

Installation Guides

Unfinished Solid Wood Flooring

Solid wood floors are very dimensionally stable allowing them to be installed over all types of sub floors. They are suitable for all areas of the home except bathrooms and wet areas. You should seek out a professional to install this floor.

Finishing

All unfinished flooring will need to be finished on the premises after installation, otherwise it will likely stain, mark, and get easily water damaged. The floor should not be used or left for any period of time without a finish applied.

Oiled and lacquered finishes each have their own benefits. Choose whichever works better for you with the product of your choosing, provided it is suitable for finishing solid wood flooring.

Storage

Decorating and remodelling a home is a time-consuming process that can become even longer when problems arise. If your building project exceeds the original timeframe you may need to store some of your flooring. Solid wood flooring is susceptible to environmental damage, so it must be stored properly for it to be viable for use when you need it. If you make the effort to store your flooring properly, you can avoid having to deal with damage or replacements later.

If it is required to leave solid wood flooring elsewhere before bringing it into the correct room to acclimatise, it must be kept in properly enclosed surroundings that have a secure roof and weatherproof windows. Extreme temperatures and excess moisture can irreparably damage wood flooring, so it is important to select an area that will protect your flooring from exposure to the elements. A garage, for example, would be unsuitable due to the cold and potential for damp.

If solid wood flooring is exposed to freezing temperatures or extreme heat, this can lead to cracking or warping. To prevent this damage, if you are not sure, speak to our personal flooring experts about what temperature and humidity is ideal for storing your particular type of flooring, and do what you can to control the temperature and humidity in your temporary storage area. Solid wood flooring needs to be kept clean and dry, so air circulation is also a concern. Clean air should be allowed to circulate among the stacks of flooring; you may need to install fans if your building has poor air flow.

Flooring packs should be laid down horizontally onto a flat surface, and never propped up against a wall, for example, as this is likely to cause the flooring to warp and bow.

As a general guide, look at temperatures in the region of 18-24°C and a relative humidity of between 45-60% (please refer to the manufacturer's guides upon delivery).

Acclimatisation

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.

Installation

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 your 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.

Visit ukflooringdirect.co.uk 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 Chat Button at the bottom of any web page.