

Installation Guides

Tongue & Groove Solid Wood

All solid wood flooring can react to the presence of moisture. In the winter when the home has the central heating on, moisture can leave the wood, while in the summer months when the humidity is higher, the wood will absorb moisture. This is a natural process, due to the wood being “Hygroscopic” in nature.

Nearly all problems related to solid wood flooring are due to improper installation and exposure to excessive moisture in the concrete sub floor or excessive relative humidity (RH). If there is too much moisture it will cause the wood planks to cup, or buckle. This is why it is important when installing that you follow the correct recommended installation methods.

Prior to installation solid wood flooring must be acclimatised to reach its equilibrium moisture content (EMC). The product should be left in the room it is going to be laid in at normal room temperature and relative humidity (RH) for 7-10 days prior to installation. Refer to the supplied guides with your product for further reference.

Solid Wood Floors can be installed several ways:

- Fully Glued Down
- Nail/Screw Down
- Floated on Fast Fit Peel and Stick Underlay (Only up to 150mm widths)

Fully glued down installations

All Concrete sub-floors must be dry, smooth, level and free of structural defects. If the concrete sub floor is uneven we recommend using a self-levelling compound to level the subfloor out. On concrete sub-floors we always recommend installing a surface damp proof membrane (DPM) prior to installation, this applies to both new and old floors.

Also note that new concrete slabs require a minimum of 60 days drying time to achieve the correct moisture content (MC) before covering them with a wood floor, please always test the moisture content of a concrete sub-floor in several random places to ensure it is suitable to be laid on. The concrete must also be free of paint, oil, existing adhesives, wax, grease, dirt and curing compounds. These may be removed chemically or mechanically, but do not use solvent-based strippers under any circumstances. The use of residual solvents can prohibit the satisfactory bond of flooring adhesives. It is important to ensure a proper bond between the adhesives and concrete and wood panels.

Another important consideration in using glue-down installation is your choice of adhesives as some are only suitable for floors up to a small width. To avoid warranty issues and the

possibility of future problems we recommend Timba Floor Trade Adhesive 10L Tub which you trowel out to fully bond to the subfloor. Alternatively use Timba Easy Bond Adhesive & Gun Kit. This adhesive is applied with an applicator gun to run beads of adhesive on the subfloor at intervals and is easy for DIY and professional installations up to 150mm board width.

Nailed/screw down installations

Nailed down installation is the traditional way to install solid wood floors and can be done either directly onto wooden subfloor or on a concrete subfloor with the use of battens.

Solid wood floors can be nailed into existing wooden subfloors such as floorboards or plywood but not into chipboard floors as these are not strong enough to hold the nails. The floorboards must be in good condition and level if not it is advisable to lay 18mm plywood down first. For added soundproofing it is also advisable to use a poly-foam underlay such as Essential Plus Cushion White Underlay. When you nail down a solid wood floor you use a Porta-Nailer to drive a nail at a 30° angle through the tongue and into the subfloor. Porta-Nailers can be hired from any good hire shop.

A DIY friendly alternative to this is our Tongue Tite Screws these have been specially designed for use with tongue & groove wood flooring. Each pack covers 10m² and comes with a special drill bit that fits any standard electric drill or screwdriver.

Installing onto battens

You can nail/screw down a solid wood floor over a concrete subfloor with the use of battens. A damp proof membrane sheet must first be laid over the concrete subfloor before the battens are laid out at centres of 400mm. The battens must be a minimum of 40mm in depth to avoid them bowing. The solid wood floor can then be nailed down as described above.

Floated on Fast Fit Solid Wood Underlay

You can install solid hardwood flooring over a concrete subfloor or a mixture of different subfloors by floating it on an adhesive underlay. Fast Fit Solid Wood Underlay has adhesive on one side which the solid wood floor is laid onto, the boards must be 150mm or narrower for a successful installation. Before you lay down the underlay you will need to either first lay a DPM sheet like our Fast Fit Polythene Damp Proof Membrane or use our liquid Timba Barrier DPM.

You will need to leave a minimum 15mm expansion gap around the perimeter of the room. To maintain this gap during installation, spacers are provided in our installation kit (purchased separately).

After you have installed the floor you can cover this expansion gap with scotia beading or replace you old skirting boards with new ones, to give a much more professional finish. An

expansion gap also needs to be left in doorways where the floor follows through from one room to another or not. We have a full range of door profiles available to match your floor.

This is a brief guide on installing solid wood flooring always refer to the manufacturer's installation guides in the packs of the flooring. Or visit our Flooring Manufacturers Installations Guides.

If you require any further advice on installation then please call our technical department on 02476 012 840, e-mail us on technical@ukflooringdirect.co.uk or click the Live Help Button at the top of the page.