

LAMINATE FLOORING INSTALLATION GUIDE

Important observations before your installation begins

- ALWAYS inspect each plank for defects such as chips and color or sheen differences before installation. Also make sure tongue and groove clean and free of debris
- Lay the unopened cartons horizontally and acclimate for approximately 48 hours in the area where the floor will be installed. Job site temperature should be 65-75°F and the relative humidity should be 30-50% before, during and after installation. And these conditions must be maintained for the life of the product. Never install laminate floors in damp areas such as steam rooms and saunas.

Tools and supplies needed

- Foam underlay (If product does not have attached underlay), pressure sensitive polypropylene adhesive tape such as tuck tape, spacers, tapping block, pull bar, saw, hammer, utility knife, pencil, tape measure, ruler, construction adhesive

Subfloors and Floor Preparation

- Laminate Floors can be installed over existing resilient floor coverings, wood flooring, particle board and ceramic tile (grout joints must be flat according to installation specifications). Do not install Laminate Floors over carpet. Remove all carpet, pad and staples if present before installing a Laminate Floor and examine the subfloor underneath. Make any repairs to the subfloor, if necessary, prior to installation.
- The subfloors must be thoroughly even, dry, clean and solid. Subfloor variations should not exceed 1/8" in 6' (3.18 mm in 1.8 m). Use a 6' level or straightedge to check for variation. All high spots must be sanded or ground smooth. Fill in low spots, cracks, and depressions.
- Floors must be carefully checked for moisture problems. Any moisture problems need to be solved before installation. New concrete needs to cure for at least 60 days before installation.
- If installing over a crawlspace or on a concrete floor, you must also install a 4 mil (or thicker) polyethylene vapor barrier under your foam underlay or use a convenient 2 in 1 foam underlay that has a vapor barrier built-in. When installing 2 in 1 foam underlay, butt seams and then completely seal seams using polypropylene adhesive tape if the underlayment is not self-sealing. No underlayment is required if the product you are using has an attached underlayment provided

Radiant Heated Subfloors

- Laminate Flooring may be installed over hydroponic radiant-heated subfloors, provided the surface temperature of the system does not exceed 82°F. Before installing Laminate Flooring over newly constructed radiant-heating systems, operate the system at maximum capacity to force any residual moisture from the radiant heating system. Then set the thermostat to a comfortable room temperature for the installation.

Installation Instructions

- Our laminate floors are designed to be "floated." That means they should never be nailed or glued to the subfloor. Glueless laminate planks are joined together by a specially designed mechanical locking profile; no adhesive is required to join the planks. It is recommended that a PVA adhesive be used on end joints of wide planks (6" or wider) to avoid squeaking or end joint separation. This is not a requirement for proper installation
- Remove tongue from wall side of the first row of plank and position this edge along the starting wall using $\frac{5}{16}$ " - $\frac{3}{8}$ " spacers to maintain proper expansion gap. If the starting wall is irregular, the first row of planks must be scribed to fit.
- For installation on concrete floors or any floors over a crawl space, a vapor barrier must be laid down first. See "Subfloors and Floor Preparation" above for details.
- All flooring installations require foam underlay (If underlay is not attached). Run the foam underlay in the same direction as laminate planks. Underlayment should be butted side by side with no overlap. Tape seams together.
- You will need to remove the tongue on the long side of the planks that face the wall from the appropriate amount of planks for your first row. This is to ensure that the decorative surface of the laminate is well under the finished trim when installed. Use a utility knife to score through the tongue several times until it easily snaps off.
- Start in a corner by placing the first plank with its trimmed side facing the wall. Use spacers along each wall to maintain an expansion space of $\frac{5}{16}$ " - $\frac{3}{8}$ " between the wall and the flooring.

- Attach the ends of the planks using the fold-down method (the ends are meant to fold over the ends). Line up edges carefully.
- Continue along the wall until you reach the last full plank, connecting them as you go. To fit the last plank, rotate the plank 180° with the pattern side upward, place beside row. Mark off the excess and saw off. When using a handsaw cut with the decorative side down to avoid chipping. Use a pull bar to tap the last piece into place.
- Begin the next row with the cut off piece from the previous row to stagger the pattern. Pieces should be a minimum of 8" long and joint offset should be at least 16". To attach the planks tilt the plank you are attaching slightly upwards. When lowered, the plank will click into place with light pressure. Make sure gaps are as small as possible. Continue along locking each piece into place ensuring a straight, tight fit beginning with the long side first and then folding the short side over the preceding end.
- To fit the last row, lay a plank on top of the previous row. With the tongue to the wall, lay another plank upside down on the one to be measured and use it as a ruler. Don't forget to allow room for spacers. Cut the panels and tap into place using the pull bar.
- Door frames and heating vents also require expansion room. First cut the plank to the correct length. Then place the cut plank next to its actual position and use a ruler to measure the areas to be cut out and mark them. Cut out the marked points allowing the necessary expansion distance on each side.
- You can trim door frames by turning a plank upside down and using a handsaw to cut away the necessary height so that planks slide easily under the frames.

Floor maintenance

- Use a slightly dampened cloth to clean up any dirt and footprints but avoid using excessing moisture or spraying cleaner directly on surface. All spills should be cleaned up immediately. Never use wax, polish, sand or scouring agents as they may dull or distort the finish. You can use acetone or a cleaner specially formulated for laminate to remove stubborn marks.
- To avoid scratches apply felt pads to your furniture legs and use only soft rubber casters. Protect high traffic areas with area rugs.
- It is a good idea to save a few planks in case of accidental damage. Planks can be replaced or repaired by a flooring professional.

Moldings

- Transition moldings are required at any opening, doorway, etc. less than 6 feet wide. Failure to use transition pieces could result in tenting of the planks due to movement
- Reducer molding is used to finish flooring when the adjoining surface is lower than the laminate flooring or when the flooring meets carpet. Position the U track between each edge of the flooring. Screw, nail or glue down the track directly to the subfloor and then insert the reducing strip into the track
- T-molding is used to finish flooring when two level surfaces meet in doorways or for expansion joints. Install same as above. If your room is more than 29' wide you will need to allow for an expansion joint. Expansion joints use T-molding and can be positioned in any inconspicuous place.
- Landing molding is used to finish flooring on landings or stair edges. Moldings need to be glued and screwed down to the subfloor for safety and stability. Color fill should be used to cover counter sunk screws.
- To finish the perimeter of the room install quarter round molding using finishing nails. Quarter round molding is nailed directly into the base board, not into the laminate flooring

Note: When installing the transitions it may be necessary to add a shim under the plastic U-rail for the trim to fit properly. You can achieve this by trimming a 3/4" wide foam strip by the desired length of the transitions off of the back side of the leftover flooring then adhere to the substrate under the U-rail