

Under Foot

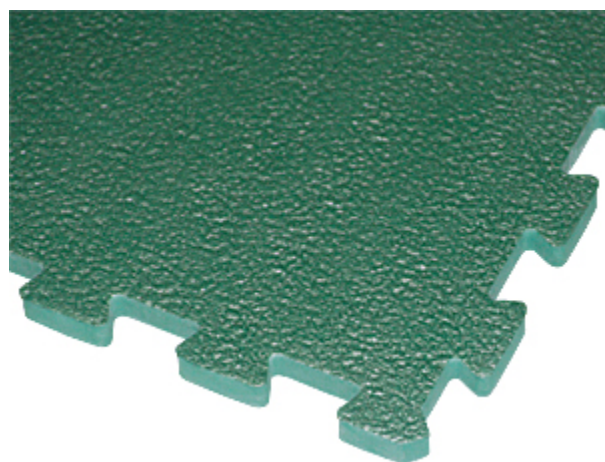


Nothing can make or break an agility facility like flooring. Assuming sufficient space, a site that offers footing with excellent traction and shock absorption will be sought after for training and trialing purposes. But proper flooring can be very expensive, and choosing the wrong one can be a costly mistake.

In 2005, *Clean Run* contacted manufacturers of some of the most popular agility flooring products and compiled the information so that readers could use it as a starting point for their search for the perfect indoor agility flooring. Now we've updated that article and we're presenting the information here.

NOTE: Costs quoted here are based on a 60' by 80' area; shipping is not included.

AgiliFlex Dog Mat



Although Group Summit offers several dog facility flooring options, including AgiliFlex Plus and Alphatrax (both featured in our 2005 article), AgiliFlex™ is now the product the company recommends for use in agility facilities. These tiles are made of ethylene vinyl acetate (EVA), a polymer used in the soles of high-end athletic shoes. It has closed-cell construction to block absorption of moisture, and four interlocking sides to further prevent leakage to the subfloor. Each tile is individually reversible to extend floor life. It is only available in blue, although custom colors are

available for facilities with more than 3,000 square feet.

Contact: Summit Flexible Products, 820 Crater Lake Ave, Ste 208, Medford, Oregon, 97504; customers call 800-782-5628, all others 541-773-4353 (ask for Janet); www.groupsummit.com.

Cost: Suggested retail is \$38.01 per each 39.4" x 39.4" x 11/16" thick tile. Call for specials.

Installation costs: Can be self-installed without significant cost.

Installation requirements: A utility knife with replacement blades, a piece of chalk, a tape measure, and a straight edge.

Warranty: 3 years

Weight: 6.5 lbs. per tile.

Ease of cleaning and maintenance: Clean Agiliflex floors as you would your bathroom or kitchen floors. Use any standard household cleaners and clean it about once a week.

Comments:

Paul Anderson, from Leader of the Pack Canine LLC, Minnesota, says: “We installed Agiliflex tiles in November of 2005. Group Summit was very helpful sending samples we could look at and test. Our floor is 50' x 50' and it took a crew of friends about three hours to put down including some pre-mopping and sweeping. The tiles lock together easily and stayed together. Other than a few chewed edges and claw marks, the tiles show very little wear. It has held up extremely well and still looks good even with all the abuse it has taken.

The flooring is very easy to clean and stands up well to cleaning. We use bleach water with a mop for accidents with no side effect from the bleach. We vacuum the flooring weekly with a canister vacuum; hairs come clean without sticking. Every so often we do a complete cleaning of the floor with a bleach mix in a sprayer. The floor is scrubbed with brushes to get up any stains and then vacuumed after drying. It is a very easy floor to maintain even with the abuse of puppy pees and poops.

As far as using it for agility, the traction is superb for the dogs, sometimes too good for handlers with new shoes.

I would definitely buy this flooring again. I hope the price has not risen too much but it has been excellent choice in flooring. The flooring has held up, the over-all price was good, excellent customer service, installation is easy, and it has saved people from injuries from falls.”

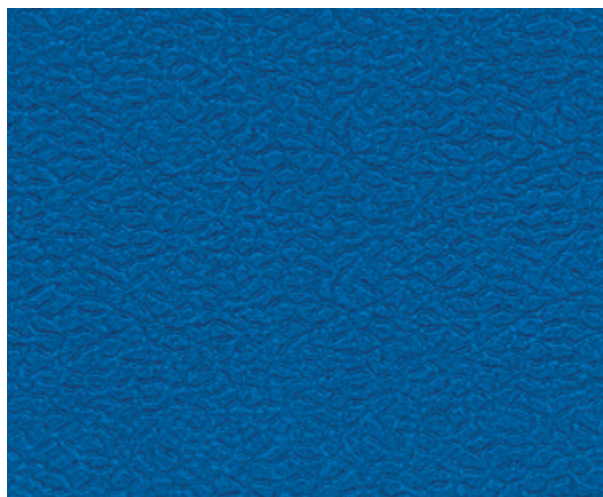
Fran Seibert, co-founder of Jazz Agility Training in Greenfield Center, NY: “We are using Agiliflex flooring and love it!”

Jane Cardillo, who has had AgiliFlex in her basement for over a year: “I use the space for agility practice and daily play sessions with our 46-lb., 6-year-old Aussie since our house does not have a yard. It has good traction, very little slipping/sliding even when doing very hard, sharp stops and turns playing fetch and Frisbee. It has very tight seams—the tiles do not come apart at all—even with the hard stops/turns. It does not absorb water and is easy to clean up spills. It was simple to install, very light weight, and cuts easily with a utility knife.”

Cardillo did see some negatives with Agiliflex: a strong smell when first installed (which may have been because of the small space in which she is using it), the texture of the tiles “shedded” when new, leaving flecks on her dogs paws for months, that same texture encourages a collection of fur, and it does it gouged by dog nails.

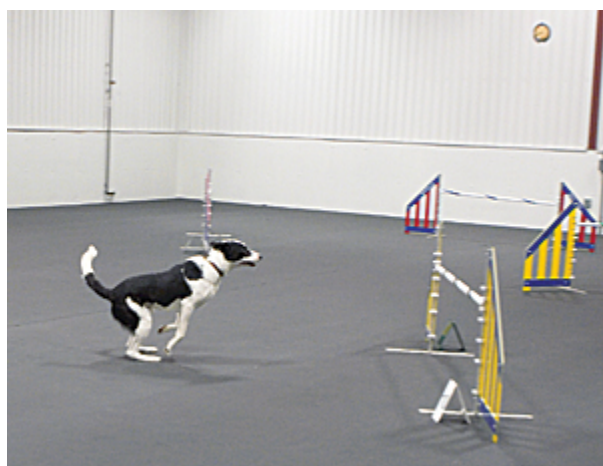
Angelica Steinker, owner of Courteous K9 Dog School in Lutz, Florida: “I like it. It is holding up well. It isn’t kryptonite in the sense that if a dog continuously scratches at one spot it will eventually tear, but I really like it. I would recommend it.”

Crown Matting Comfort King Supreme



Comfort King was developed for the commercial anti-fatigue market and has crossed over to the indoor agility facility market with great success. Since it was designed with cashiers and production line workers in mind, it reduces the amount of strain on human (and presumably canine) feet, ankles, legs, and back. Crown's Comfort King patented Zedlan foam offers three times as much "bounce" as traditional foam and rubber products. It comes in 3/8" and 1/2" thickness, and agility facilities seem to be using the wider product with success. The 60' rolls come in 2', 3', 4' and 6' widths. The widest product is not recommended

due to its weight; 3' and 4' widths are the most popular sellers for dog facility use. The product comes in black, gray, and royal blue.



According to company literature, "Dogs training full-time on Comfort King performed equally well outdoors on grass." With some other products, "dogs had to adjust their takeoff position to prevent themselves from sliding and had difficulty making the transition when competing outside on grass," the company states. It is also recommended as an excellent flooring for flyball. Clean Run has this product in its facility.

Comfort King Supreme is not designed to withstand the dragging of heavy equipment or other objects. Doing so may cut or rip the

product. This matting performs best at a temperature of 63° or higher. Colder temperatures may cause the matting to become less slip resistant and it may shrink. Dog nails need to be kept trimmed to avoid potential cuts, tears, and possible injury to the dog.

Tuff-Spun was Crown's main agility facility product for years but its composition has evolved and it is now recommended for obedience facilities only. Comfort-King will last three times longer than the current Tuff-Spun product.

Contact: Crown Mats and Matting, A Division of Ludlow Composites Corporation, 2100 Commerce Drive, Fremont, Ohio, 43420; 800-628-5463; www.crown-mats.com.

Cost: 3/8" thick mats range from \$1.80-\$1.96/sq ft and 1/2" thick mats range from \$2.51-\$2.73/sq ft, depending on number of rolls ordered.

Installation costs: Can be self-installed without significant cost. Crown Mats provides detailed installation information.

Installation requirements: Space and time must allow for the product to sit for 3-5 days so it can acclimate before installation; then it should be unrolled and allowed to sit, rolled out, for an additional 3 days so it can relax and reform to its natural form.

The matting is designed to be free floating, and Crown does not recommend or warrant the gluing down of the product. Double-sided tape may be used on the underside of the product to help hold it in place, or on the top surface to help cover seams. If there are no walls surrounding the area to be covered with matting, some type of frame should be used to keep the matting from shifting.

The mats have beveled edges. You can install the mats with the beveled edges side by side, you can overlap the beveled edges, or you can trip off the beveled edges.

Cut matting with a straight edge utility knife. Place extra matting under the corners of contact obstacles and other heavy equipment to help reduce damage to the top surface.

Warranty: 1-year warranty against defects in material and workmanship when maintained as specified.

Weight: 1/2" x 3' rolls weigh 174 lbs. each and 1/2" x 4' rolls weigh 218 lbs. each.

Ease of cleaning and maintenance: Use a non-abrasive, neutral pH cleaner or mild soap with warm water. Use a damp mop for cleaning, and commercial-grade brooms to remove debris. Urine should be wiped up immediately with a neutral pH cleaner or mild soap using a damp towel or mop. Use of rotary scrubbers, industrial-grade vacuums, or other mechanical cleaners or scrubbers may damage the product and will void the warranty. Allow the matting to dry completely after dampening it before permitting foot traffic to resume.

Removing debris beneath the matting regularly will reduce premature wear. Regular maintenance is crucial.

Comments:

Lisa Barrett, instructor at The Dog School in Williston, Vermont: “Although our space is small, we are able to teach beginner classes, jumping skills, and challenging sequences because the flooring is so good. The dogs get great purchase, and the matting provides wonderful shock absorption. Dogs never ever slip on this matting. We are really happy with this floor and can keep it clean with a regular vacuum cleaner. We can easily roll our wheeled A-frame around on it.

I am really surprised that 1/2" matting can be so cushioned and provide so much traction for our dogs. My one concern is that I'm not sure how well it will hold up over time. We have been using it for just two years now.

Can you tell I love this flooring?”

Cassie Compton-Schmidt, co-owner of an indoor training facility in Kansas City: “We have a training facility in Kansas City with Comfort King. We have had it for two years and it is holding up well. We installed it ourselves with tape provided by Crown Matting and did not remove the bevels. We have never had an issue with the bevels. We use a leaf blower to clean up hair, and don't really do much maintenance beyond that. Fast dogs do not seem to have any problems with footing. We had one competitor tell us it was more comfortable than her bed.”

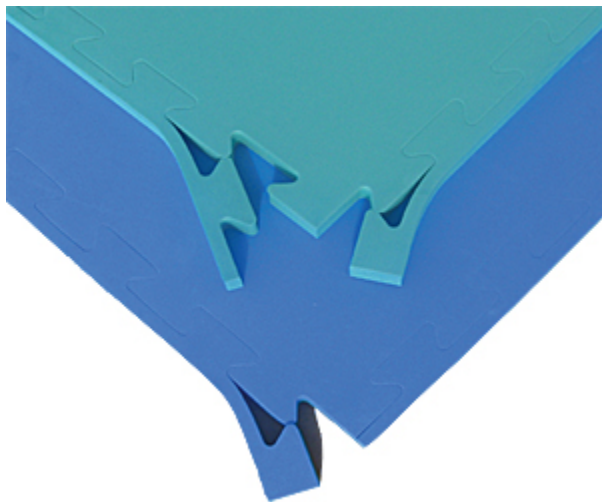
Monica Percival, owner of Clean Run Productions, LLC in South Hadley, Massachusetts: “We spent almost a year researching various flooring options for our 50' x 100' training area. Artificial turf was not an option because there were no drains in the room and no way of cleaning the ‘grass’ if there were accidents. So we turned to mats. There were a lot of solutions that we found to be “cushy” on the handler, but not for the dog. We wanted there to be give for landing jumps safely and without slippage, we wanted traction for turns and take-offs, and we wanted a surface that didn't require our dogs to alter their jumping style significantly from what was required on the grass fields we see on weekends.

We purchased the 1/2" thick x 6' wide mats because we wanted as few seams as possible. We also wanted the weight to help discourage the mats from shifting. We had professional carpet installers trim off the bevels and do the installation.

We've had the matting for almost 3 years now and we still love it. Many dogs have visited here to work that have burned pads and slid on surfaces in other training centers, and they've had no problem here. Seminar leaders have been thrilled. The only drawback I can think of is that handlers have to be careful to pick up their feet when they run. It has excellent traction!

We vacuum the mats every week and then every other week we do a full mop with a solution of water and Simple Green.”

Dog Agility Foam Mats



Unlike many of the flooring products on the market, Dog Agility Foam Mats were designed specifically for agility. These high density EVA foam interlocking mats have a “felt top” surface texture that provides excellent grip and traction for the dogs, according to the company. The 40" x 40" x 3/4" tiles come in blue, forest green/black (double color), and forest green. The tiles are reversible.

Contact: Great Mats, 117 Industrial Avenue, Milltown, Wisconsin, 54858; 877-822-6622; info@greatmats.com, www.greatmats.com.

Cost: Ranges from \$17-\$19 per tile, depending on the number ordered. Groups ordering more than 100 tiles should check for a discount. Also, specials are sometimes offered; call the company for more information.

Installation costs: Can be self-installed without significant cost.

Installation requirements: Sub-floor should simply be clean, hard, and flat. The mats are laid loose on to the floor beneath and no glue or tape should be used. If mats are being fitted in a room from wall to wall, a sharp utility knife and a straight edge will be needed to cut the mats. If the floor will form an island within a larger room, no tools are needed for installation.

Warranty: 1-year normal limited warranty against manufacturers defects under normal daily use.

Weight: Approximately 6 lbs. per tile.

Ease of cleaning and maintenance: Maintenance is simple. Sweep and vacuum as needed (possibly daily). Use Pine Sol and warm water for cleaning.

Comments:

Lisa Antonini, from Stay and Obey LLC in Stevensville, Michigan: “I love my flooring, the company was great to work with, and the mats were easy to install and fit to my space even though room was not perfectly square. They look great and really brighten up the space. They are wonderful for agility, easy on the dogs’ joints and my knees! They hold up excellent to everyday use and are a breeze when it comes to cleaning up after accidents. I would highly recommend them to anyone and would do so over other flooring options.”

Debb Kirschner, from K9 JYM in Colmar, Pennsylvania: “We put the flooring down in October 2008. The mats look great! All the activity they see and they stand up to it well. I’ve had folks bring their fastest dogs and turn tight corners at impossible speeds without seeing the dogs lose their footing. And people with sore knees and hips find the surface easy on their joints as well. It seems to provide a firm, yet very resilient working surface.

Care needs to be taken with any of the sharp edges on equipment as heavy sharp edges will cut into the mat surface immediately.”

Dream Turf

Dream Turf is a synthetic turf that looks like a grass lawn. The company offers several versions of their product to meet various customer needs, from a lawn for dogs to play on to a backyard putting green. Dream Turf representative John Davidson says, “About half our business is for dog owners, many that just can’t keep a good looking lawn due to the dog’s traffic and urine spots. We have also installed our turf at some commercial kennels as well as condo rooftops in downtown Seattle specifically for dog potty areas. With heavy dog traffic, I would expect a life expectancy anywhere from 7-12 years.”

Contact: 13621 212th Street SE, Snohomish, Washington 98296; 866-901-TURF (8873), ask for John Davidson; john@dreamturf.com, www.dreamturf.com.

Cost: See installation costs.

Installation costs: \$3/sq ft to lay subfloor tile drainage system. The turf portion of the install is \$7/sq ft so the entire installed system would be \$10/sq ft

Installation requirements: A subfloor drainage system is required, along with preexisting drains installed in the floor. Without the drainage tile, there would be problems rinsing the turf to keep sanitary. The tiles allow for water and other liquids to travel freely to the drains. Davidson says, “Installers lacking experience may quote a much lower price and then glue the turf directly to the floor; you *will* not have proper drainage and you *will* have an unpleasant experience that will be very costly to fix. Our motto is to do the job right the first time.”

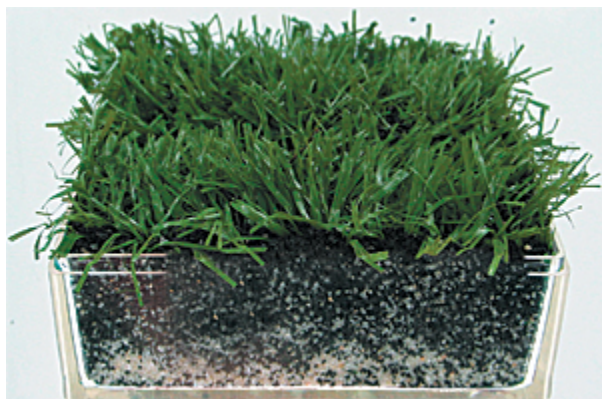
Warranty: 7-year warranty on fading.

Weight: Total system weight with tiles, turf, and infill is about 4 lbs/sq ft

Ease of cleaning and maintenance: Daily rinsing with water is suggested. When a stronger cleaner is needed, use products like Simple Green to eliminate any odors or bacteria build-up.

Comments: None available.

FieldTurf



FieldTurf is a 100% recyclable artificial grass system made of polyethylene fibers which are durable yet soft to the touch. The infill is made from graded silica sand and cryogenically frozen and crumbled recycled rubber to provide a non-compactable, resilient, natural-feeling “synthetic earth” to withstand the most demanding environments.

This product is used in some agility facilities and has been installed in many other businesses with high canine traffic. “FieldTurf is a widely

used product preferred by kennel masters at key locations including The San Diego Humane Society, The Marin County Humane Society, Sea World in San Diego, and The USDA National Canine Detector Training Center at Hartsfield-Jackson Airport in Atlanta,” says Richard Spanjian, President of FieldTurf Greenscapes division.

Contact: FieldTurf, 100 FieldTurf Drive, Peachtree City, Georgia, 30269; 800-364-6541; www.fieldturf.com.



Cost: \$9 to \$17/sq ft depending on size of installation, access to site, geographic availability of sub-base materials, and other variables.

Installation costs: Included in cost.

Installation requirements: FieldTurf is not a do-it-yourself project; a certified FieldTurf installation crew is needed. This surface can be put asphalt or concrete with most typical installations requiring removal of top 4"-6" of existing soil which is replaced by a compacted crushed stone base to ensure proper stability and drainage. Installation costs include all necessary products.

Installation costs may be increased if there is no opening 6' high by 7' wide and/or if there is a

long distance from the point of entry to the point of installation.

Warranty: 8-year manufacturer’s warranty for product

Weight: Not applicable because the product is installed by FieldTurf staff.

Ease of cleaning and maintenance: Spanjian reports that kennels using FieldTurf typically just need to hose off waste. Some owners have found many cleaners, disinfectants, and deodorizers to be effective, including Simple Green, AlphaZymePlus, KennelSol, Roccal-D, Parvasol II, and most often a simple 10:1 water-to-household-bleach mixture works best. Damage to turf is infrequent since dogs are not drawn to dig through the material. In the rare event that damage is done, it can be repaired by FieldTurf certified contractors/installers.

Comments:

Lo Baker, from BARK-NH Agility: “We host four USDAA trials a year on FieldTurf. We find that many dogs (including our own) are posting their fastest yards per second on this surface. It is amazing to run on; the dogs don’t slip, and judges love it because their legs and feet don’t get tired. I love the stuff! If we won the lottery and put up a building, I would want FieldTurf for the surface.”

Dee Davidson, who has had FieldTurf in her yard for 18 months: “I love it. I have two large dogs, the yard is fairly small (1000 sq ft) and it looks as good, if not better, today than it did the day it was installed. I live at the beach in southern California, so there is lots of sun and damp weather. I wash it down with a mild solution of Simple Green about every six weeks in the summer when it doesn’t get much rain to wash it off.

The dogs run and play and have excellent traction—in fact, probably better than regular grass because its uniform texture and level.”

Kennel Kolor Tiles and Runners

These mats by Linear Rubber are made of slip resistant, 3/8" thick, non-porous, recycled rubber that is sound resistant and shock absorbing. Although Linear Rubber makes flooring for a wide variety of purposes, the Kennel Kolor products are the ones they recommend for agility facilities. They come in rolled matting in 4' widths up to 250' in length and as interlocking tiles (48" x 48"). The company recommends the long rolls for agility facilities since they have fewer seams. The products come in solid black or with your choice of yellow, green, blue, white, or red colored speckles. Tiles are reversible.

Contact: Linear Rubber Products, 5416 46th Street, Kenosha, Wisconsin, 53144; 800-558-4040; info@rubbermats.com, www.rubbermats.com.

Cost: Ranges from \$2.30-\$2.80/sq ft. Price varies based on color, amount being purchased, and other factors. Call for details.

Installation costs: Can be self-installed without significant cost.

Installation requirements: Utility knife, straight knife, and optional indoor glue (available through Linear Rubber). This product can be free-laid.

Warranty: 2 years prorated.

Weight: Less than 2 lbs/sq ft

Ease of cleaning and maintenance: Clean the Kennel Kolor floor any other, using light detergent and water; just mop it up. Light disinfectants are also fine and it can even be power washed.

Comments:

Nita Woulf, owner of Clever K9s in Kaukauna, Wisconsin: “I love it. It has great traction and has good ‘bounce’ factor. You can order it in any type of size, edging, etc. I’ve had mine for almost two years. Half of it is used every day for dog daycare, the other half for training classes.

Both sides look almost brand new; you don’t see any scratch marks or wear. Lots of people with fast dogs are surprised how well the dogs do on the matting. There is very little slippage, although if it is wet, it is slippery.

The only complaint I have... I ordered mine in rolls with straight edging—the company said the machine-cut edging would butt together almost seamlessly. Well my rolls of matting were not manufactured completely straight, so I do have some small gaps between the edges. I could have had the edging done in puzzle piece, which would have solved that issue.

The mats were incredibly heavy to install; I also should have paid the extra to have [a] company come and set them up!”

Chas Richardson, owner of A Dog’s Day Out LLC: We have just purchased Linear Rubber flooring. It will be installed mid-September. While we presently have no working knowledge of their product yet, I can say that this family owned company offers excellent customer service from a team of people who seem to go the extra mile for their clients.”

RB Rubber Dog Agility Flooring/Tenderfoot



RB Rubber Dog Agility Flooring (also sold as Tenderfoot) may be best known in the agility community for its role as the flooring selected for the 2005 AKC Agility Nationals in Tampa, Florida. But since 1985, both animals and people have benefited from using this durable, anti-fatigue flooring. RB Rubber products, made from recycled tires, provide traction, joint protection, and shock absorption for use in agility and other dog sports. Ag & Pet Division Manager Kelly Arnold says that RB Rubber flooring can be found in “hundreds of agility clubs across the U.S., plus doggy daycares, and it seems to be working very well.” The matting comes in 1/2" and 3/4" 4' x 6' sections in 3/8" x 4' x 25' or 50' rolls. Thinner rolls are available but not recommended for agility. Users can choose to lay the product smooth-side up or textured-side up to best meet their needs.

RB Rubber flooring meets nation-wide safety standards for children’s use.

Contact: RB Rubber Products, 904 NE 10th Avenue, McMinnville, Oregon, 97128; 800-525-5530; www.rbrubber.com.

Cost: RB Rubber Products are available through J & J Dog Supplies or various dealers throughout the United States. Please contact customer service at RB Rubber Products, Inc. to locate the dealer near you. When purchased through J & J Dog Supplies, 4' x 6' mats are \$39.99 each for 1/2" thickness and \$42.99 each for 3/4" thickness; 3/8" rolled matting is \$214.95 per 200' roll. Prices may vary based on quantity ordered; call for details.

Installation costs: Can be self-installed without significant cost, although RB Rubber has installation companies to refer customers to if preferred.

Installation requirements: Rolled rubber should be applied with double-stick tape or a trowel grade adhesive to concrete according to the installation instructions. The mats should be laid over unsealed concrete, with caulking adhesive applied between the seams.

Warranty: 5 years

Weight: 98 lbs. per 3/4" thick mat; rolls weigh 2 lbs/sq ft and come in 4' x 25' or 4' x 50' lengths.



Ease of cleaning and maintenance: Arnold suggests that for thorough cleaning, clubs should use a floor extractor that applies and removes a cleaning solution. The solution may pool if heavily applied because of the pores in the product. RB Rubber carries cleaning solutions and veterinary approved disinfectants for proper cleaning. Since heat will neutralize the cleaning solutions, a steam cleaner should not be used. A dry or damp sponge can be used to clean small areas. Some clubs use leaf vacuums for easy maintenance.

RB Rubber now carries a sealer that will fill in the pores between the particles of rubber and makes it significantly easier to maintain. It puts a sheen on the floor but doesn't make it slippery. The sealer will eventually wear off so it needs to be maintained by reapplying every three to six

months in high traffic areas. No stripping is necessary—the sealer will stick to itself so you don't have to redo the entire floor each time.

Comments:

Robin Nuttall, instructor from the Columbia Canine Sports Center said in 2005: “The dogs love it, and after three years I don't know of any increase in injury, either short or long term. We have it installed ‘wrong side’ up, which is a rougher surface. The dogs can accelerate to full speed, turn easily, and there is absolutely no slipping. Judges at our UKC trials fight over who gets to have the RB Rubber ring because their feet don't get tired after an entire day of walking on it. We use the 3/4" thickness, in the 4' x 6' mats.

The one disadvantage of the wrong-side-up approach is that it's a bit more difficult to clean in case of an accident; brushes and blotting are called for instead of wiping with a paper towel, and vacuuming works better than sweeping for dog hair. But overall we're thrilled with the surface and would choose it again.”

Update from Robin Nuttall, regarding Columbia Canine Sports Center's new 28,800 sq ft facility with RB Rubber: “We've been very happy with it. The mats are holding up well to moderate-to-heavy use. We run classes on the surface four days a week and now host AKC, UKC, USDAA,

and ASCA agility trials on it as well as using it for Obedience, Rally, etc. Last winter, a group of local soccer teams came in and used it for winter practice.”

Terry Smorch, who ran his Border Collie on RB Rubber at the AKC Agility Nationals in 2005:
“[It had] good traction for the dogs and handlers. The matting was placed on top of concrete so it was a firm surface without a lot of cushion. It was fine for a few runs over a weekend but I would probably not want to use it for regular training if placed on top of concrete. I would want to evaluate the matting over a cushioned surface for everyday use”

Elaine Mayher, Jump & Run Canine Training Center, LLC in Columbia Station, Ohio: “We purchased RB Rubber for our flooring in our 4,000 sq ft training building. It is the 3/8" thickness in solid black. I really have no issues with the flooring but we did have issues with ordering and picking up the material from their warehouse, plus on our second order they sent the wrong thickness of rubber which wasn't detected until we started using the pallet it was on due to the way it was packaged. That set us behind and cost us some income. Everything was rectified to our satisfaction but we could have lived without the hassle in the first place. You can view pictures of our flooring at our web site at www.jumpruncaninetraining.webs.com.

The flooring was installed December 1, 2008 and is holding up very well. Cleaning isn't a problem but I wouldn't use paper towels on it because the rough texture of the flooring traps paper towel particles and when it dries and makes a messy looking spot. A hard surface floor scrubbing machine works well for deep cleaning while daily vacuuming keeps the hair tumbleweeds down.”

Sprinturf



Sprinturf is an artificial turf that looks and feels like natural grass. Made of very strong Ultrablade™ fiber and a rubber or rubber and sand infill, Sprinturf products can be found in professional sports facilities, high school and college stadiums, dog parks, and dog training sites. Sprinturf produces other surfaces as well that may be useful for agility facilities.

The Ultrablade DF (dual fiber) product is the most popular for indoor and outdoor dog facility use. It was designed for athletic fields. The DF version is updated from previous product in that

it traps the infill in place with slightly curling fibers.

All-rubber infill is recommended for installations in dog facilities. The infill surface rubber has been tested under numerous circumstances and has been deemed to be safe for children as well as pets. In fact, it is used as the primary system for playground applications.

Contact: Sprinturf, 1200 Liberty Ridge Drive, Ste.100, Wayne, Pennsylvania, 19087; 877-686-8873; www.sprinturfsp.com.

Cost: \$3.75-\$4/sq ft for self-installation (this is a significant price decrease from 2005).

Installation costs: If installed by Sprinturf or affiliated installers, then the cost is approximately \$5.25/sq ft total for the product and the installation. Variations in cost may occur depending on accessibility, location, and other factors. Sprinturf can provide assistance over the phone for self-installations.

Installation requirements: Can be installed on concrete, compacted stone, or compacted dirt (should be 95% compacted). If it is to be used heavily for dogs to eliminate on it, adequate drainage must be ensured. Sprinturf comes in 15' widths, so seaming and cutting will be required.

Warranty: 8-year manufacturer's warranty. Installation warranty depends on installer (varies based on size).

Weight: A 1,500 sq ft roll weighs about 700 lbs., but Sprinturf can be cut to any size to facilitate ease of installation. The infill rubber comes in 50-lb., 1,000-lb., and 2,000-lb. bags.

Ease of cleaning and maintenance: Sprinturf can be hosed off or special cleaners can be used. Company called Pioneer has helped work with Sprinturf to create a debacterial agent, but a non-phosphorus Tide product diluted may also be used. To remove hair and debris, use a backpack/walk behind blower and or a drag brush. Sprinturf Specialty Sales Coordinator Ray Bernabei says, "If a product were ever damaged, we would recommend one of our installers to come out and fix the issue."

Comments:

Lisa Kucharski, of Cleveland, Ohio, has used Sprinturf for her own training and for occasional lessons since October, 2008: "There's little maintenance. I don't really see any dog hair on it but I'm not doing classes. We've had accidents—urine, feces, vomit—but they've been easy to clean. There's no vapor barrier between the turf and the stone [it's installed over crushed lime] and there are interior drain tiles under the stone. So, after picking up the bulk, I can douse the spot well with water and then I spray it *very* thoroughly with a commercial sanitizer mix. It hasn't been in very long but it has been excellent so far.

I consider rubber infill turf to be the ideal [for agility]. It is not slippery—the dogs can dig their nails into the rubber just as they could into dirt on nice grass outdoors. But, unlike outdoors, it is even and it doesn't get hard if there's a lack of rain. The cushion is excellent. And, it is very clean. The dogs will pick up pellets in their coats if they roll around on the floor but it's easy to brush them off [Editor's note: that is not supposed to happen with the DF version].

The only downside to it is that we are a bit spoiled by it. The dogs can't 'dig in' as well on mats and I don't run very well on uneven dirt or grass surfaces.

I really love it and I'm glad that I chose it over the other options I'd considered. Sprinturf was *awesome* to work with. They have now done a decent number of agility installations so they understand what is involved and they were incredibly responsive. I love my floor – I have even started to do my own conditioning runs on it instead of pounding my legs on sidewalks or being bored to death on a treadmill."

Mark Bills of Highest Hope Dog Sports in Grand Blanc, Michigan has had Ultrablade DF for just over a year: "We did our own install; it required rented equipment and lots of work. This saved 50% of the cost but I needed to call in a lot of favors from dog friends.

[To clean it] we use a lawn sweeper pulled behind a lawn tractor, and clean up accidents with Nature's Miracle. So far it has worked well. Because the dog hair does not collect into little dust bunnies, it is not noticeable on the floor. We sweep every few weeks. [It's holding up well, but] the dirt base has moved a little. We need to do some minor repairs but it's nothing serious.

Good dirt is probably better for the fast dogs, but the Sprinturf offers great footing with out the mess and dust. I shopped for lots of turf options; Sprinturf was easy to work with and treated me like a real customer. The other large suppliers did not seem interested in working on a small project like mine."

Beverly Melcher, owner of Orchard Hills Training Center in Barto, Pennsylvania installed Sprinturf in late 2006: "The decision to put Sprinturf in my training center is one the best investments I have ever made. It cleans fairly easily. I have had the Sprinturf people blow the hair out for me, and I have used a leaf blower and pressure washer to help keep it clean. If I ever put up another building, I would use Sprinturf again [for agility]. Everybody that has seen and used my training center can not say enough about how nice the Sprinturf is. My Sprinturf gets a lot of wear and tear with many activities going on at my training center, and seems to be holding up very well."

Mary Ellen Barry, who instructs on Sprinturf Ultrablade: "It is by far my favorite surface to run on as well as stand on all day for teaching. Ours is installed over leveled dirt. Since the facility is used by all kinds of classes, there are accidents on it. The turf has holes in it for draining and because of the dirt underneath; accidents are not a problem. We have Natures Miracle on hand and clean up quickly, but so far there haven't been any long term effects.

There is some level of slipping by the dogs, however, I personally find it to be no more so than outside on grass (even less). This surface is an indoor/outdoor and can also be used outside. When used outside in rainy climates, it alleviates the problem of mud and the surface drains quite well."

Trac-Roll



Trac-Roll, sometimes known as Top Dog Flooring, is a versatile floor which can be used anywhere that a shock-absorbing, spike resistant, anti-skid surface is required, including fitness centers, golf pro shops, and dog training centers. It can be found in facilities all over the U.S. and Canada. This product is made of recycled tire rubber and Dandy Products claims that it provides excellent traction when wet or dry. Top Dog/Trac-Roll is available in different

thicknesses between 1/4" and 3/4", and in solid black or black with color flecks. Reversible.

Contact: Dandy Products, Inc., 3314 State Route 131, Goshen, Ohio, 45122; 888-883-8386; dandypro@aol.com, www.dandyproducts.net.

Cost: \$2 /sq ft

Installation costs: Must be quoted per job. Can be self-installed without significant cost (40%-50 % of all purchases are self-installs).

Installation requirements: Install over clean, dry, smooth cement. Customers may glue the product down or tack it down with industrial carpet tape.

Warranty: 3-year warranty says that it is free of defects in material and workmanship, that the material meets specifications, and that it will not exhibit signs of excessive deterioration other than normal wear and tear.

Weight: A 4' x 50' x 3/8" roll weighs 350 lbs. (1.75 lbs/sq ft). Since rolls are available in different lengths and thicknesses, the weight of each roll will vary.

Ease of cleaning and maintenance: This flooring can be vacuumed, swept, and mopped with cleaners that are readily available, like Simple Green or something non-phosphorous based. Heavy detergents should be rinsed thoroughly to prevent residue or build-up. Avoid abrasive alkaline cleaners, petroleum products, and citrus-based products (including lemon).

Comments:



Denise Thomas, owner of Countryside Agility in Fairview, Pennsylvania, has had Top Dog for six years: “We hold 25-30 classes a week plus 15 trials a year and occasional seminars. It’s held up extremely well as far as not breaking down and you can’t hurt it with equipment moving or heavy use, but it did get slippery after about five years so we flipped it over. That was the good part was that it is the same on both sides. I did find it to be a little too hard for my liking for my own dogs that train there regularly so when we flipped it we put down foam tiles underneath it (see photo on left). Now I am quite happy with it.

It’s extremely easy to clean; we use a leaf blower several times a week to get the hair off and a Zamboni-type machine to scrub the floors about every two

weeks. I would purchase it again even though I would prefer more cushion. I don’t know what else could hold up to the heavy usage we put it through. We are thinking perhaps mopping it with bleach water could have possibly caused the change in the floor surface so now only use water and are trying more frequent scrubbing using a machine that extracts the water from the floor so the dirt is being lifted off the floor instead of just being pushed around.”

White Bourland, from the Queen City Dog Training Club in Cincinnati, Ohio, has had the 3/8" floor since January 2004: “[Cleaning is] very easy now that we have solved the problem.

Consequences of misdirected cleaning was slipping by large dog in agility trials...we think by using the wrong brush on the auto-scrubber that we were just polishing the floor. Through experimentation we have come up with our present maintenance system: sweep weekly with the 30" vacuum, scrub two to three times per month with a wet NSS auto scrubber using only hot water and a Niagara Blue Cleaning pad. 10,000 sq ft takes us one hour.”

Bourland says that the club would purchase the flooring again but would add underlayment.

Patti Jo Yuswak, from the Wisconsin-Illinois Agility Group (WAG) in Spring Grove, Illinois: “We love it. We left our old matting down then put another layer of padding and then the Trac-roll. We are very happy with it. It was easy to put in and easy to clean. I haven’t heard anyone

complaining about it; even after standing on it for two hours instructing your legs don't hurt. We just have to make sure not to leave any standing liquid of any sort as it is more porous [than our previous floor,] I believe."

Tru-Blue Agility Mats

Tru-Blue Agility Mats are water-resistant, interlocking, EVA closed-cell foam tiles with a non-slick finish that offer, as their website states, "wonderful traction." The 7/8" thick, 40" x 40" tiles were made with agility in mind but are also suggested for other purposes, including indoor children's facilities and playgrounds. According to company owner Jeanne Emge, unlike other EVA agility mats, these mats do not create static electricity. Reversible.

Contact: EMGE Services, 142 Railroad Ave, Westminster, Maryland, 21157; 800-467-7321; jeanne@earthhorse.com, www.earthhorse.com.

Cost: Approximately \$21/tile. Price varies; call for quantity discounts or discounted, slightly used tiles.

Installation costs: Can be self-installed without significant cost.

Installation requirements: Sub-floor should be a hard level surface. To install, simply lay down mats and interlock them. No glue or tape is required.

Warranty: 1 year

Weight: 8 lbs/tile

Ease of cleaning and maintenance: Sweep or vacuum up loose dirt and use a mild detergent solution or even plain water to clean up accidents or spills.

Comments:

Nancy Morris, from Oriole Dog Training Club in Baltimore, Maryland: "This is the best matting that we have found." ODTC has trials at the Maryland County Fairgrounds and transports Tru-Blue agility mats to the site and installs it every time they have an event. "It takes two six-hour days putting it down; it's not that hard," she says. In fact, they hire students to do it with the help of adult supervision. Nancy says that flooring ODTC used previously had a lot of static electricity. "[Tru-Blue] has next to none," she says.

Click the links to see dogs using Tru-Blue Agility Mats:

www.arielagility.com/videoplayer.php?recordID=644

www.arielagility.com/videoplayer.php?recordID=640