How to Check If Your Floor Is Level Using a Phone App

Before laying tile, installing cabinets, or setting furniture, use a free phone app to check floor level in under a minute.

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Why Floor Level Matters

An unlevel floor causes cascading problems: doors that won't close properly, cabinets that lean visibly, floor tiles that crack along grout lines, and furniture that rocks. Catching the problem before you start a project saves expensive rework.

Checking a floor with a traditional 4-foot level gives you a point-to-point comparison, but it misses the bigger picture of how the whole room slopes. A phone app lets you check quickly at multiple points and build a mental map of where the high and low spots are.

Setting Up Your Phone App

Open **Bubble Level & Angle Gauge** on your phone. You'll use the bullseye mode for flat surface checks and the horizontal level mode for directional measurements.

Before checking your floor, calibrate the app: set your phone on a surface you know is level (like a granite kitchen countertop that was professionally installed), and use the 180° calibration tool in the app. This removes any factory offset from your phone's accelerometer and ensures accurate readings. Save the calibration profile so it persists between sessions.

Step-by-Step Floor Level Check

1. Center of the Room

Place your phone flat on the floor in the center of the room. The bullseye indicator shows any cross-slope. Note whether the bubble is centered or which direction it drifts. A drift of more than 0.5° is usually noticeable once tile or a floating floor is installed.

2. Along Each Wall

Walk the perimeter, placing your phone every 3–4 feet along each wall. In horizontal level mode, this tells you whether the floor slopes toward or away from that wall. Make a quick note of the readings — even a rough sketch on paper helps.

3. Diagonal Across the Room

Check corner-to-corner diagonally. This reveals if one corner is significantly higher or lower than the rest, which would indicate a hump or depression that's less obvious from wall-to-wall measurements.

4. Transitions and Doorways

Check floor-to-floor transitions between rooms and at doorways — these spots accumulate measurement error if multiple trades worked the subfloor at different times.

Interpreting the Results

Industry tolerances for residential floors vary by flooring type:

- **Hardwood and laminate:** No more than 3/16 inch over 10 feet (about 0.1°)
- **Ceramic and porcelain tile:** No more than 1/8 inch over 10 feet for joints under 15 inches
- **Vinyl plank:** 3/16 inch over 10 feet
- **Subfloor for carpet:** Up to 3/8 inch over 10 feet

Bubble Level & Angle Gauge shows readings in degrees, percent slope, and mm/m. Convert by remembering that 0.1° over 3 meters is approximately 5mm of drop — or use the percent reading directly: 1% slope = 10mm per meter.

What to Do When the Floor Isn't Level

Minor variations (under 3/16 inch over 10 feet) are common in residential construction and can usually be accommodated with a self-leveling compound applied before flooring installation. For larger deviations, a flooring contractor or general contractor should assess whether the issue is in the subfloor or the structure below.

If you're checking before buying furniture, remember that most furniture can be shimmed under legs to compensate for floor slope — you don't need a perfectly level floor to have stable furniture.

Checking Multiple Rooms

For a whole-home survey before a renovation, create a simple grid and record the angle at each measurement point. The hold feature in Bubble Level & Angle Gauge lets you lock the reading and move to a notepad without disturbing the phone's position — useful for single-person surveys across multiple rooms.

Limitations of Phone-Based Floor Checks

A phone app measures the angle of the surface you place it on. Loose or warped subfloor panels can give inconsistent readings as the panel flexes under the phone's weight. For a professional pre-tile assessment, a floor flattening check requires a long straightedge or a laser level to catch small, localized high spots. Phone apps are excellent for identifying macro-level slope issues; they're less suited to detecting small, localized humps.

Download and Start Checking

Bubble Level & Angle Gauge is free for iPhone and Android. The calibration feature and multiple measurement modes make it the most practical free option for floor level checks before renovation projects.

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