



# SPX

GYM DESIGN

15 LBS

FLOORING GUIDE

# SPX FIT IS THE GLOBAL GYM & WELLNESS DESIGN FIRM.

Partnering and designing luxury hospitality, residential, commercial facilities, and private residences. We have created and opened over 100 fitness & wellness spaces across 14 countries and 4 continents.

**At SPX, we believe that form and function are not mutually exclusive. In fact, we believe that they can work together to create a truly unique and inspiring fitness experience.**

We work with leading interior designers and the latest equipment to create immersive and interactive fitness experiences, that are both beautiful and functional. Our modern design approach fused with our extensive experience means you'll be left with an enticing wellness space that will motivate and inspire you.



# SPX GYM DESIGN: The Ultimate Gym Flooring Guide

## INTRO

I'm sitting down to write the most comprehensive gym flooring guide to date, sharing everything I've learned over the past eight years of designing gyms. From painstaking Google searches and mistakes to vendor conversations and manufacturing insights, this guide covers it all. If you just want stall mats. Then just go to tractor supply and you're done. This guide is for someone that is looking to upgrade or invest in their gym flooring.

Here's what you can expect to learn:

- 01 WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
- 02 THE RIGHT FLOORING THICKNESS
- 03 COLOR OPTIONS
- 04 STYLE CHOICES AND CUSTOMIZATION
- 05 BONUS

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## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Before you start, you need to consider a few things. First, what is the flooring going on? Concrete? Wood? Existing flooring? (Please don't lay gym flooring on carpet.)

What programming is your gym running? Powerlifting flooring will demand a different thickness than, say, a SoulCycle studio.

Finally, consider acoustic issues. This is complicated, and to be transparent, don't get sold on vendors' acoustic flooring solutions without careful consideration. If you have or are concerned about acoustical issues, especially from a commercial aspect, you'll need more in-depth solutions than just thick flooring. We've been up and down this road numerous times, from homes to group fitness to large commercial gyms in urban areas with sensitive neighbors.

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## What you need to know

Assuming you have a concrete slab as your base, say a garage floor or basement, and you like to lift weights, do some cardio, and want some open space, I recommend the following spec:

- 3/8" Black Rolled Rubber
- Commercial all-purpose glue
- 1 gallon per 80 sq. ft.

When using glue, this isn't your kindergarten arts and crafts project. You don't need to paint your flooring with glue. This stuff is serious, and you'll also have heavy gym equipment on top of it. Use sparingly—you can always add more. Take it from someone who spent four days tearing up over-glued flooring in a Soho basement in NYC.

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## FLOORING THICKNESS

As mentioned above, different programming calls for different thicknesses. The most common thicknesses we use are  $\frac{3}{8}$ ",  $\frac{1}{2}$ ",  $\frac{3}{4}$ ", or 1".

We rarely use 1" plus unless it's for lifting platforms, acoustic solutions, or high-level athletes (think NFL/NCAA football weight rooms). I'd argue  $\frac{3}{8}$ " is quite thin, and the programming for that user should be relatively low impact.

For using flooring to 'cushion,' I'll forever be lost on this. Commercial-grade rubber is not soft, and when laid on concrete, it protects your concrete slab rather than creating a comfortable surface for you to lay on or jump on. There are scenarios where you would get rubber flooring for plyometrics or a space used for sprinting and agility, but that's outside the scope of this guide.

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## FLOORING THICKNESS

I'll tell you a story about one of my best friends. He loves CrossFit. I don't want to embarrass Frank by using his name, so I'll leave it out. He bought ½" rubber mat for his backyard. Pretty cool, right? He could do all his CrossFit Olympic lifts out there—snatches, cleans, deadlifts. You name it, he did it on his ½" rubber mat. Every. Single. Day. In the same spot, dropping heavy weight from overhead, from the hips, from shoulder height. By the time he moved out a year later, he removed the rubber mat and saw he had cracked his concrete slab down to the foundation of the house. Long story short, Frank does CrossFit in his backyard, loses his security deposit, and more...

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## FLOORING THICKNESS

Flooring thickness matters in a lot of scenarios. For Frank, he probably would've been better off with a lifting platform with  $\frac{3}{4}$ "-1" thick flooring tiles. Since they are typically 8x4 in size, he would've had more varied space to drop the weights over time, distributing the impact.

Building rubber up is also a common strategy. Think of a concrete slab, plus plywood, and then  $\frac{1}{2}$ " rubber. That's starting to really build some serious protection.



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## COLOR OPTIONS

Black is definitely commonplace, cost-effective, and looks sharp. The more high-end clients we've worked with want something more unique—sometimes so unique we start to wonder what they think will be occurring in their 'gym.'

Flooring vendors usually start with black and then introduce fleck in varying percentages with varied colors. Think predominantly black flooring with 10% grey fleck. The intention of adding fleck is to ensure every little dust particle doesn't show. The more color introduced, the more expensive the solution will be, in most cases.

Sustainable options using cork are very popular right now and can be a great option to consider.

I love smoke from Ecore and charcoal from Plae.

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## STYLE OPTIONS AND CUSTOMIZATIONS

The most common option from a style choice will be rolled rubber and tiles. Rolled rubber comes in various thicknesses, is easier to install over a large space, and might be more cost-effective. For rubber tiles, you're looking at 1" to 1.5" in thickness, with fewer color choices for complex shapes and lower square footage spaces. Rubber tiles could be a quick install. However, if the rolled rubber gets damaged (not likely unless you're moving heavy steel across it often), you will need to replace a larger area versus using tiles. For the sake of this guide, when I refer to rubber tiles, I mean beveled-edge rubber tiles. There are solid rubber tiles that look like puzzle pieces that are thinner and have more options.

Customizations are a baller move. Customizing rubber can really make the space but comes with a high price tag. Usually, clients are interested in this until we come back with the cost. You typically see this work in pro and college facilities.

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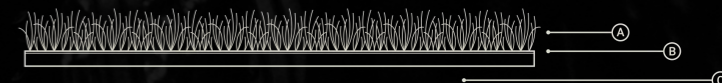
## RUBBER & TURF

Inlaying the rubber is a must against turf. If it is a new build, we always opt to inlay. If we can't, unfortunately, we will have to lay the turf on top of the rubber, and we will need to incorporate reducer/transition strips to mitigate the potential tripping hazard.

When inlaying, it is important to consider the 'pile' height of the turf. Turf is a soft surface, and rubber is a hard one. You'll have to consider the depression of the turf when someone steps on it transitioning to rubber. This is about a .25" difference. Our most common builds for this are 1/2" rubber flooring and building the turf up to 3/4". The difference creates a nice level transition for users.

Please don't buy turf at Home Depot. Flooring and turf is a buy-once, cry-once operation. The turf should be high quality and have a 5mm pad backing to deliver great shock absorption and usability.

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## CONCLUSION

There's a lot here to get you started. There are definitely more levels, complexities, and unique options to deliver, but this should get the ball rolling if you are starting or in the middle of a project.

When you nail the flooring, it's the first step to designing an incredible gym.

If you found this guide helpful, please consider subscribing to our newsletter and social media channels for more things like this.

Thank you,



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