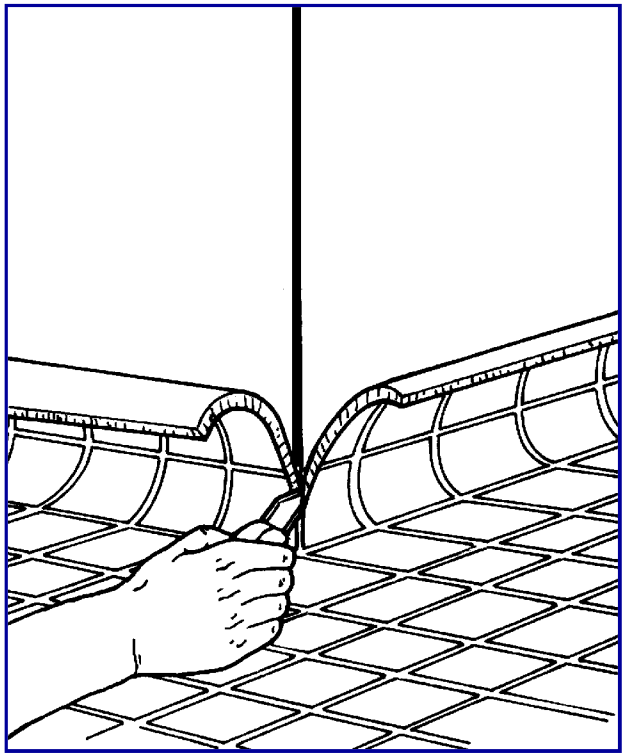
# HOW-TO BOOKLET #3116
# VINYL FLOORS



## TOOL & MATERIAL CHECKLIST

- ❑ Tape Measure
- ❑ Heavy-duty Shears
- ❑ Screwdriver
- ❑ Vinyl Sheet Flooring
- ❑ Power Stapler and Staples
- ❑ Metal Straightedge
- ❑ Utility Knife and Blades
- ❑ Hammer
- ❑ Crosscut Saw

***Read This Entire How-To Booklet for Specific Tools and Materials Not Noted in The Basics Listed Above.***

Vinyl floorings are durable, attractive, and long lasting. They're almost as easy to install as spreading a blanket over a bed. This booklet will show you the basics.

### PREPARING THE FLOOR

Prepare the room for the flooring by removing all the furnishings, including the covers on the floor registers and the shoe molding along the baseboard. The baseboard doesn't have to be removed if you can't do it without damaging walls or doorjambs. When you remove shoe moldings and baseboards, number the pieces so you can replace them in the same order.

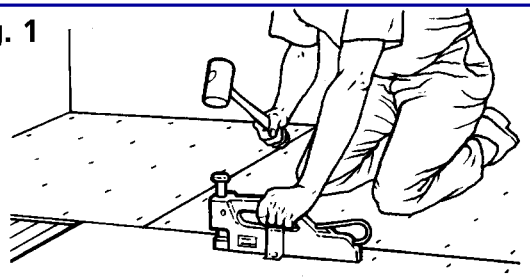
Vinyl flooring can be installed over several types of old flooring, but in all cases the floor must be in good condition. You can lay the flooring over old flooring if it is completely smooth and still tightly adhered to the subfloor. Concrete must be dry, level, and clean. A wooden floor is suitable if the boards are not rotten or warped, and only if they are firmly nailed down. If these conditions can't be met, then it's best to install an underlayment of plywood or hardboard. Use staples driven in by a power nailer (**Fig. 1**).

### HOW MUCH TO BUY

To start the project, draw an accurate sketch of the floor area or write the measurements down on the old floor surface. Then, when the entire floor has been measured, go back and transfer your calculations to the floor plan.

**Seamless Installation.** In **Fig. 2**, one of the dimensions is smaller than 12', so a 12'-wide sheet can be installed without seams. Now, the maximum measurements of this room are 10' 6" x 15' 6". You might think you should buy a 12'-wide sheet 15' 6" long, maybe adding another 6" for trimming.

**Fig. 1**



**Using a power stapler** to fasten underlayment; the joints must be staggered.

However, notice that cabinets run along one whole wall and the new floor won't run under those cabinets. So the real working dimensions are 10' 6" x 13' 6" plus 6" for trimming, giving you a piece 12' x 14'.

To convert linear feet into square yards, multiply length times width and divide by nine (9 square feet equal 1 square yard). For our job:

12' x 14' = 168'

168 ÷ 9 = 18.7 sq. yd.

**Installation with Seams.** If both dimensions of the room are greater than 12', seams are needed. In the floor plan in **Fig. 3**, the location of the seams is determined as follows:

1. Start at one end of the room with one length of 12'-wide sheet vinyl, laid in a direction that will give you maximum use of the second 12'-wide sheet. In our example, you would lay the first piece of flooring along the 13' wall, leaving a 10' section for the second piece. If you laid the first piece horizontally along the 22' wall, you would leave only 1' for the second piece, resulting in a great deal of wasted material.
2. Add 6" for trimming to the first piece. In our example, that would give you a piece 13' 6" long.
3. To determine the length of the second piece, take the length of the space and add enough material for a pattern match. On second piece and succeeding lengths, do not add the 6" for trimming; add only the pattern match. Manufacturers' catalogs and product brochures give the repeat for each pattern. Or you can measure the repeat yourself by selecting a reference point on the pattern and measuring across to its repeat. Measure the actual repeat and not a similar part of the pattern. If our pattern match is 8", our second piece of flooring would be 20' 8". Thus, you need to trim only 2' off the second 12' piece to fit into the 10' width.
4. To determine total square yards needed, first determine total square yard adding the lengths of each 12' piece. In our example, that would be:

   13' 6" + 20' 8" = 34' 2'

5. Now multiply length by width just as you did in the seamless installation.

   34' 2" x 12' = 408' 24" or 410'

6. To find the number of square feet needed, divide by 9, just as you did in the seamless installation.

   410 ÷ 9 = 45.6 sq. yd.

7. To determine cost, simply multiply 45.6 by the cost per square yard. If the cost is $5.99 a square yard, you would have:

   45.6 x $5.99 = $273.14

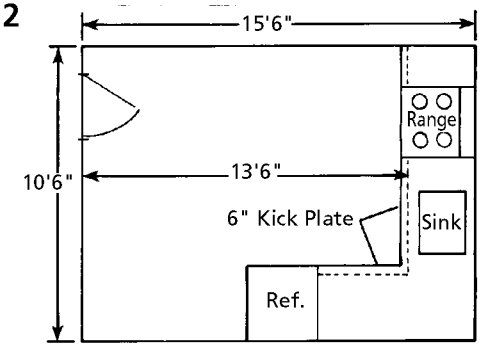
Some dealers will cut the material to rough measurement according to your drawing. If the dealer doesn't offer this service, you will have to transfer your measurements to the sheet vinyl and cut it 3" larger. Do the cutting with a sharp utility knife or heavy-duty shears.

## TRIMMING TECHNIQUES

When the sheet is laying square to the walls with the pattern in the desired position, start trimming to fit. The key to a professional trimming job is a sharp edge. Change the blade often.

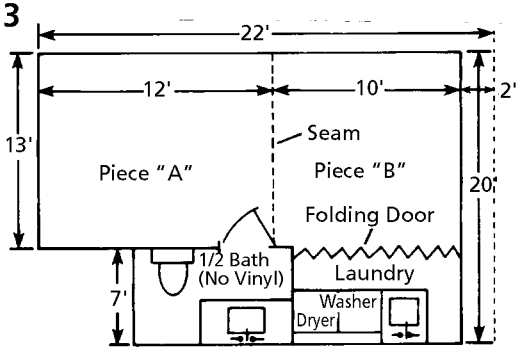
1. Once the material has been cut to rough dimensions, lay the longest edge against the longest wall first. Position the entire piece, making sure it curls up 3" on every wall.
2. To get the sheet to lay flat, make relief cuts at all corners. For outside corners, do this by cutting straight down the curled up sheet flooring. Start at the top edge and cut to where the wall and floor meet (**Fig. 4**).
3. Trim for an inside corner by cutting the excess flooring away with increasingly lower diagonal cuts on each side of the corner.

**Fig. 2**



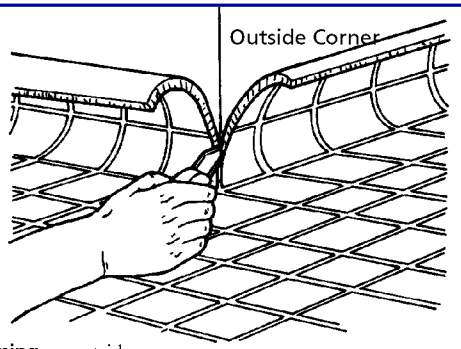

**Planning** a seamless installation

**Fig. 3**



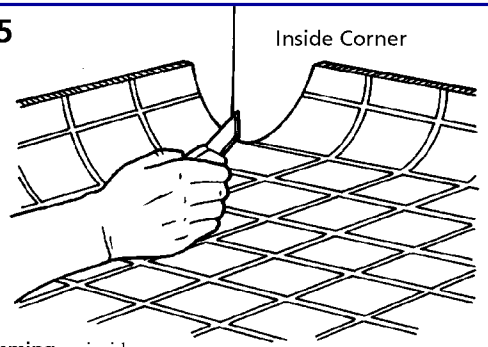

**Planning an installation** with seams

**Fig. 4**



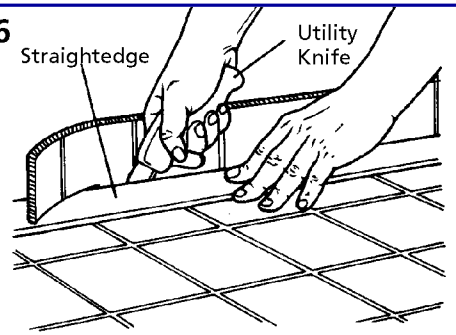

**Trimming** an outside corner

**Fig. 5**




**Trimming** an inside corner

**Fig. 6**




**Trimming** along walls

Gradually these cuts should produce a wide enough split for the corner to wedge through and the flooring to lay flat around it (**Fig. 5**).

4 Remove the curled up flooring at the walls by pressing it down with a long 20" to 24" piece of 2 x 4. Press the flooring into the right angle where the wall and floor meet until it begins to develop a crease at the joint. Then position a heavy metal straightedge into the crease (**Fig. 6**) and cut along the wall with a utility knife, leaving a 1/8" gap between the edge of the flooring and the wall. This is necessary to allow for expansion and contraction of the material and subfloor. This space, of course, will ultimately be covered by the molding. A clearance gap should also be allowed between the top of the sheet vinyl edges and what would be the bottom of the molding when it is installed to allow the walls and subfloor to move without affecting the sheet material. When the shoe molding is installed, it should therefore be nailed directly to the baseboard, not through the sheet vinyl and into the subfloor. A thin sheet of cardboard, which will later be removed, should be placed between the bottom of the shoe molding and the top of the vinyl sheet while nailing to permit the proper 1/32".

5 The best way to have the vinyl flooring meet a doorjamb is to cut away a portion of the jamb at the bottom so that the flooring will slide under it. Trim the flooring to match the angles and corners of the doorjamb, overcutting about 1/2" for the edge to slip under the jamb (**Fig. 7**). If necessary, you may have to trim the bottom of a door slightly to fit over the sheet. Remove the door and use a plane or crosscut saw to make the cut.

6 Frequently, the sheet material must be cut out to fit around pipes, toilets, basins, or other irregularities. This is sometimes quite a problem. However, a piece of light cardboard or paper can be used as a template and cut out to fit the irregular space exactly (**Fig. 8**). The cardboard or paper should be big enough to project out into the room after it has been cut and fitted into place. Then, with the sheet vinyl in place everywhere except in the irregular area into which it is to fit, put a few spots of glue on the edge of the cardboard or paper and unroll the material far enough for it to cover the glued part of the paper. When the sheet vinyl is rolled back, the paper will adhere to it and can be laid back on the vinyl. By using a knife to trim around the edges of the paper, you can cut out the sheet vinyl so that it fits the irregular space exactly.

**Metal Strips.** An exposed edge of sheet vinyl, for instance where the material ends in a doorway, can be protected by a metal strip. The metal strip is nailed into place; the vinyl sheet is then laid on top of it and cut to fit under the curved metal edge. If necessary, the curved edge can be bent down to protect the vinyl edge.

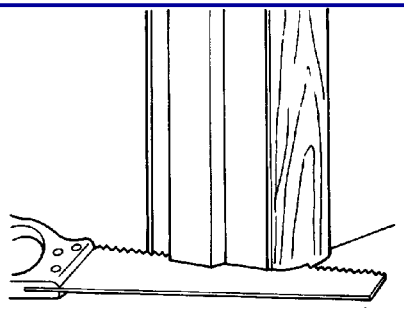
**Accidental Cuts.** If a cut is made in the wrong location, fix it using seaming adhesive and no-stain double-sided tape. Both of these are available at your flooring dealer.

Cut a piece of tape and run the sticky side down the cut on the underside of the sheet vinyl. Remove the backing from the tape and press down the sheet. Then run a thin bead of seaming adhesive along the entire length of the cut so that it only fills in. The adhesive will bond the edges together so that they are hardly noticeable.

**Sheet Overtrimmed.** If there is a gap between the wall and the edge of the vinyl, if often can be covered with quarter-round wood molding or vinyl cove base. It is also possible to patch in a strip of vinyl using tape and seaming adhesive in much the same procedure for accidental cuts. Disguise the seam in the patch by making it along a line in the pattern.

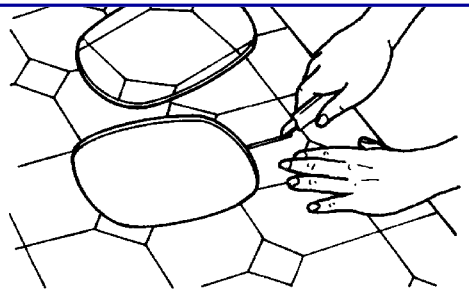
**Tight Fits.** This can happen when the sheet vinyl begins to settle and flatten. If it should occur, mark where the sheet fits perfectly on either side of

**Fig. 7**



**Cutting** under a doorjamb

**Fig. 8**



**Make the cut-outs in the vinyl** along the marked lines, then make a straight cut to the edge of the sheet where the seam won't be noticeable.

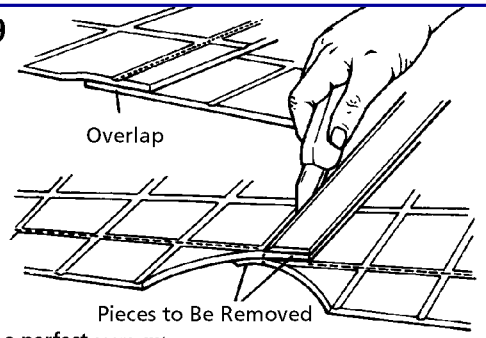
the problem area, then fold back the sheet and join the marks with a straight line. Retrim along this line using a straightedge.

## INSTALLING SHEET VINYL

Once the sheet vinyl has been cut to exact size, it should be positioned on the floor and the edges should be as close as possible to the wall. Check with your flooring dealer for the method for adhesion to be used with the flooring you have chosen.

If stapling the flooring, begin along the longest edge of the room. The staples should be spaced approximately 3" apart and as close to the wall as possible. After you have completed one wall, move on to an adjoining wall and repeat the same fastening technique. As you staple, make sure that the new flooring is being pulled up tightly against the wall. The type of sheet vinyl flooring that can be installed with staples usually can be stretched slightly, and you should do this before you drive each staple.

**Fig. 9**




**Making a perfect** seam cut

The remaining walls are done in a similar manner, except that you will want to pull tighter before stapling these.

If fastening the sheet around the edges with adhesive, apply it to the floor with a toothed trowel, according to the manufacturer's directions. Work from the corners to the center of each length of the wall.

For single layer vinyl flooring or where foot traffic is heavy, the manufacturer will recommend an adhesive. Apply the adhesive evenly on the floor with a wide spreader over a few square feet at a time, and then press the material down firmly on it. Be sure that the entire surface is well covered with cement and that there are no bulges in the material where it has failed to adhere. Air bubbles under the sheet material are hard to remove after it is down; try to avoid them. As soon as all the sheet material has been cemented in place, roll it down with a heavy roller, which usually can be rented from a flooring dealer. A regular garden roller can be used, provided it is clean and smooth. Place weights on the seams to prevent their coming loose before the cement has fully dried.

If the sheet material installation requires a seam, use a sharp utility knife to cut the most intricate piece first, making it 3" oversized on all sides, including the seam. If using adhesive, spread it on the floor for this piece, stopping about 10" from the seam. Position the flooring. Cut the second sheet, so it overlaps the seam at least 2". Spread adhesive over the rest of the floor, stopping 2" from the edge of the first sheet. Align the second piece carefully (**Fig. 9**). Then cut half-moon shapes at the edge of each seam so the ends butt the walls. With a straightedge and utility knife, cut through both sheets at the point where the seam will be. Lift up both halves and apply adhesive. Clean the seam and use the recommended seam sealer.

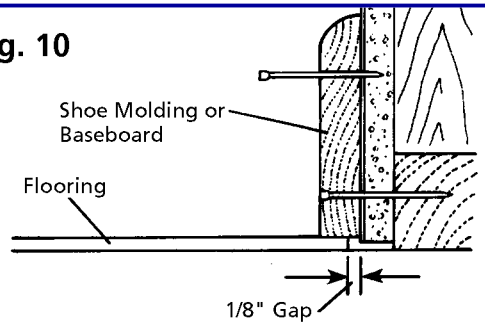
**Baseboards and Moldings.** Install baseboards or shoe molding around the room so that they cover the gap between the flooring and walls (**Fig. 10**). Leave a slight space, about the thickness of a matchbook cover, between the bottom of the baseboard and the surface of the floor to allow for movement.

## FINISHING TOUCHES

Clean the flooring only with a solvent recommended by the manufacturer to avoid damaging the finish. Clean up any adhesive that may have spilled onto the surface. Then roll the flooring so that it sets firmly and flatly in the adhesive. You can rent a heavy roller for this job.

Start at the center of the room and roll firmly. After the floor has been cleaned and rolled, replace the baseboard and any other trim.

**Fig. 10**




**Installing baseboard** to complete the project