

Affordable Luxury: Installing Heated Floors This Winter

by Jaime Derringer

Imagine stepping onto your bathroom floor in the dead of winter in bare feet! Oh the cold! Wouldn't you just love it if your floors were heated to keep your tootsies from freezing?

You might think that heated floors are for those people on HGTV building their dream house or renovating their million dollar home, but that's not the case anymore. Heated floors are a luxury for the masses! According to Russ Dunn, vice president of marketing at ThermoSoft, heated floors are riding the coattails of home improvement DIY trends of installing ceramic tile, marble, porcelain, natural stone, laminate, engineered and natural woods. What does DIY-ing have to do with it? Well, the more that people improve their homes themselves, the more that they save. So while your floor is bare, why not reward yourself with a little luxury?



A section of ThermoSoft underfloor heating.

Not only does electric radiant floor heat eliminate the cold feeling associated with hard surface flooring, it provides indescribable comfort. Dunn explains that electric radiant floors save energy because they are more efficient than conventional forced air heating systems that waste heat blowing through the duct-work and rising to the ceiling. There aren't many surfaces under which you can't install an electric heating systems. ThermoSoft manufactures heating systems designed for virtually any subfloor and any floor covering. The installation steps might vary but almost any floor covering can be heated with ThermoSoft's electric radiant floor heating systems.

ThermoSoft is just one brand of electric underfloor heating that is DIY-friendly. Other companies include Warmup, Heavenly Heat and Warmly Yours. The other type of underfloor heating, hydronic (water) heating systems, are very complex, require professional installers and are typically reserved for new construction. Compared to hydronic floor heating systems, ThermoSoft's floor heating is less expensive and easier to install. According to Dunn, electric "is more efficient because all the electricity is converted to heat evenly distributed across the floor. Hydronic systems expend energy not only heating the floor, they heat the water, then pump the water to the floor. While the water circulates, it cools resulting in uneven heat distribution which is compensated by heating to higher temperatures." Sounds like a lot of work!

ThermoSoft's systems are made in the USA and warranted for a lifetime, as well as toll-free technical support. They stock standard sized mats for immediate shipment and easy, on-site fitting to any floor and their systems connect to standard household voltage. So that means no on-site splicing or special tools are required.

I mentioned that this system was more cost-effective than the hot water system. The typical project will run you about \$452 to heat a 30 square foot bathroom floor and \$692 to heat a 9'x10' room. Larger installations can cost under \$5 per square foot. Not bad! The long-term costs on your electric bill are ultimately up to you, depending on how often you use this feature.

Want more heat *and* savings? Check out the insulated garage door tax credit!

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