

healthy HOME



Get Floored.

A few years ago, when Ben and I designed our home with our architect, we made sure to request plenty of room to do things on the floor. You see, we desired more than just a healthy home, we desired a sanctuary where we could live as naturally as possible and, for us, that meant less couch time and more time spent in activity standing, leaning, and on the floor.

Both Ben and I knew that designing a home that promoted movement, instead of a home designed around sitting and watching television, would prompt family interaction, more conversation, and help us to remain as distraction free and focused on our relationships and goals as possible. Because, let's be honest, traditionally designed homes, with little to no open floor space, filled with oversized furniture, and decked out with multiple screens, are not usually associated with empowered living or good health – and probably contribute more to ill health than we are willing to admit.

We stuck with our “healthy home” design guns and now enjoy an amazing home with large workspaces, kitchen butcher blocks for family food prep and gatherings, large open areas in our lower level where the kids can play and build with toys, spacious patios for reading, sunning, and exercise, gardens to meander, and less of most things like traditional furniture and screens.

Don't get me wrong - we have furniture. Just like most of America, we have a dining table and chairs, a couch, comfy seating nooks, and welcoming bedrooms – but we do more activities standing and on the floor than on our furniture – well, except for sleeping. For instance, Ben and I have adjustable standing desks and Ben will often kneel, on comfy knee pillows, while writing or reading. We have stairs, that we run up and down multiple times per day, we don't have wired-in internet, nor do we have screens (but for one, in the lower level, for family movie nights), and we have plenty of bars, ropes, swings, and odd mobility devices rather than traditional furniture.

It might sound strange to some, but we love our vertical-to-floor alternative lifestyle. When others are vegging out on Lazy Boys, Ben and I are on the floor, with our boys, engaged in conversation while, without any real exertion, we're also engaging our core, improving our posture, and increasing our flexibility. And, truly friends, this is just a peek as to why we love getting our floor time on – and hopefully the start to why you'll be getting yours on too.

Did you know that traditional furnishings, like over-stuffed couches and chairs, cause the body to go limp, but floor pillows and bolsters create a better body? When the body is not overcome by fluffy furniture, the body must support itself and utilize musculature – even the tiny, hard to tone, innermost

muscles that rarely get activated. This is a good thing – because the contractions necessary to hold the body upright also lengthen the spine and naturally improve posture while creating a Zen-like internal environment beneficial to the parasympathetic nervous system.

Take a moment...

Think about wellness classes, yoga classes, meditation sessions, and general “play” – it’s all performed on the floor, right? There is a specific reason for this – the actions required to keep the body upright and engaged on the floor also cause the mind to be present. Getting off the couch and onto the floor also increases back strength, which aids in the prevention of back injury, and offers the body the chance to move through space and gravity in ways that aid joint alignment.

My personal favorite reasons for getting “floored” include naturally lengthened and strengthened muscles, beautiful ballerina like posture, and increased flexibility - which has reduced my muscle soreness after a hard day’s work in the garden. I’m also enjoying my tight abdominal muscles, developed from holding my body upright, and, of course, the precious family time.

By now you’re probably wondering what we use to protect our bones from the floor and what we use to bolster our bodies while playing, picnic- dining, or exercising on the floor. Well, what we use is actually quite simple – floor cushions. You can call them floor pillows, floor pads, floor furniture – whatever you wish – but, basically, all we use are simple floor cushions that I make.

Although I’ll be sharing my exact floor cushion design with you, in the long run, what matters most is that you use my design as a template for what works best for you. This project can and should be tweaked to your specific design aesthetic, household color scheme, and desired household energy.

Remember, if I role with a simple neutral look and you desire a peppy colorful vibe – go for it! Use your intuition to pick the perfect fabric and cushion size to attain the look, feel, and energy you’re after.

So, follow me as I share my step-by-step design for beautiful and functional floor cushions so that you too can make your own unique, beautiful, and functional floor cushions and get off that couch and onto the floor.

Let’s get floored...

Jessa Greenfield’s Healthy Home Floor Pillows

Tools:

- Sewing machine, needle and thread, stapler, or hot glue gun.
- Fabric – enough to cover each desired floor pillow with at least five inches of extra length on each side.
- Pillow stuffing, pillows, couch cushions, or any other stuffing material you desire.
- Memory foam.
- Measuring tape, safety pins or straight pins, scissors, and a flat cutting surface.

Steps:

1. First, decide on the size of the floor pillow(s) you desire. I usually make square floor pillows that are between 20 and 24 inches wide. You can make any shape or size – just make sure it's a functional dimension.
2. Second, on a flat cutting surface, measure your fabric and cut according to your desired measurements with an additional 5 inches of fabric on all sides. You will need two cuts per pillow – a bottom piece and a top piece. Both cuts should be identical.
3. Third, lay the fabric pieces right side facing in on top of right side facing in – this will give you an inside out sandwich of both fabric pieces.
4. Fourth, use your straight pins or safety pins to mark a border around three sides of your fabric – not all four sides. This is where you will run stitches, sew stitches, staple, or glue your fabric together to make the floor pillow cover. The fourth side must be left open so that you can eventually turn the fabric right side out and stuff the stuffing and foam into place before securing the cover completely.
5. Fifth, secure the three sides however you choose. I have used all methods in the past – machine, by hand, stapled, and glued. Naturally, the machine creates the best final product.
6. Sixth, turn your fabric right side out and fill with stuffing. I like to sandwich memory foam between pillow stuffing and create a dense resilient floor cushion.
7. Seventh, turn the extra five inches of fabric, on the opened side of the cushion, inside of the pillow and secure the opening as neatly as possible. This side of the cushion requires careful attention to detail, as the seam will be exposed. Take your time and it will turn out beautiful. Promise.

Now you have your first beautiful and functional floor pillow and I encourage you to make at least one for every member in your household, or more.

Floor cushions are great for stacking beside low tables during meal times, positioned under the knees while relaxing on your back, and great for spinal support while trying out energetic back openers and other yoga like movements.

If you feel that you'd rather buy before you DIY, Ben's friend Kathleen makes super cool "Floor Bloom" floor pillows. We have a couple of Kathleen's designs and both of my boys just love them. Her designs are very different from mine and geared more towards a playful aesthetic, but they might be the perfect solution to help you and your kids get off the couch and onto the floor without any DIY hassle.

I encourage you to do whatever it takes to get your household "floored" and I can't wait for you and your family to start reaping all the great health boosting benefits floored living brings. I'll tell you, once you get floored, you'll never turn back.

Peace,

Jessa