

# terrazzo restoration

Authored by: **Administrator** [admin@stoneandtilepros.com]

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Q. Hello, My 60 year old house has terrazzo floors, which have been covered with either sheet vinyl, vinyl tiles, or carpet for greater than 20 years (that I know of). I am in the process of obtaining quotes for restoring the floors and I am more confused than ever. Can you give me some info or advice on the proper method to restore? I am hearing various descriptions, such as hardeners vs crystallization; stain removal expectations go from none (stains are expected) to removal with chemicals; steel wool polishing.... What should a layperson like myself expect for a proper restoration of 60+ year old terrazzo floors, and what is the most appropriate method of restoration? Thank you

A. There are several methods that would work for restoring your terrazzo floors but there are some things that are common. A floor that old will first need to be honed to remove any pitting, etc. The honing process involves using diamond abrasives to sand the surface. The floor can then be polished with several different polishing methods which are all acceptable for terrazzo. I would make sure you hire a contractor that has done terrazzo restoration before and ask for references and a detailed proposal.

What you should expect for the outcome will depend on the condition of your floor. Cracks and some deep stains may not be able to be removed. But you should see a nice shine restored on the floor.

You didn't specify in which part of the country you're in, but we presented your question to a terrazzo restoration specialist that we know and trust, Bill Thornton from Colonial Floor and Stone Care ([www.colonialfloorandstonecare.com](http://www.colonialfloorandstonecare.com)).

Yours is a common question that is being asked a lot, especially here in Florida where most home that were built before the early 70's have terrazzo flooring.

First of all an honest terrazzo restoration expert will never give you any guarantees on stain removal!

Removing vinyl tiles from flooring can have some issues with staining. You need to find out if the glue on the floor is black or clear? If it is black, you will most likely not be able to get rid of it. The stain should lighten up with deep grinding. The other problem you might have from removing vinyl tile is what we call ghosting stains. This is where the pattern of the tile seeps into the floor. This usually happen from dirty mop water and the glue.

We do a lot of terrazzo restoration down here in South Florida. I currently run three crews doing terrazzo restoration weekly. I like doing the first initial cuts -- the dry process -- starting at 50 metal then go to 100 metal. The best result will come from a heavy machine that uses 220 electricity. After the metal cuts, we continue the grinding wet. If the staining is still there, we put an oxygen bleach on it, then hone the floor to 800 resin.

We then polish the floor using 5X powder.

Finally if any stain is left, we will apply a poultice to hopefully remove any stubborn stains.

Best of luck!

Bill Thornton

Colonial Floor and Stone Care

[www.colonialfloorandstonecare.com](http://www.colonialfloorandstonecare.com)