



**RENOVATION:**  
PART FOUR

# EXTERIORS & FLOORS

Replacing your flooring, cladding or roofing can cost a heap. You don't want to get it wrong, says **Sharon Newey**.

## QUICK QUIZ

1. Solution-dyed carpets are more fade-resistant than standard versions.

True  False

2. Cut pile carpets are tougher than loop weave carpets.

True  False

3. All laminate timber floors can be re-sanded and re-urethaned.

True  False

4. Sunscreens can be added to paint.

True  False

5. Cedar is a hard-wearing, low-maintenance cladding.

True  False

6. Traditional concrete tiles are weatherproof and non-porous.

True  False

Answers on page XX

**WHEN YOU'RE RENOVATING** a rental property, most people want to avoid replacing the big-ticket items like flooring, cladding or roofs. But time, weather and wear and tear can go against us. Or you may have bought a property that's in need of major attention with a view to smartening it up for higher rental returns.

Let's start from the bottom up.

## FLOORING

When you're deciding on the type of flooring to use, consider your likely tenants and the level of wear and tear the floors will be up for.

It might be tempting to cover the floors in hardy vinyl or tiles, but tenants will find hard floors throughout a property pretty uninviting and echoey – unless you are renting out a beautiful character home with original timber floors.

Most tenants will respond well to a mix of soft and hard flooring, so it's warm and welcoming, but practical where it needs to be.

**Carpet:** As an item that hits the eye (and the pocket) straight away, carpet packs a big punch. A once-over on the floor can create a really major positive impression to a prospective tenant.

For a rental, you can't really go past

polypropylene carpet for affordability and wear. This type of carpeting no longer looks nasty, cheap or industrial. In fact, some of today's polypropylenes are very difficult to tell apart from wool carpets, yet they are tough and fade-resistant.

Modern nylon carpets are also far more advanced than early versions and come in standard or solution-dyed versions, with the latter more fade-resistant.

Wool is a Kiwi classic for carpeting fibre and offers the most choice, coming in many styles, textures, colours and grades. It's soft and, depending on the grade, can be very hard-wearing and resilient.

Whatever the fibre you choose, loop weaves are tougher than cut pile, and carpets with a texture or mottled colourway will keep their good looks for longer.

Check the grading of the carpet – it will pay to spend more on an extra-heavy duty or even commercial grade for a rental property.

**Timber floors:** If your rental property is blessed with original timber floors, simply sand and polyurethane them – timber is a wonderful hard flooring surface that looks good, is tough and has visual warmth.

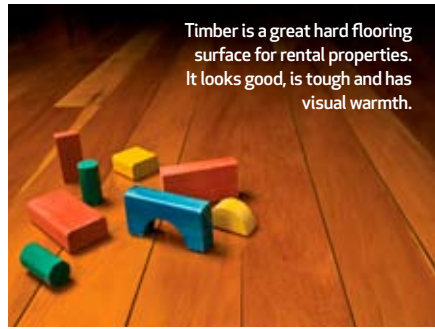
If you want to replicate the look, timber flooring ranges from solid tongue-and-groove timbers that are professionally laid

**THE  
RESENE  
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GUIDE  
PART FOUR**



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then sanded and polyurethaned, through to pre-finished laminate timber lookalikes that you buy in packs from the hardware store and lay yourself. In between are timber veneers, most laid using the floating flooring system, so they are not glued down.

The solid timber floors will be the most expensive – and the laminates the cheapest. All are quite hardy, the difference being that when the floor suffers wear, tear and scratches, a solid timber can be re-sanded and re-urethaned whereas the laminates can't. Depending on the thickness of the veneer styles, some can also be re-sanded.

**Vinyl:** No one looks down on vinyl flooring nowadays and there is a vast range of modern vinyl flooring designs in many styles. Vinyl has a softer feel than other hard flooring materials, is easy to clean, quiet underfoot, and can be extremely cost-effective. It can be laid in wide width lengths (like carpet) or for a DIY job, you can buy vinyl tile packs from the hardware store.

**Cork tiles:** These are a good alternative to timber in that they have a warm look and are relatively soft, with good sound absorption. They really need to be professionally laid and finished.

**Tiles:** While tiles are fairly bullet-proof, unless they are heated underneath they can be cold and uninviting, and also very unforgiving of dropped plates or stumbling toddlers. They are always a good choice in bathrooms, however, simply because of their moisture-resistance.

They come in a wider range of styles. Tiles for flooring are thicker than those for walls, are generally larger in format and should be non-slip. Plain dark- or light-coloured tiles will show the dirt more easily.

### CLADDINGS

When it comes to renovating your property's cladding, most often it's just a case of a few well-applied coats of paint to weatherboards, stucco or plaster.

As with any painting job, preparation is the key to a long-lasting result – scrapping and sanding, identifying any rotten timbers and replacing, priming any bare timber and undercoating.

There are many good exterior paints and stains for a range of purposes and substrates. Resene even has one with a type of sunscreen (called CoolColour) that resists UV, so you don't get the same heat build-up or stress on the paint.

**Cedar weatherboards:** These can be rejuvenated with special treatments or can be painted, but they can be tricky, depending on the profile and how well prepared timber was when it was built. Make sure anyone renovating cedar knows what they are doing, as cedar is a very soft timber and can be easily damaged by over-vigorous attention. Likewise with painting – cedar needs special preparation products before painting. Check out the Resene website for more detailed information, [www.resene.co.nz](http://www.resene.co.nz).

**Leaky homes:** If you have been caught with a leaky building, you'll probably know about it by now. If you don't, but suspect there is a problem, or are looking at buying a property with a monolithic or plaster cladding system, have it assessed by professionals.

Risk factors include monolithic claddings (in other words, plaster-type finishes with an applied waterproof coating), wind/rain exposure, multiple storeys, lack of eaves or narrow eaves, inadequate flashings, untreated pine framing, complex building shapes, and decks with cantilevered joists or those built over the top of enclosed spaces.

There's absolutely no point in painting or re-coating claddings on a leaky home without fixing the underlying problem.

Once you've shelled out good money for a decent exterior paint job, be prepared to maintain it well. An annual wash will increase the life of the paint, and get rid of potential harmful moss and mildew in shaded areas.

In the extreme case of needing to reclad altogether, there are many options, however the style of the house should be your main guide. For a weatherboard look, prefinished vinyl, aluminium or fibre-cement weatherboards are probably your easiest-care option.

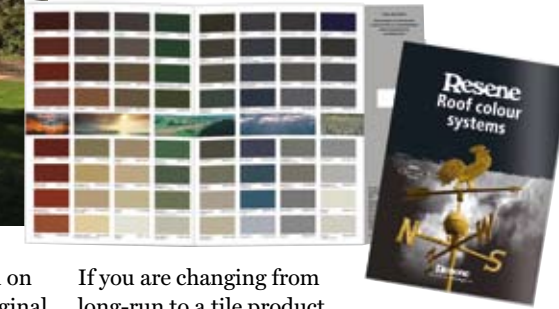
### ROOFING

Re-roofing is a big and expensive job. Replacing the entire roof will cost two or three times the amount of a roof restoration. The larger, higher, steeper and more complicated the shape of the roof, the more expensive any work will be.

It's far better to keep up a rigorous maintenance programme. Each spring, check for any damage, to either the roof or



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the guttering and downpipes, and have it repaired.

A leaking roof can cause all sorts of insidious damage within your roof cavity and end up wrecking the ceiling and walls of rooms below.

Spraying your roof with a fungicide to kill any moss or lichen is a relatively inexpensive and effective treatment.

Our most common roofing material, corrugated iron, or its modern counterparts, long-run pre-painted steel, are fairly easy to maintain and to partially replace.

Old concrete tiles (the type you find on ex-state houses) can lose both their original coating and weather-tightness over time.

When the tiles get wet, the water they absorb adds extra weight to the roof, and lichen can grow. Changes in moisture can also cause movement in the roof and breaks in the ridge lines. Concrete tiles can become eroded and thin.

There are many companies around who specialise in re-coating old concrete tiles.

If the roof is beyond repair and needs fully replacing, it's best to stick with the style of material that's already on the house.

If you are changing from long-run to a tile product, make sure your roofing structure can carry any extra weight.

Many of today's tile products aren't as heavy as they look, being made from pressed steel to mimic stone or concrete tiles. These come in many different profiles, colours and coatings. Some are also made to mimic timber or slate shingles.

Other materials include fibreglass or asphalt shingles, as well as synthetic rubber roofing membrane. ■

Answers to quick quiz: 1. Y, 2. F, 3. F, 4. T, 5. F, 6. F