during showings.

Flooring upgrades with the highest NB resale return: refinishing existing hardwood floors (\$3-\$6/sq ft) returns nearly 100% of cost because it is inexpensive relative to the value it restores. Replacing worn carpet on main floors with engineered hardwood or LVP is the single most impactful flooring upgrade for NB resale, typically returning 70-90% of cost while accelerating the sale.

Flooring choices that hurt NB resale: outdated linoleum or vinyl sheet flooring, carpet on main living floors, visible laminate damage (swelling at seams), and any flooring showing moisture damage. If your home has these conditions, even a modest investment in quality LVP (\$5-\$12/sq ft installed) will improve your sale price and reduce days on market. For a 1,000 sq ft main floor, that \$5,000-\$12,000 investment can translate to a \$10,000-\$20,000 improvement in sale price based on NB market comparables.

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Q6

COREtec vs Mannington vs Shaw — which LVP brand is best for NB conditions?

All three are premium-tier LVP brands that perform well in New Brunswick's Maritime climate, but COREtec edges ahead for NB conditions specifically because of its patented cork-backed SPC core, which provides superior moisture resistance and thermal comfort on cold NB floors. That said, the best choice depends on your specific room, budget, and aesthetic preferences.

COREtec (by USFloors/Shaw subsidiary) pioneered the SPC (stone polymer composite) luxury vinyl category, and its flagship COREtec Plus and COREtec Pro lines remain the benchmark. The key advantage for NB homes is the attached cork underlayment on most COREtec products, which serves three purposes: it adds warmth underfoot during NB's long heating season (a noticeable difference on January mornings versus bare SPC), it provides natural sound dampening (important in NB homes with open-concept main floors above basements), and it acts as an additional moisture barrier over concrete slabs. COREtec Plus runs \$5-\$7/sq ft for materials in the NB market, with the Pro Plus line at \$6-\$8/sq ft. The attached underlayment means you do not need to purchase separate underlayment, saving \$0.50-\$1.50/sq ft.

Mannington Adura offers both WPC (wood polymer composite) and SPC options. The Adura Max line (WPC core) is slightly softer and warmer underfoot than pure SPC products, making it particularly comfortable in NB bedrooms and living areas. Mannington'sDERA Performance Core technology in its Adura Flex line provides excellent dimensional stability through NB's seasonal temperature changes. Mannington also offers some of the most realistic wood and stone visuals in the industry — their hand-scraped oak patterns are difficult to distinguish from real wood at a glance. Materials run \$5-\$8/sq ft in the NB market. Mannington's warranty programme is among the best in the industry, with lifetime residential warranties on most Adura products.

Shaw Floorte is the most widely available of the three in New Brunswick, stocked by most NB flooring retailers, which means easier sample selection and faster availability. The Floorte Pro line uses a rigid SPC core with Shaw's COREtec-derived technology (Shaw owns COREtec's parent company), and the Floorte Elite line adds a premium wear layer for enhanced scratch resistance. Shaw's advantage in NB is availability and price — Floorte products start at \$4-\$6/sq ft for materials, making them the most accessible premium LVP option. The attached pad on Floorte Pro products provides adequate cushion and sound dampening, though the cork backing on standalone

COREtec products is slightly superior for thermal comfort.

Which to Choose for Specific NB Rooms

For NB basements over concrete slabs, COREtec Plus or Pro Plus is the strongest choice — the cork backing provides a thermal break between cold concrete and your feet, and the SPC core is completely impervious to the moisture vapour that continuously migrates through NB basement slabs. **For main-floor living areas**, Mannington Adura Max offers the warmest, quietest feel if comfort is your priority, while Shaw Floorte Pro delivers excellent performance at a lower price point. **For kitchens and bathrooms**, any SPC-core product from all three brands performs equally well — prioritize wear layer thickness (20mil minimum) and slip resistance rating over brand.

Budget guidance for a 900 sq ft NB installation: COREtec Plus at approximately \$6,300-\$9,000 for materials, Mannington Adura Max at approximately \$5,400-\$8,100, or Shaw Floorte Pro at approximately \$4,500-\$7,200. Add \$2-\$5/sq ft for professional installation across all three brands. All three are excellent click-lock systems suitable for confident DIY installers, which can save \$1,800-\$4,500 in labour on a 900 sq ft project.

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Is engineered hardwood as durable as solid hardwood in a New Brunswick home?

Engineered hardwood is equally durable to solid hardwood in surface hardness and wear resistance — the top layer is the same real wood species — but it is actually more durable in overall performance in a New Brunswick home because it resists the humidity-driven movement that causes solid hardwood's most common failures in Maritime conditions. Durability is not just about surface scratches; it includes dimensional stability, structural integrity, and long-term appearance, and engineered hardwood wins on all three in NB.

Surface durability is identical when comparing the same species. An engineered white oak plank has the same Janka hardness rating (1,360 lbf) as a solid white oak plank because the wear layer is genuine white oak. Scratch resistance, dent resistance, and finish wear are determined by the wood species and the finish applied, not by whether the product is solid or engineered. A factory-finished engineered plank with an aluminum oxide-enhanced polyurethane finish will actually outperform many site-finished solid hardwood floors for surface durability because factory finishes are applied under controlled UV-curing conditions that are impossible to replicate on site.

Dimensional stability is where engineered hardwood dramatically outperforms solid in New Brunswick. Solid hardwood moves freely across its width as humidity changes — and NB's 30-50% annual indoor humidity swing (from 20-30% RH in winter to 60-65% in summer without climate control) drives severe seasonal movement. This manifests as winter gapping between planks (sometimes 1-2mm per joint), summer cupping or crowning, and occasional buckling at doorways and transitions where expansion has nowhere to go. Engineered hardwood's cross-laminated plywood core restricts this movement by 50-70%, producing minimal visible gapping in winter and virtually eliminating cupping risk in summer. Over a 20-year span in an NB home, this stability translates to fewer repairs, fewer refinishing cycles to address damage from movement, and a consistently better appearance.

Structural durability also favours engineered in several NB scenarios. Engineered hardwood can be installed over concrete slabs (glue-down), over radiant heating systems, and in condos or upper floors where floating installation is required. Solid hardwood is limited to nail-down over wood subfloors, excluding it from many NB installation situations. For homes with older subfloors that have minor imperfections, engineered hardwood's plywood core bridges small gaps and irregularities better than solid hardwood, which telegraphs every subfloor defect.

Where Solid Hardwood Has the Edge

Solid hardwood's durability advantage is **refinishing longevity**. At 3/4 inch thick with approximately 5mm of usable wood above the tongue, solid hardwood can be sanded and refinished 4-6 times over a lifespan of 75-100 years. Each refinishing at \$3-\$6/sq ft in the NB market completely restores the floor. Engineered hardwood's refinishing potential depends on its wear layer: budget products with 1-2mm veneers cannot be meaningfully refinished; mid-

range products with 3-4mm wear layers allow 1-2 refinishings; premium products with 5-6mm wear layers allow 2-3 refinishings over a 40-60 year lifespan.

The NB-specific recommendation is to choose engineered hardwood with a minimum 3mm wear layer for the best balance of surface durability, dimensional stability, and long-term refinishing potential. If you invest in a premium engineered product with a 4-6mm wear layer and maintain indoor humidity between 35-55% year-round, your floor will match or exceed the practical durability of solid hardwood in real-world NB conditions — and it will look better doing it because it will not gap every winter.

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Q8

Should I choose LVP or tile for my NB kitchen floor?

Both LVP and porcelain tile are excellent, waterproof choices for a New Brunswick kitchen, but the right pick depends on your priorities: LVP wins for comfort, warmth, affordability, and easy installation, while porcelain tile wins for longevity, heat resistance, and perceived luxury. Neither will fail due to NB's moisture conditions when properly installed, so this decision is about lifestyle and budget rather than climate survival.

LVP (SPC or WPC core) has become the most popular kitchen flooring choice in New Brunswick for good reason. It is 100% waterproof — spills, splashes, and mopping water cannot damage it. It is warm and comfortable underfoot during NB's long heating season, which matters enormously when you are standing at the counter preparing meals in January. It provides natural cushion that reduces fatigue from standing (a noticeable difference after an hour of cooking versus standing on tile). And it is quiet — dropped utensils bounce rather than shatter, and footsteps are muffled. Quality kitchen-grade LVP runs \$5-\$12/sq ft fully installed in NB, and a typical 150-250 sq ft kitchen costs \$750-\$3,000 for materials and installation. Most LVP can be installed in a single day with minimal

disruption.

The downsides of LVP in an NB kitchen are heat sensitivity and longevity. LVP can be scorched by hot pans dropped on it (tile is impervious to heat). It will eventually show wear in 15-25 years and cannot be refinished — only replaced. And while it resists scratches well, heavy appliances or dropped cast iron can dent SPC core products.

Porcelain tile is the traditional premium kitchen floor and offers genuinely permanent performance. A properly installed porcelain tile kitchen floor will last 50-75+ years without replacement. It is completely impervious to water, heat, scratches, UV light, and staining (when properly sealed grout is maintained). Modern large-format porcelain (12x24, 24x24) in wood-look or natural stone patterns creates a stunning kitchen aesthetic that buyers value highly for NB resale. However, tile costs significantly more to install: \$9-\$20/sq ft fully installed, putting a typical NB kitchen at \$2,500-\$7,000 — two to three times the cost of LVP.

Tile's disadvantages in an NB kitchen are real. It is cold underfoot from October through April unless you invest in electric radiant floor heating (adding \$8-\$12/sq ft for the heating system). It is hard and unforgiving — standing for long periods causes leg and back fatigue, and dropped dishes shatter. It requires professional installation with proper substrate preparation (cement board, levelling, waterproofing membrane) that adds days to the project timeline. Grout lines require periodic sealing and can stain from kitchen spills if neglected.

The Practical NB Kitchen Decision

Choose LVP if: you cook frequently and stand in the kitchen for extended periods, you have young children (softer landings for falls and drops), you want to keep costs under \$3,000 for a standard kitchen, you plan to sell within 15 years, or you want a quick installation with minimal disruption.

Choose porcelain tile if: you are building your forever home and want a 50+ year floor, you are investing in radiant floor heating (tile is the ideal conductor), you entertain frequently and want a premium visual impact, or your kitchen opens to a tiled mudroom or bathroom for a seamless transition.

A smart NB compromise: install quality LVP throughout the kitchen and invest the savings (\$1,500-\$4,000 compared to tile) into a better product tier or other kitchen upgrades. The money saved on a 200 sq ft kitchen by choosing \$8/sq ft LVP instead of \$15/sq ft tile could fund a significant portion of new countertops or appliances that add equal or greater resale value.

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Q9

What is the most scratch-resistant flooring for homes with dogs in NB?

Porcelain tile and luxury vinyl plank (LVP) with SPC cores are the most scratch-resistant flooring options for NB homes with dogs, and each brings distinct advantages depending on where you plan to install them.

Porcelain tile is essentially scratch-proof — dog nails cannot damage a fired porcelain surface, and it handles the wet, muddy paws that come with NB's long spring thaw and rainy Maritime seasons without any risk of water damage. The downside is that porcelain runs \$9-\$20/sq ft fully installed in New Brunswick, and it feels cold underfoot during the heating season unless you add radiant floor heating. Dogs also find hard tile uncomfortable to lie on, and dropped items (bowls, toys) can chip tile edges.

SPC-core luxury vinyl plank has become the go-to flooring for NB dog owners, and for good reason. Quality LVP with a thick wear layer (20 mil or higher) resists dog nail scratches far better than hardwood or laminate, and it is 100% waterproof — a critical advantage when your retriever tracks in snow, mud, or rain from October through May. Products from brands like COREtec, Shaw Floorte Pro, and Mannington Adura Max feature enhanced scratch-resistant top coats specifically designed for pet households. Expect to pay \$5-\$12/sq ft fully installed in NB for quality LVP, making it significantly more affordable than tile for large areas.

If you have your heart set on the warmth and beauty of real wood, **engineered hardwood with a factory-applied aluminum oxide finish** in a harder species like hickory or white oak (Janka hardness 1,360-1,820) will hold up better than softer species like pine, birch, or cherry. However, even the hardest hardwood will eventually show scratches from dog nails, especially in high-traffic paths. You will need to keep nails trimmed, use area rugs in main corridors, and expect refinishing every 8-12 years rather than the 15-20 years a household without dogs might enjoy.

Avoid standard laminate flooring if your dogs are active. While laminate resists surface scratches reasonably well, its HDF core swells irreparably when moisture gets into seams — and dogs inevitably bring moisture. NB's humidity swings compound this issue, as expansion and contraction can open seams over time.

For NB dog owners specifically, keep in mind that your entryway and mudroom take the worst abuse. Consider installing porcelain tile or commercial-grade LVP in those high-impact zones and a quality residential LVP or engineered hardwood through the rest of the home. Adding boot trays and washable entry mats catches the worst of the Maritime grit and salt that dogs drag in during winter.

Practical tips for dog-friendly flooring in NB: keep dog nails trimmed every 2-3 weeks, place mats at all exterior doors, wipe paws during the muddy spring season, and choose a textured or matte finish LVP that hides minor scratches better than high-gloss options. If you are installing LVP, spend the extra \$1-\$2/sq ft on a product with a 20+ mil wear layer — the thicker wear layer pays for itself in longevity with active dogs.

For a large home or open-concept main floor, a professional installer ensures tight seam connections that keep moisture out — critical with pets. Get matched with a flooring professional for a free estimate through New Brunswick Flooring.

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Is hardwood or carpet better for NB bedrooms during cold winters?

Both hardwood and carpet work well in NB bedrooms, but carpet provides noticeably warmer comfort underfoot during the province's long heating season from October through April, while hardwood offers superior longevity, air quality, and resale value. The right choice depends on your priorities and whether you are willing to manage humidity for hardwood.

Carpet is the warmer option by a significant margin. A quality nylon broadloom with a thick underpad creates genuine thermal insulation between your feet and the subfloor, and that difference is felt immediately on January mornings in Fredericton or Moncton when indoor temperatures may be comfortable but floors radiate cold. Carpet installation in NB bedrooms runs \$4-\$8/sq ft fully installed with a quality pad — a standard 180 sq ft bedroom costs \$720-\$1,440. Nylon fibre is the most durable choice, resisting matting and wear far better than polyester. The trade-off is that carpet traps dust, pet dander, and allergens, and it has a finite lifespan of 10-15 years before it needs replacement.

Hardwood in bedrooms provides a timeless look and can last 50-100 years with periodic refinishing. Engineered hardwood at \$6-\$14/sq ft fully installed is the better choice over solid hardwood for NB bedrooms, especially on upper floors where seasonal humidity swings cause the most dimensional movement. Adding a quality area rug beside the bed gives you warmth where you need it while keeping the easy-clean, allergen-free benefits of a hard surface floor.

The NB-specific factor that tips this decision is **indoor humidity management**. During heating season, forced-air systems drop indoor humidity to 20-30% — well below the 35-55% range hardwood needs. If you install hardwood in bedrooms, you need to run a whole-home humidifier at 35-45% RH through winter or accept visible gaps between planks that may persist for five to six months each year. Carpet requires no such maintenance. If you already have a humidifier or plan to install one, hardwood becomes a practical choice. If humidity control is not something you want to manage, carpet keeps things simple.

For NB homes with allergy sufferers, hardwood is the clear winner — it does not harbour dust mites, mould spores, or pet dander the way carpet fibres do. In coastal communities like Saint John or Shediac, where ambient humidity runs higher, engineered hardwood handles the moisture swings better than solid, and carpet can develop musty odours if the home lacks adequate ventilation.

A practical middle-ground approach that many NB homeowners take is engineered hardwood with a plush area rug beside the bed and in front of dressers. You get the warmth and softness where bare feet touch the floor, the easy maintenance and longevity of hardwood everywhere else, and the ability to replace the rug when it wears out without touching the floor itself.

Whichever direction you lean, getting quotes from local professionals ensures you understand the full cost including subfloor preparation, baseboard work, and old flooring removal. New Brunswick Flooring can match you with local installers for free estimates on your bedroom flooring project.

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Q11

What is the most waterproof flooring option for NB bathrooms?

Porcelain tile is the most completely waterproof flooring for NB bathrooms, followed closely by sheet vinyl and luxury vinyl plank (LVP) with SPC cores. Each handles water differently, and the right choice depends on your budget, style preferences, and whether you are hiring a professional or considering a DIY approach.

Porcelain tile has been the gold standard for bathroom floors for decades, and it remains the most water-proof option available. Fired at extremely high temperatures, porcelain absorbs less than 0.5% moisture by weight, making it virtually impervious to the standing water, splashes, and steam that NB bathrooms endure daily.

Combined with proper waterproofing membrane beneath the tile and quality epoxy or urethane grout, a porcelain bathroom floor will last 30-50 years with minimal maintenance. In New Brunswick, expect to pay \$9-\$20/sq ft fully installed, which puts a typical 60-100 sq ft bathroom floor at \$1,200-\$3,000. The main drawback is that tile feels cold underfoot — a real consideration during NB's October-to-April heating season. Adding electric radiant heat mats beneath the tile (\$8-\$15/sq ft installed) solves this but increases the project cost significantly.

SPC-core luxury vinyl plank and tile have become extremely popular for NB bathroom renovations because they are 100% waterproof, warmer underfoot than tile, and considerably less expensive to install. Quality bathroom-rated LVP or LVT runs \$5-\$12/sq ft fully installed. The rigid SPC core will not swell, warp, or delaminate from water

exposure, and the click-lock installation means no grout to maintain. The critical detail is ensuring the perimeter is properly sealed with silicone caulk around toilets, vanities, and tub surrounds, because water that seeps beneath the floating floor can become trapped against the subfloor — a serious concern in NB's humid Maritime climate where trapped moisture breeds mould quickly.

Sheet vinyl deserves mention as a budget-friendly waterproof option at \$3-\$7/sq ft fully installed. Because it comes in continuous rolls with minimal or no seams, sheet vinyl creates an almost impenetrable moisture barrier. It lacks the upscale appearance of tile or premium LVP, but for secondary bathrooms, half-baths, and budget renovations, it is a practical and fully waterproof choice.

Avoid these materials in NB bathrooms: standard laminate flooring (HDF core swells irreparably when wet), solid hardwood (will cup and warp from bathroom humidity), and ceramic tile in unheated bathrooms or seasonal cottages where freeze-thaw cycles can crack lower-density ceramic.

For NB bathrooms specifically, pay attention to what happens **beneath** the floor. Maritime moisture can migrate through concrete slab floors in ground-level or basement bathrooms, and older NB homes may have inadequate subfloor ventilation. A professional installer will assess subfloor moisture levels and recommend appropriate barriers before laying any flooring. This step is especially critical during spring snowmelt season (April-June) when NB's water table rises and pushes additional moisture through concrete.

If you are planning a bathroom flooring project, getting professional installation ensures proper waterproofing details that protect your investment. Browse flooring contractors in the New Brunswick Construction Network directory at newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com/directory?trade=flooring for free estimates.

Q12

How does vinyl plank flooring compare to real wood in feel and appearance?

Today's premium vinyl plank flooring is remarkably close to real wood in appearance, but there are still noticeable differences in feel, sound, and long-term character that matter to many NB homeowners.

Understanding where LVP excels and where hardwood remains superior helps you make the right choice for your home and budget.

Visually, top-tier LVP has closed the gap dramatically. Products from brands like COREtec, Mannington Adura, and Shaw Floorte use high-resolution photographic layers with embossed-in-register (EIR) texturing, meaning the surface grain you feel under your fingers matches the printed grain pattern. From standing height, quality LVP is nearly indistinguishable from real hardwood in many species — oak, walnut, hickory, and maple patterns are all

available. The differences become apparent when you look closely at plank-to-plank variation: real hardwood has genuinely unique grain in every board, while LVP repeats its pattern every 6-10 planks depending on the product line. Higher-end LVP uses more pattern variations to minimize this repetition.

Underfoot feel is where the biggest difference remains. Real hardwood — whether solid or engineered — has a warmth and subtle give that comes from being an organic material. It resonates differently when you walk on it and has a natural thermal quality that vinyl cannot replicate. LVP with an SPC (stone polymer composite) core feels harder and more rigid underfoot than hardwood, and it can sound hollow or "clicky" when walked on, especially over concrete subfloors. WPC (wood polymer composite) core LVP feels slightly warmer and quieter, but still lacks the natural resonance of real wood. Adding a quality cork underlayment (\$1-\$2/sq ft) significantly improves the warmth and sound of LVP installations.

The **long-term character** of each material also differs. Real hardwood develops a patina over decades — the grain deepens, minor scratches blend into the floor's history, and the wood can be sanded and refinished 3-5 times over its 50-100 year lifespan to look completely new again. LVP does not age the same way. Scratches in the wear layer expose the printed pattern layer beneath, and LVP cannot be refinished — when it wears out in 15-25 years, it must be replaced entirely.

For NB homeowners, **LVP has a major practical advantage:** it is 100% waterproof and dimensionally stable across the province's dramatic 30-50% annual humidity swing. Real hardwood requires year-round humidity management — humidifiers in winter when forced-air heating drops indoor RH to 20-30%, and dehumidifiers or AC in summer when Maritime humidity pushes above 65%. LVP needs none of this maintenance, making it the lower-effort choice for NB's challenging climate.

On cost, quality LVP runs \$5-\$12/sq ft fully installed in New Brunswick, while engineered hardwood runs \$6-\$14/sq ft and solid hardwood \$8-\$14/sq ft. The gap narrows at the premium end, where high-end LVP approaches hardwood pricing.

The honest summary: if you prioritize authentic warmth, natural beauty that improves with age, and long-term value, real hardwood (engineered for NB) is worth the investment and maintenance. If you want a practical, waterproof, low-maintenance floor that looks very good without the humidity management demands, quality LVP is an excellent choice for NB homes. Neither option is wrong — they serve different priorities.

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What is the most durable flooring for a NB home entryway and mudroom?

Porcelain tile and commercial-grade luxury vinyl plank (LVP) are the two most durable flooring choices for NB entryways and mudrooms, and both handle the province's punishing seasonal conditions far better than hardwood, laminate, or carpet in these high-abuse zones.

NB entryways and mudrooms face a uniquely harsh combination of challenges. From November through April, boots track in road salt, sand, gravel, and calcium chloride — all of which are abrasive enough to scratch softer flooring materials. Spring snowmelt means standing water and mud at every exterior door. Summer brings sand from beaches and trails. Your entryway flooring needs to handle moisture, grit, heavy foot traffic, and frequent cleaning without showing wear.

Porcelain tile is the most durable option outright. A through-body porcelain tile (where the colour runs through the entire thickness, not just the surface) is essentially immune to scratches, water, salt, and staining. It cleans easily with a mop and stands up to decades of boot traffic without visible wear. In NB, expect \$9-\$20/sq ft fully installed for a mudroom. Choose a textured or matte finish with a slip resistance rating of R10 or higher — glossy smooth tile in a wet NB mudroom is a safety hazard. The drawback is cost and the cold feeling underfoot, though a small mudroom is an ideal candidate for electric radiant heat mats if budget allows.

Commercial-grade SPC luxury vinyl plank with a 28+ mil wear layer is the next best option and costs considerably less at \$5-\$12/sq ft fully installed. It is 100% waterproof, comfortable underfoot, and available in realistic wood and stone patterns that look far more inviting than plain tile. For mudrooms, choose a product with a textured surface for slip resistance when wet. Quality LVP handles salt and grit well, though very coarse gravel tracked in on boot treads can scratch thinner wear layers over time — this is why the thicker 28+ mil commercial wear layer matters in entryway applications.

Materials to avoid in NB entryways and mudrooms: solid hardwood will show salt damage, water stains, and scratches within the first winter season. Standard laminate absorbs moisture through seams and swells irreparably. Carpet in a mudroom is a maintenance nightmare — it traps salt, mud, and moisture and develops odours quickly in NB's humid shoulder seasons.

For NB-specific durability, add a **recessed boot tray or drip pan** near the door to catch the worst of the snowmelt and salt slurry before it reaches the floor. Install durable coir or rubber entry mats both outside and inside the door to capture grit. These simple additions extend any flooring's lifespan significantly in Maritime conditions.

Subfloor preparation matters in entryways and mudrooms, which are often at or near grade level in NB homes. If your entryway sits on a concrete slab, moisture testing is essential before installation — spring snowmelt raises the

water table and increases moisture vapour transmission through concrete. A professional installer will assess conditions and recommend appropriate moisture barriers.

Need help choosing the right mudroom flooring for your NB home? New Brunswick Flooring can match you with local professionals for free estimates on your project.

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Q14

Prefinished vs site-finished hardwood — which is better for NB installations?

Prefinished hardwood is the better choice for most NB installations because its factory-applied finish is harder, more moisture-resistant, and eliminates the multi-day finishing process that NB's unpredictable humidity can compromise. That said, site-finished hardwood has specific advantages that make it the right choice in certain situations.

Prefinished hardwood arrives from the factory with its stain and protective coats already applied and cured under controlled UV or heat conditions. These factory finishes — typically aluminum oxide-infused polyurethane — are significantly harder and more scratch-resistant than anything a contractor can apply on-site. The finish is cured in ideal conditions with zero humidity interference, which matters enormously in New Brunswick where indoor humidity can swing from 25% in January to 65% in July. Installation is faster because there is no sanding, staining, or coating on-site, and the floor is ready to walk on immediately after installation. Prefinished solid hardwood runs \$8-\$14/sq ft fully installed in NB, comparable to site-finished when you factor in the finishing labour.

The main drawback of prefinished hardwood is the **micro-bevelled edges** between planks. These small V-shaped grooves along each plank edge are necessary to hide minor height differences during installation, but they create

tiny channels that collect dust and require more detailed cleaning. Some homeowners find the bevels give the floor a "plank" look rather than the seamless, smooth surface of a site-finished floor. However, many modern prefinished products now offer minimal bevels that are barely noticeable.

Site-finished hardwood is installed as raw, unfinished wood, then sanded perfectly flat and finished on-site with stain and polyurethane. The result is a completely smooth, seamless surface with no bevels — the finish flows continuously across all planks, creating a unified look that many homeowners find more elegant. Site-finishing also allows unlimited custom stain colours, which is valuable if you are matching existing trim, cabinetry, or flooring in another room.

The NB-specific challenge with site-finishing is **humidity during the curing process**. Oil-based polyurethane needs 3-5 coats with 24-48 hours drying between each coat, and humidity above 50% or temperatures below 15C extend drying times and can cause finish defects like bubbling, clouding, or poor adhesion. In NB, this means site-finishing is best done during the drier months (late fall through winter, with humidity controlled) and should be avoided during the humid summer months or the damp spring season. The house must remain unoccupied during finishing — typically 5-7 days — and the VOC fumes from oil-based finishes require adequate ventilation. Water-based polyurethane dries faster and produces fewer fumes but is slightly less durable than oil-based.

Choose prefinished when: you want the hardest possible finish, you need a faster installation timeline, your project is during NB's humid season, or you want predictable results with less risk. **Choose site-finished when:** you want a seamless surface with no bevels, you need a custom stain colour, you are matching existing floors, or you are refinishing old hardwood alongside new installation for a uniform look.

Either way, proper acclimation of the wood to your home's environment for 5-10 days before installation is non-negotiable in NB. A professional hardwood installer understands these timing and climate considerations. Get matched with a flooring professional for a free estimate through New Brunswick Flooring.

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What is the best flooring material for NB basement rec rooms?

Luxury vinyl plank (LVP) with an SPC core is the best overall flooring for NB basement rec rooms, combining waterproof performance, comfort, realistic appearance, and affordability in the one environment where moisture risk is highest. Carpet tiles are a strong second choice if warmth and softness are your top priorities.

NB basements present the toughest moisture challenge of any room in your home. The Maritime water table sits close to the surface in many communities, and concrete basement slabs continuously release moisture vapour upward — a process that intensifies during spring snowmelt from April through June when the water table rises across the province. Any flooring you install over NB basement concrete must either be completely waterproof or installed with a proper moisture management system beneath it.

SPC-core LVP checks every box for NB basements. It is 100% waterproof — if your sump pump fails or a spring flood seeps in, LVP will not swell, warp, or delaminate like laminate or hardwood would. The rigid SPC core does not absorb moisture from the concrete slab below, and it installs as a floating floor that can be removed and reinstalled if needed. Quality LVP for basement use runs \$5-\$12/sq ft fully installed in New Brunswick, putting a typical 400 sq ft rec room at \$2,000-\$4,800. Choose a product with an attached cork or foam backing for warmth and sound dampening, and always install a foam underlayment with an integrated vapour barrier over the concrete slab.

Carpet tiles are an excellent alternative if you want a softer, warmer floor for a kids' play area or family room. Unlike broadloom carpet, carpet tiles have moisture-resistant backings designed for concrete applications, and individual tiles can be pulled up and replaced if they get stained or damaged. Budget \$3-\$6/sq ft for materials in NB. The modular format also means you can remove sections to access the slab for inspection or if moisture issues arise. Just ensure you install them over a moisture-resistant pad or dimpled drainage membrane (\$1.50-\$3/sq ft) to prevent moisture from wicking up through the concrete.

Materials to avoid in NB basements: solid hardwood should never be installed below grade — basement moisture will cause cupping, warping, and eventual rot regardless of mitigation efforts. Standard laminate with HDF core will swell if any moisture reaches the seams. Broadloom carpet installed directly on NB basement concrete without a moisture barrier will develop mould and musty odours within 2-5 years as Maritime moisture migrates through the slab.

Before installing any basement flooring in NB, have the concrete slab tested for moisture. A calcium chloride test or relative humidity probe test costs \$50-\$150 and tells you exactly what you are working with. If moisture readings are elevated, install a dimpled drainage membrane or sealed vapour barrier before laying your flooring.

This step is especially critical if you are installing during or shortly after spring snowmelt season.

A professional installer experienced with NB basement conditions will assess your slab, recommend the right moisture mitigation approach, and ensure your rec room floor performs for years. Browse flooring contractors in the New Brunswick Construction Network directory at newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com/directory?trade=flooring for free estimates on your basement project.

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