

A-Z of Wood Flooring



At Wood and Beyond, we stand behind what you stand on and it's for this reason that we've put together this e-book. We want to help you select, install and look after your wood floor, making the whole process as simple as it can be. Sit back and let us give you all the information you need to take your wood flooring project from concept to reality. We really hope you'll enjoy this e-book and find it useful.

To make our e-book easy to follow, we've split it into 7 different parts, each covering a specific element of your wood floor buying and care process. No matter where you are right now in your wood flooring project we hope our guide will provide you with the help and support you need to make the right decisions and to make your life easier.

A-Z of Wood Flooring

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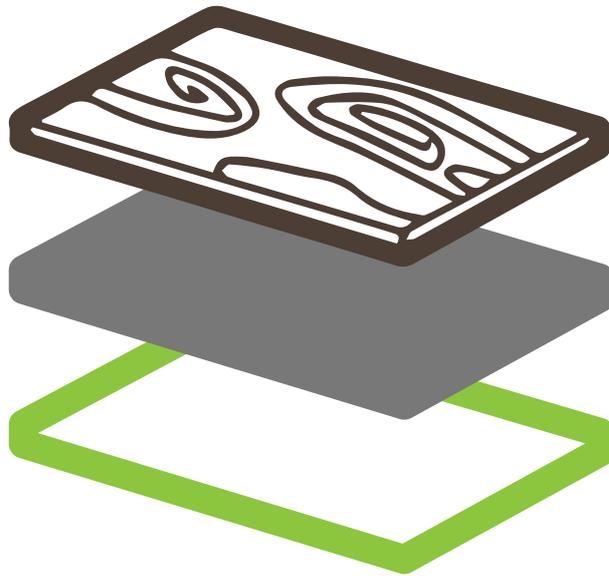
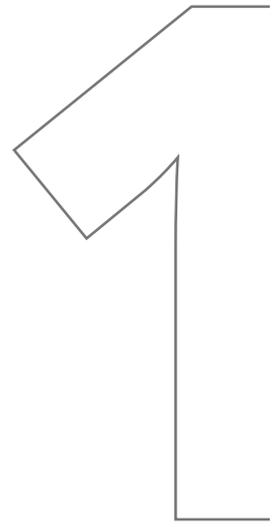
- For solid wood flooring
- For engineered wood flooring

7 PART

Wood Flooring Care Guide

Follow our easy care guide to keep your floor looking great for even longer.

- For solid wood flooring
- For engineered wood flooring



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Types of Wood Flooring

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ENGINEERED



SOLID

Engineered or solid wood floor

How do I choose?

This is a question faced day in and day out by hundreds of home improvers, DIY-ers and builders. While solid wood flooring is arguably amongst the most durable flooring solution you can choose, there are other factors you need to take into account before making your final decision. However, before looking at the pro's and cons of each, it's probably worth touching on what's really meant by "engineered" and "solid wood".

In a nutshell, the difference between the two is their make-up. [Solid wood flooring](#) boards, as the name suggests are made from one single plank of wood whereas engineered wood flooring is made up of a thin layer of wood on top of a plywood base. It's important to stress that we're not on about laminated flooring here, which is another, totally different product, we're on about [engineered flooring](#).

In order to help you make the right decision for your needs, here are some questions you might want to ask yourself:

- Do you have an under floor heating system?
- Is the area where you intend to fit the floor likely have moisture or any water spillage, for example a kitchen or a bathroom?
- Is your room subject to a lot of sunshine?
- Does your home suffer from any form of dampness or is it left un-aired for lengthy periods?
- Is your house located close to a natural source of moisture eg. a river, a stream, a lake or by the coast?
- Do you want the floor to float or do you want to fix it by gluing or nailing it down?

Solid hardwood flooring tends to shrink and expand with temperature and moisture fluctuations. During the summer for example, the moisture will evaporate from the solid wood causing the flooring to contract, which may result in gaps between each plank. During the winter, as humidity intensifies the flooring will expand and the spaces between the planks will disappear. Engineered wood will look the same, during summer and winter.

One major advantage of engineered wood flooring boards is their ability to deal with extreme and unstable conditions like those described above. Its stability and the way it's made mean it can combat the pressures of a lot of through traffic and can

remain more stable under extreme conditions than solid wood.

All of that said, a solid wood floor is also extremely durable as can be evidenced from the number of ancient wood floors that are still in pristine condition. And of course, for many people, the feeling of stepping on a solid wood floor is second to none.

So, the answer to the question solid wood or engineered is so subjective that there is no right or wrong answer, it all depends on your property's conditions, your needs, your taste and of course your budget.



Grades of Wood Flooring

A to Z Wood Flooring E-book

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Find out the real differences between Rustic, Natural, Select and Prime grade wood flooring.

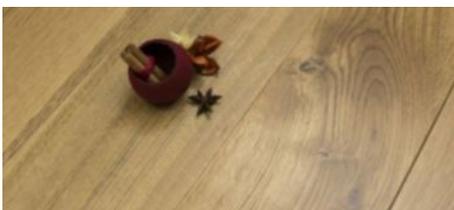
PRIME



SELECT



NATURAL



RUSTIC



What do the different wood flooring grades mean?

The wood used in the manufacture of wood flooring is graded according to its appearance. Generally speaking, the features taken into account when grading wood include (but are not limited to): the number and size of knots; the amount of sap present in the wood and its colour variations.

As a rule of thumb, the smaller the knots, the lower the sap content and the more uniform the colour, the higher the grade of wood and (of course) the higher the price. When it comes to deciding which wood grade is best for your wood floor, there are four grades of wood to choose from. Each grade gives a slightly different look.

The grades are called

1. [Prime or AB](#)
2. [Select or ABC](#)
3. [Natural or ABCD](#)
4. and [Rustic or CD](#)

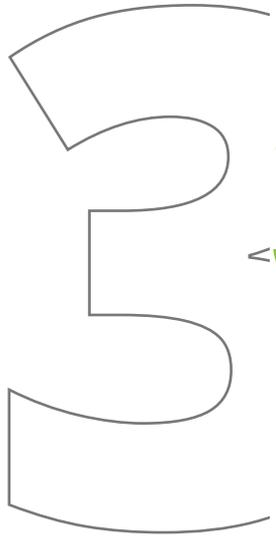
In order to help you make the choice of wood grading for your wood flooring here are some of the characteristics of each grade:

1. Prime Grade is the highest grade of wood flooring. It is also often described as AB-high grade. Cut from the centre of the log, this grade of wood is highly uniform in its appearance and has very few knots. If this quality of wood grade does contain knots, they tend to be small and unobtrusive. The sap content of this wood is also low which means a maximum of 5% of the make up of the plank. Finally, and often one of the most important considerations for people choosing a wood grade, the colour variation in prime grade wood is minimal. A floor laid using prime grade wood will have a highly uniform, yet at the same time natural look.

2. Select Grade is the next grade of wood flooring. Often described as ABC grade, this wood contains some knots, which may be up to 20mm in size, some sap (in this case, up to 10% of the plank) and some colour variation. The overall look of select grade hardwood flooring is slightly less uniform than prime, but still very smooth and consistent.

3. Natural Grade comes next on the wood floor grading ladder. Often referred to as mill run or ABCD grade, this wood grade sports knots of up to 30mm in size, contains sap and has some colour variations. Certain manufacturers use coloured wood filler to fill holes which are naturally present in the wood, resulting in a smooth overall look.

4. Rustic Grade (or country style) is the final grade of wood used for wood flooring. As the name suggests, this grade of wood can have significant colour variation, has sap and typically has knots of up to 35mm in size. Once again, any naturally occurring holes are often filled by manufacturers resulting in a smoother finish, but still with a varied overall look.



Wood Flooring Coating Options

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Explore the pros and cons of Untreated, Oiled and Lacquered wood flooring and the situations where one works better than another.

Untreated, lacquered or oiled wood floor

The differences in detail

One of the features of wood flooring that people often leave unconsidered until just before ordering is the finish or coating they'll choose for their new floor. While it is possible to leave this decision pretty much to the last minute, it's well worth taking the time to understand the options that are open to you. In this part of our guide, we'll give you a clear and quick overview of the most commonly selected and most popular wood flooring finishes; lacquered and oiled as well as mentioning the pros and cons of choosing untreated wood flooring.

Untreated wood flooring

Untreated wood flooring, as the name suggests is wood flooring boards that are delivered to you in their natural state. This type of board has neither been re-tinted, brushed, aged, nor protected.

What you receive when you choose an untreated wood floor is raw boards that need to be laid and subsequently treated in situ.

What are the advantages of untreated wood flooring?

Many people are fans of untreated wood flooring because it allows them the luxury of laying their floor before having to commit to its final look.

There are also some purists who suggest that a finish that is applied to a floor in situ will produce a better end result than a pre-finished floor; but this is debatable.

What are the disadvantages of untreated wood flooring?

There's no getting away from the fact that untreated wood flooring is significantly more labour intensive and time consuming to install than treated wood flooring. Not only do you have to fit your new floor, but once it is installed, you then need to think about starting the treatment process. So, in effect, this approach costs you more, and also means that your room will be out of action for a significantly longer period.

Lacquered finish



What is it?

A lacquer is a bit like a modern day varnish and is applied to a wood floor as a way of protecting the floor and often to give it a shine. Lacquer effectively sits on the top of the wood and doesn't sink in like oil does.

When should you choose it?

A lacquer finish is ideal in a room where you anticipate either high or heavy footfall or where you want a gloss or high gloss finish.

Ease of care

The good thing about a lacquered finish on your floor is that it becomes somewhat water resistant. That said, it's never a good idea to splash lots of water about on any wood floor.

The one downside of a lacquered wood floor is that it has a tendency to show scratches more easily than an oiled floor. Because of this, when the floor finally ends up looking tired and worn, the best course of action is normally a re-sand and re-finish.

Protection level

The protection offered by lacquered wood finish is arguably the toughest of all and this is probably why, in the good old days, gyms and dance halls were finished in this way, rather than simply waxed or oiled.

That said, because lacquer sits on top of the wood, when it is worn away with wear and tear, the bare wood is left exposed and susceptible to damage.

Visual effect

Lacquer comes in high gloss, gloss and matt finishes. All of that said, even a matt finish tends to have a bit of a shine to it. So when you're choosing a lacquered finish for your floor, it's important to be aware of the shine that you'll get.

Additional options available

As already mentioned, you can choose either a high gloss, a matt finish, or something in between when you choose lacquer as your finish, however there's another option that's particularly appealing if your room gets a significant amount of sunshine. This is a UV filter, which works like a sunscreen and helps avoid your floor becoming faded by too much sunshine.

Oiled finish



What is it?

Oil is the modern day equivalent to the old fashioned; 'on your hands and knees' wax option that our grandparents had to put up with. Now typically involving a hardwax oil, oiled finish wood flooring provides both a surface protection and a deep penetrating protection.

When should you choose it?

An oiled finish is the perfect solution when you're looking for a natural looking finish for your wood floor. Generally speaking, this solution will give you a nice natural, matt look.

Ease of care

Although oiled wood flooring is slightly higher maintenance on an ongoing basis than lacquered wood flooring, it tends to need fewer major inter-

ventions because the protection goes deeper than the surface. Unlike lacquered finish, when the top layer of oil finish gets worn away, there is still a level of protection underneath. And like any wooden floor, if you protect it with good doormats, and sweep or vacuum it regularly as well as giving it a light mopping, it'll stand the test of time nicely.

Protection level

The good thing about oiled wood flooring finish is that it goes deep into the heart of the wood and provides not only protection on the surface, but into the core too, which means that your wood is protected to the max.

Visual effect

Oiled wood flooring has a really natural look and enables the colour of the wood to deepen over the years and the grain to stand out.

Additional options available

Oiled floor finishes often come with a brushed effect, which serves to open up the grain of the wood even more, further enhancing the natural look. Certain options may also come with a UV filter.



Wood Flooring Colour Possibilities

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Get information to help you choose between natural, white, grey and dark colour wood flooring for your project so you can achieve the look you want with ease.

Choosing the right colour of wood flooring for the look you want

If you're in the market for a new floor and for some reason have rejected the notion of wood flooring because you think it's all about brown, brown and brown, today's the day to think again. Wood is a completely natural product and wood flooring, like a whole host of things in nature comes in a range of different colours as well as shades and options that have been enhanced by man. Here are just some great colour ideas to think about if you:

You want a light coloured floor



If you're on the lookout for a seriously light coloured floor you could be forgiven for thinking that cold or off white ceramic or marble tiles might be your only hard option, with carpet coming a close second. But this simply isn't the case. If you would like all the advantages of a wood floor, either solid or engineered, you can have access to those and a great looking light coloured floor to boot.

With whitewashed wood flooring, limed wood flooring as well as brushed and oiled white stained wood flooring you can have an extremely light coloured wood floor that is either made from solid or engineered wood. What this means is that you can choose a light coloured wood flooring option for any room in the home including bathrooms, kitchens and even where you have under floor heating.

[Light coloured wood flooring](#) works really well in rooms that aren't washed with natural light or have a tendency to look a tiny bit gloomy. What's more you'll be surprised at the illusion of space they create in rooms that are relatively small.

You want a middle-of-the-range coloured floor



If you want a mid-range coloured floor, for example a floor that acts as a nice neutral backdrop for any style of furnishing, this is where wood truly comes into its own. With or without influence from man in the form of finishes, wood comes in a whole range of different colours. Depending on the species you choose and the finish you opt for,

you'll get anything from light honey blonde woods through to rich auburns.

So when you want a middle-of-the-range colour of flooring, wood is the ideal choice because you can mix and match different species to create stunning effects either in the same room, on a room-by-room basis or even by sticking to the same colour throughout. Either option, when planned well creates a high impact, interesting and appealing effect in any home.

A great choice in modern or traditional homes, mid-range, natural wood colours add real style and charm to any home. A great way to anchor a mix of furnishings as well as a neutral backdrop allowing you to get creative with wall and soft furnishing colours, with mid-range wood colours, you can't go wrong.

You want a dark coloured floor



More and more people are plumping for seriously dark coloured flooring right now. [Black wood flooring](#) is highly appealing and comes in a whole range of options, so even if you want a

dark coloured floor, wood is a real possibility for your project. Certain woods come in a natural state that is almost black and others are stained or treated to make them darker. No matter which option you choose, you can have anything from an almost black to a true jet black finish on either solid or engineered wood flooring; the choice is yours.

Perfectly suited to highly modern interiors, black wood flooring is most commonly paired off with whites and greys or alternatively with a palette of bold colours to really create a statement.

You want to go a bit wild with colour



If you want something that is made of wood but doesn't have a natural wood colour for your floor, you can even have that too. [Grey wood flooring](#) is a relatively new kid on the block but is punching well above its weight in the popularity stakes. Grey wood flooring is a great alternative to black if you're seeking to create a monochrome look with a difference.



Wood Flooring Sizes

A to Z Wood Flooring E-book

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Wide or narrow boards? Thick or thin?
Fixed or random length? In this part of our
e-book, we'll help you choose.

Helping you make the right choice between wide and narrow; thick and thin as well as short, long or random length wood flooring.

Wide or narrow wood flooring?

When it comes to wide and narrow flooring, we have a tendency to categorise these according to our life experiences. We most commonly associate highly polished, [narrow board wood flooring](#) with formal settings (or, depending on your age, school gyms!). If you have a valuable, highly polished dining table for example and you want it to retain a formal and distinguished look, then choosing highly polished, narrow wooden floor boards will give an overall look of class and charm.

However, if you want the backdrop to your table to be more relaxed, then a [wide board](#), with a distressed finish will help you achieve this feel. So, as a general rule of thumb, if you assume narrow boards to look more formal and wide boards to look more casual you won't go far wrong. The other thing that wide and narrow flooring will do to your décor is that it will appear to change the shape and, or dimensions of a room. Here are some ideas to play with if you'd like to change the apparent shape or dimensions of your room:

1. Small Rooms

If you have a small room, wide boards will give and impression of greater volume to your room,

particularly if they are light coloured.

2. Big Rooms

In big rooms you can normally get away with either narrow or wide wood floor boards, but ironically, while wide boards will make a small room look bigger, they can also make a big room seem smaller. In big rooms, where you want the room to seem more in proportion, it is a clever trick to mix wide and narrow boards to create an illusion of bringing in the walls. For example, if your room is rectangular, you could create a rectangle of either wide or narrow boards in the middle of your room and place a border of the opposite type of board around the outside. That's to say, if you've created a central rectangle with narrow boards, you could create the border with the wide boards, or vice versa. Cutting your room up in this way will cleverly reduce the impression of volume and add interest to your décor at the same time.

3. Narrow rooms

A clever way to make narrow rooms seem wider is to use wide boards that are laid perpendicular (at right angles) to the long side of your room. The effect of this will be that your room will seem immediately wider.

4. Long rooms

In the same way that wide boards laid perpendicular to the long side of narrow rooms will make the

room look wider, wide boards laid perpendicular to the long side of long rooms will make them seem shorter.

While all of these effects are only visual rather than actual, the right choice of board can make a huge difference to the look of both your décor and your room size or dimension.

Thick or thin wood flooring?

If you're in the throws of planning a wood flooring project, you won't need us to tell you that you have plenty of things to think about when it comes to making the right choices. Everything from selecting between solid and engineered wood, right down to fitting method and accessories are all important and deserve attention. In this part of our guide, we'll demystify the different thicknesses of wood flooring in order to help you decide which thickness might work best for your project.

Solid vs Engineered wood flooring

Solid wood floor is most commonly found in 18-20mm thickness. When choosing the thickness of *engineered wood flooring*, there are two different considerations to be taken into account. The first is the thickness of the overall board and the second is the thickness of the solid wood lamella or top layer. The thickness of the overall board you need will depend largely on whether or not

you have under floor heating and the layer of the top layer will depend on how often you want to be able to re-sand and re-finish your floor.

Whether or not you have under floor heating

If you have under floor heating, then engineered wood flooring is the only option we, at Wood and Beyond would recommend. This is because it is the best option to withstand the temperature highs and lows. When it comes to choosing the correct thickness, then again we recommend a board that is no more than 18mm thick and that the top layer, or lamella is no more than 5mm. These are what we believe to be the optimum thicknesses to ensure heat efficiency.

Other factors which will affect the thickness of board which will work best are:

What's your sub floor made of?

Plywood

If you have a plywood sub floor, most 19mm thick flooring options, no matter whether they are solid or engineered wood should work well. The only time thickness may be a problem is when the plywood sub floor is weak or flexes when you walk on it. If this is the case, then ideally you should either opt for a thicker board or introduce an additional

thin layer of ply (around 0.5cm thick) to stabilize the floor and give you a better laying surface.

Planks

Irrespective of the thickness of wood flooring you choose, when laying new planks over old, it's essential that you run the new boards perpendicular (ie. at 90 degrees) to the old boards. If you want to run your floor parallel (in the same direction) as the old boards, you should introduce a layer of ply (as above for plywood sub floor) or another suitable stable sheet.

Concrete

With a concrete sub floor, the important thing is to make sure that your sub floor is dry and level. Once you have established that it's dry, you should either establish that the existing surface is good enough to support your new floor or you should introduce a plywood layer to the mix. Either way, once you know your floor is dry and level, you'll normally have complete flexibility over the thickness of the boards you lay.

Fitting directly over joists

It's perfectly feasible to fit solid or engineered wood flooring directly over joists, but you need to make sure that the joists aren't too far apart (generally speaking, they should be no more than 45cm apart). If they meet this condition, then either a solid or engineered wood flooring product

that is at least 18mm thick should be sufficient. If your joists are further apart than the recommended maximum, then the advice is that you should lay a ply or chipboard sub floor over the joists in order to create a level and stable surface for your new floor. If you do this, then a thinner board, even 14 or 15mm thick should suffice.

Short or long, fixed or random length?

If you're at the final stage of planning your wood flooring project, the chances are you're wondering about whether you should invest in short, random or long length wood flooring boards. Short and long boards, if they are all the same size will come in packs where every board is exactly the same length. Short boards may be as short as 30cm and long boards could reach over 1.5m in some instances.

Random boards come in packs with a range of board sizes in the each pack. Random length boards are more common than fixed length boards (long or short) and are typically cheaper. That said, short, fixed length boards will be cheaper than long, fixed length boards. So how do you decide? Here's what we believe you need to take into consideration:

Your budget

If you're on a budget (and who isn't these days?),

it's a good idea to opt for either random length or short length boards. If price is no issue, then you will be able to opt for any of the three that takes your fancy. All of that said, it is most common for people to want to make their boards look random once they're fitted, even if they aren't, so before over-investing in fixed length flooring, do make sure that you're not wasting your money.

The size of your room

If you have a large room, then long, fixed length boards will reinforce the size of your room and may even work to make it look bigger. If this is what you want to achieve, then choosing long, fixed length boards isn't an issue. However, if you want to make a cavernous room appear smaller, then either short, fixed length boards or random boards will achieve that objective better.

The impact of creating breaks in your floor, and particularly random breaks will help create interest in the floor and therefore attract attention to the flooring rather than to the size of the room. Clearly the opposite is true with small rooms whereby long, fixed length boards can cleverly create an illusion of space.

The look you're hoping to achieve

When it comes to making the right choice, it's worthwhile looking around at lots of different

floors before making your final choice. Becoming a 'floor spotter' is a great way of determining what you like and what you don't like as well as helping you avoid making expensive mistakes.

Even if you choose fixed length long or short boards, it's normally advisable to lay your boards on a random basis to avoid creating an end result that seems fake. The joins in your floor create interest and charm if they fall in a random pattern. If however, they all fall in line, they can look cold and lacking in charm. So, even if you're looking for long or short boards, you should make sure that they are fitted on a random basis.

Whether you're fitting DIY or getting in a professional

On the basis that a floor should be fitted so that the joins fall in a random pattern, it's worth considering who will fit your floor before choosing fixed length boards that are either short or long. If you're fitting the floor yourself, making a fixed board floor have random joins isn't particularly complicated and only involves adding a different plank length at the start and, or end of every row. However, if you're not all that confident about your fitting capabilities, then boxes of random boards will help you achieve this result without needing to cut boards or over-plan your project. On the other hand, if you're getting the professionals in, then you needn't worry about this issue.



Wood Flooring Fitting Guides

A to Z Wood Flooring E-book

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Find out all you need to know for a successful DIY wood flooring installation:

- For solid wood flooring
- For engineered wood flooring

For solid wood flooring

This guide tells you what you need to know to install solid wood flooring.

Important things to think about before you start

Before you fit your new solid wood floor, there are a number of important things to think about.

They are:

Acclimatising and storing your flooring

You should store and acclimatise your new wood flooring in the location and conditions in which it will be laid.

It is important to make sure that the post-installation temperature and moisture levels have been maintained in your room before laying out the flooring to acclimatise for between 5 and 10 days.

Assuming your room conditions are already how they will be after installation, you should allow your new floor to acclimatise for around 2 weeks before laying it. If you are working in a new build or a renovation, you should add 5 to 10 days to this acclimatisation time (depending on the extremity of the conditions) in order to allow the room to reach anticipated post-installation conditions.

Getting your subfloor ready

Before laying your new solid wood floor, it's essential to make sure your subfloor is dry, clean, stable and flat. If you have any doubts about humidity, you should measure the humidity level of the subfloor to reassure yourself. You should ideally take around 30 moisture readings across the entire area to establish whether or not you are facing a moisture problem.

Ideally, you're aiming for a consistent average across your readings of no more than 2-3%. If your readings seem worrying in any way, it's worth making further investigations and taking remedial action if necessary. You should aim for the moisture content of your subfloor to be 12% or less.

NOTE | *It's never worth laying a new floor over a subfloor that has issues that have been left ignored.*

Once you're satisfied that you don't have any moisture issues, you should then go about cleaning your subfloor, repairing any damage and making sure it is as flat as it possibly can be.

The tools you will need

Assuming you're planning to lay your floor on a DIY basis, it's essential that you have the right tools to hand, as well as a good understanding of how to use them. Depending on how often you plan to do DIY, you may want to buy the tools you

need or you might decide it's better to borrow or hire them.

Either way, here's an idea of what you'll need: some basic hand tools, including a hammer, a hand saw, a set square, a tape measure and a screw driver. You may also want to avail of some power tools, such as a chop saw, a jigsaw and maybe a cordless, power screwdriver.

If you have under floor heating

You should check with your flooring manufacturer that the flooring you have chosen is suitable for installation over under floor heating.

NOTE | *Most solid wood floors are not recommended for fitting over under floor heating.*

Allowing for expansion and contraction

No matter what type of wood flooring you're fitting, you should allow for expansion and contraction in your installation plans. Wood is a natural product and as such expands and contracts with changes in atmospheric conditions. It is for this reason that wooden floors need an expansion gap.

High humidity levels cause flooring to expand and low, or reducing humidity causes it to contract. When flooring expands, it may be that small gaps

disappear but when the wood contracts again the gaps will typically reappear. This is entirely normal.

Either way, it is essential to leave an expansion gap around the perimeter of your room when laying any wood floor. Expansion gaps should be around 15mm to allow the wood to expand and contract without suffering any sort of distortion.

Other things to remember:

- Solid wood flooring a natural product so there is likely to be slight colour and grain variations from board to board and from box to box. It is for this reason that we recommend you mix boards from different boxes when installing your flooring.
- All wood flooring is fragile, so it's important to take extreme care when fitting your flooring in order to avoid chips, dents and scratches.

Nail or staple-down installation guide for solid wood floors

Nail-down and staple-down installation are straightforward ways of fitting solid wood flooring but are only advisable if you have a wooden sub-floor. When installing your new floor over plywood, the direction you choose to lay the planks doesn't matter.

However, if you are nailing or stapling-down a new floor over existing floorboards you must run the

planks of the new floor at a 90-degree angle to the existing floor. This is done to ensure stability and to avoid the risk of warping or buckling. Here's how you should go about nailing or stapling:

- 1.** Make sure you have allowed your 15mm expansion gap around your room. You should use wedges to make sure your expansion gap stays consistent. When you start to lay your boards, start in the corner of your room that's furthest away from the door and lay the first board in the direction you want the floor to run. Make sure the tongue is facing into the centre of the room.
- 2.** For this method of fitting, both the first and the last rows should be fixed from the top of the board with either a nail, screw or staple, 15mm from the edge of the board.
- 3.** When you have laid your first row of boards and have secured them from the top, you should nail or staple just above the tongue, at a 45-degree angle. For additional stability, you may also wish to consider adding a screw at regular intervals of around 30cm.
- 4.** Start your second row with the section of left over board that has been cut from the first row, making sure it is at least 50cm long. If it's not long enough, cut another board so you are creating a staggered effect in your second row. You should

make sure that every new row is staggered by at least 50cm to achieve a professional end result.

- 5.** When you reach the final row, you are likely to have to cut the boards to fit. In order to fit the board snugly, you may wish to use a pull bar. Make sure you have your wedges in place to ensure a nice, neat expansion gap.
- 6.** Fix the last row of boards from the top as described in 2. above.
- 7.** Expansion gaps can be covered with either a skirting board or a scotia bead.

Glue-down installation guide for solid wood floors

Glue down as an installation method for solid wood floors involves using a bonding agent, adhesive or glue that you put directly on to your subfloor before laying your floor.

As a fitting method, glue down is particularly suited to either concrete or wood subfloors. If you choose this method of fitting, you need to make sure that there's no dampness whatsoever in your subfloor.

If you have any doubt about dampness, we recommend that you install a two-part epoxy damp proof membrane to make sure that none of the

residual dampness rises into your new floor, causing future damage. Here's how to glue down your solid wood flooring:

- 1.** Once you have correctly prepared your sub-floor, you should start to apply your adhesive. It is important to apply the glue in small areas at a time. You should apply the glue in a crisscross pattern, starting at the corner of the room furthest away from the door.
- 2.** As with all other fitting methods, allow for your 15mm expansion gap all around your room by placing wedges to prevent the boards from butting up against the walls.
- 3.** Slide your first board into position, with the tongue of the board facing into the room.

NOTE | *With this type of installation, you don't need to glue the tongue and groove.*

- 4.** Work along your first row of boards, tapping them into place with the aid of a tapping board.
- 5.** Continue to apply glue to your sub floor in small areas at a time.
- 6.** Start your second row with the section of left over board that has been cut from the first row, making sure it is at least 50cm long. If it's not long enough, cut another board so you are creating a staggered effect in your second row. You should make sure that every new row is staggered by at least 50cm to have a professional end result.
- 7.** When you reach the final row, you are likely to have to cut the board width to fit. In order to fit the board snugly, you may wish to use a pull bar. Make sure you have your wedges in place to ensure a nice, neat expansion gap.
- 8.** Expansion gaps can be covered with either a skirting board or a scotia bead.

For engineered wood flooring

This guide describes how to install engineered tongue and groove flooring as well as engineered click system flooring.

Important things to think about before you start

Before you even fit your new engineered wood floor, there are a number of important things to think about. They are:

Acclimatising and storing your flooring

You should store and acclimatise your new wood flooring in the location and conditions in which it will be laid. It is important to make sure that the anticipated post-installation temperature and moisture levels have been maintained in the room prior to laying. The duration of acclimatisation will vary and can take between 2 and 7 days depending on conditions.

To acclimatise your flooring, leave it sealed in its boxes, which you should lay horizontally, ideally one on top of the other.

Getting your subfloor ready

Before laying your new engineered wood floor, it's essential to make sure your subfloor is dry, clean, stable and flat. If you have any doubts about humidity, you should measure the humidity level

of the subfloor to reassure yourself. You should ideally take moisture readings across the entire area to establish whether or not you are facing a moisture problem. Ideally, you're aiming for a consistent average across your readings of no more than 3-4%. If your readings seem worrying in any way, it's worth making further investigations and taking remedial action if necessary. You should aim for the moisture content of your subfloor to be 12% or less.

NOTE | *It's never worth laying a new floor over a subfloor that has issues that have been left ignored.*

Once you're satisfied that you don't have any moisture issues, you should then go about cleaning your subfloor, repairing any damage and making sure it is as flat as it possibly can be.

The tools you will need

Assuming you're planning to lay your floor on a DIY basis, it's essential that you have the right tools to hand, as well as a good understanding of how to use them. Depending on how often you plan to do DIY, you may want to buy the tools you need or you might decide it's better to borrow or hire them.

Either way, here's an idea of what you'll need: some basic hand tools, including a hammer, a hand saw, a set square, a tape measure and a

screw driver. You may also want to avail of some power tools, such as a chop saw, a jigsaw and maybe a cordless, power screwdriver.

If you have under floor heating

If you have under floor heating you should already have checked that the flooring you have chosen is suitable for installation over your heating. If you haven't already done so, it's essential to do so before going any further. You should also make sure that you have selected the most appropriate fitting method for both the flooring you have chosen and your under floor heating. Once again, if you haven't already done so, you should do so now.

Before you fit your floor, you should make sure your heating has been turned off for at least 48 hours. After your floor has been fitted, you should gradually increase the temperature of your heating over a few days to make sure there is no drastic change in temperature.

Allowing for expansion and contraction

No matter what type of wood flooring you're fitting, you should allow for expansion and contraction in your plans. Wood is a natural product and as such expands and contracts with changes in atmospheric conditions. It is for this reason that wooden floors need an expansion gap. Even engineered wood floors take in moisture when

there is a high level of humidity in the air and let that moisture go when the humidity reduces. High humidity causes flooring to expand. Low, or reducing humidity causes it to contract. When the flooring expands, it may be that small gaps disappear but when the wood contracts the gaps will typically reappear. This is entirely normal.

Either way, it is essential to leave an expansion gap around the perimeter of your room when laying any wood floor. Expansion gaps should be around 10-15mm to allow the wood to expand and contract without suffering any sort of distortion.

Other things to remember:

- Engineered wood flooring is topped with a solid wood lamella or top layer. Because wood is a natural product, there is likely to be slight colour and grain variations from board to board and from box to box. It is for this reason that we recommend you mix boards from different boxes when installing your flooring.
- All wood flooring is fragile, so it's important to take extreme care when fitting your flooring in order to avoid chips, dents and scratches.

Click system installation guide for engineered wood floors

The design of click system engineered wood

flooring boards means that the boards are able to effectively 'snap' together without the need for glue or nails, thanks to their unique system. When fitting click system engineered wood flooring, it's essential to use a floating fitting method. What this means is that there's no gluing or nailing required and that you'll have the opportunity to lay click floors over an existing floor or sub-floor with the addition of an appropriate underlay. Here's how you should do it:

- 1.** Make sure you have allowed for your expansion gap around your room. In order to do this, you should use wedges to make sure your expansion gap stays consistent.
- 2.** When you start to lay your boards, start in the corner of your room that's furthest away from the door and lay the first board in the direction you want the floor to run. Make sure the locking strip, or groove is facing into the centre of the room.
- 3.** Take your next board and lay it end-to-end with the first board, tilting it at an angle so that the tongue of board number 2 fits nicely into the groove in the first board. Continue until your first row is complete. Once the entire row is complete, press the boards down and tap the edges with a block of wood.
- 4.** Adopt this same method in subsequent rows.
- 5.** Start your second row with the section of left over board that has been cut from the last board in the first row, making sure it is at least 50cm long. If it isn't long enough, cut another board in order to create a staggered effect in your second row. You should make sure that every new row is staggered by at least 50cm to achieve a professional end result.
- 6.** Once you have laid your second row of boards, one-by-one, tap them into place using a tapping block after you've clicked them.
- 7.** When you reach the final row, you are likely to have to cut the board width to fit. In order to fit the board snugly, you may wish to use a pull bar. Make sure you have your wedges in place to ensure a nice, neat expansion gap.
- 8.** Expansion gaps can be covered with either a skirting board or a scotia bead.

Floating installation guide for engineered wood floors

A floating floor isn't fixed to the subfloor, instead relying on the weight of the floor itself to keep it in place. Using this method, the only parts that are glued are the tongue to the groove. This way of fitting is well suited to engineered wood flooring and is popular and quick.

Here's how you do it:

- 1.** Start by laying an appropriate underlay on your sub floor.
- 2.** Make sure you have allowed for your 10-15mm expansion gap around your room. In order to do this, you should use wedges to make sure your expansion gap stays consistent.
- 3.** When you start to lay your boards, start in the corner of your room that's furthest away from the door and lay the first board in the direction you want the floor to run. Make sure the groove is facing into the centre of the room.
- 4.** Take your next board and lay it end-to-end with the first board, applying glue to the upper edge of the tongue and to the end joints as well as along the length of the first row. Continue until you have completed row 1. Take care to clean excess glue off the boards as you go.
- 5.** Start your second row with the section of left over board that has been cut from the first row, making sure it is at least 50cm long. If it's not long enough, cut another board so you are creating a staggered effect in your second row. You should make sure that every new row is staggered by at least 50cm to have a professional end result.
- 6.** When laying the boards on your second row, again apply glue to the upper edge of the tongue to the end joints as well as along the length of the board. Take care to clean excess glue off the boards as you go.
- 7.** Use a tapping board to tighten boards together. This will avoid damage and will result in a good fit.
- 8.** When you reach the final row, you need to make sure you have allowed for your expansion gap and in most cases will need to cut a board width to size. You should use a pull bar or joint puller to wedge the boards in place and you should leave your expansion gap wedges in place for 24 hours.
- 9.** Expansion gaps can be covered with either a skirting board or a scotia bead.

Nail or staple-down installation guide for engineered wood floors

Nail-down and staple-down installation are straightforward ways of fitting engineered wood flooring but are only advisable if you have a wooden subfloor. At Wood and Beyond we normally recommend nail down fitting for boards that are 18mm thick or thicker, albeit some fitters use small screws for 15mm thick boards, but this takes more skill.

When installing your new floor over plywood, the direction you choose to lay the planks doesn't matter. However, if you are nailing or stapling-down a new floor over existing floorboards you must run the planks of the new floor at a 90-degree angle to the existing floor. This is done to ensure stability and to avoid the risk of warping or buckling. Here's how you should go about nailing or stapling:

- 1.** Make sure you have allowed your 10-15mm expansion gap around your room. You should use wedges to make sure your expansion gap stays consistent. When you start to lay your boards, start in the corner of your room that's furthest away from the door and lay the first board in the direction you want the floor to run. Make sure the tongue is facing into the centre of the room.
- 2.** For this method of fitting, both the first and the last rows should be fixed from the top of the board with either a nail, screw or staple, 15mm from the edge of the board.
- 3.** When you have laid your first row of boards and have secured them from the top, you should nail or staple just above the tongue, at a 45-degree angle.
- 4.** Start your second row with the section of left over board that has been cut from the first row,

making sure it is at least 50cm long. If it's not long enough, cut another board so you are creating a staggered effect in your second row. You should make sure that every new row is staggered by at least 50cm to achieve a professional end result.

- 5.** When you reach the final row, you are likely to have to cut the boards to fit. In order to fit the board snugly, you may wish to use a pull bar. Make sure you have your wedges in place to ensure a nice, neat expansion gap.
- 6.** Fix the last row of boards from the top as described in 2. above.
- 7.** Expansion gaps can be covered with either a skirting board or a scotia bead.

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If you choose this method of fitting, you need to make sure that there's no dampness whatsoever in your subfloor. If you have any doubt about

dampness, we recommend that you install a two-part epoxy damp proof membrane to make sure that none of the residual dampness rises into your new floor, causing future damage. Here's how to glue down your engineered wood flooring:

- 1.** Once you have correctly prepared your sub-floor, you should start to apply your adhesive. It is important to apply the glue in small areas at a time. It is best apply the glue in a crisscross pattern, starting at the corner of the room furthest away from the door.
- 2.** As with all other fitting methods, allow for your 10-15mm expansion gap all around your room by placing wedges to prevent the boards from butting up against the walls.
- 3.** Slide your first board into position, with the tongue of the board facing into the room.

NOTE | *With this type of installation, you don't need to glue the tongue and groove.*

- 4.** Work along your first row of boards, tapping them into place with the aid of a tapping board.
- 5.** Continue to apply glue to your sub floor in small areas at a time.
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Wood Flooring Care Guide

A to Z Wood Flooring E-book

woodandbeyond.com



Follow our easy care guide to keep your floor looking great for even longer:

- For solid wood flooring
- For engineered wood flooring

For solid wood floors

One of the great things about solid wood flooring is how easy it is to maintain.

For your regular cleaning regime, you should:

- Vacuum your floor all over to remove dust and grit.
- Don't forget to vacuum any rugs or mats you have on your floor, both on top and underneath so you remove the dust and grit that may be stored in them.
- Mop your floor with a damp, not wet mop. For normal staining, you should only need water for this part of your maintenance process. A good tip is to use a water spray to dampen your mop, rather than soaking it in a bucket of water.
- If staining is more ingrained, you may want to include a gentle, all-purpose detergent or a specialist cleaning product for your floor. If you decide to plump for a specialist cleaning product, it's always a good idea to seek the advice of either your own, or a reputed flooring supplier.
- Make sure the floor is completely dry before replacing rugs, mats or furnishings.

From time to time it's likely that you'll want to give your floor a really deep clean and here are our recommendations for that:

- Clear your room of furnishings, rugs and mats. Making sure your room is clear of obsta-

cles means you can work more freely and more efficiently. When you're doing this, it's really important to lift and not to drag your furnishings because dragging could cause damage.

- Once the room is clear, you need to follow the instructions above for your regular cleaning regime.

HOWEVER, if your floor is scratched, stained or extremely grubby, you may need a different approach. Here are some guidelines:

- For flooring that is scratched, you can use a floor pen or wax stick depending on your floor finish to work away scratches.
- If you have areas of severe staining, again depending on your finish, you may be able to spot repair your floor by sanding away the stain and refinishing the section of flooring affected.
- Failing all else, it may be that you need a full re-sand and re-finish to get your floor looking its best again. Although this option sounds like a whole lot of hassle, it needn't be. Irrespective of whether you do this job on a DIY basis or you get the professionals in, it shouldn't take too long, shouldn't cause too much disruption and will give you a great result when done properly.

And don't forget to add a good quality doormat to your list of essentials to protect your floor. This, alongside asking people (whenever you can) to remove their shoes and making sure pets are kept clean and dry, with short claws will all help keep your floor looking better for longer.

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NOTE | *If your floor is oiled, a hard wax oil must be applied prior to any mopping.*

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decide to plump for a specialist cleaning product, it's always a good idea to seek the advice of either your own, or a reputed flooring supplier.

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- If your floor is really grubby, you may be considering steam cleaning. Although steam cleaning

can be a really effective way of cleaning your wood floor, it is extremely important to establish that your floor is well sealed before even considering this option.

- Failing all else, it may be that you need a full re-sand and re-finish to get your floor looking its best again. Although this option sounds like a whole lot of hassle, it needn't be. Irrespective of whether you do this job on a DIY basis or you get the professionals in, it shouldn't take too long, shouldn't cause too much disruption and will give

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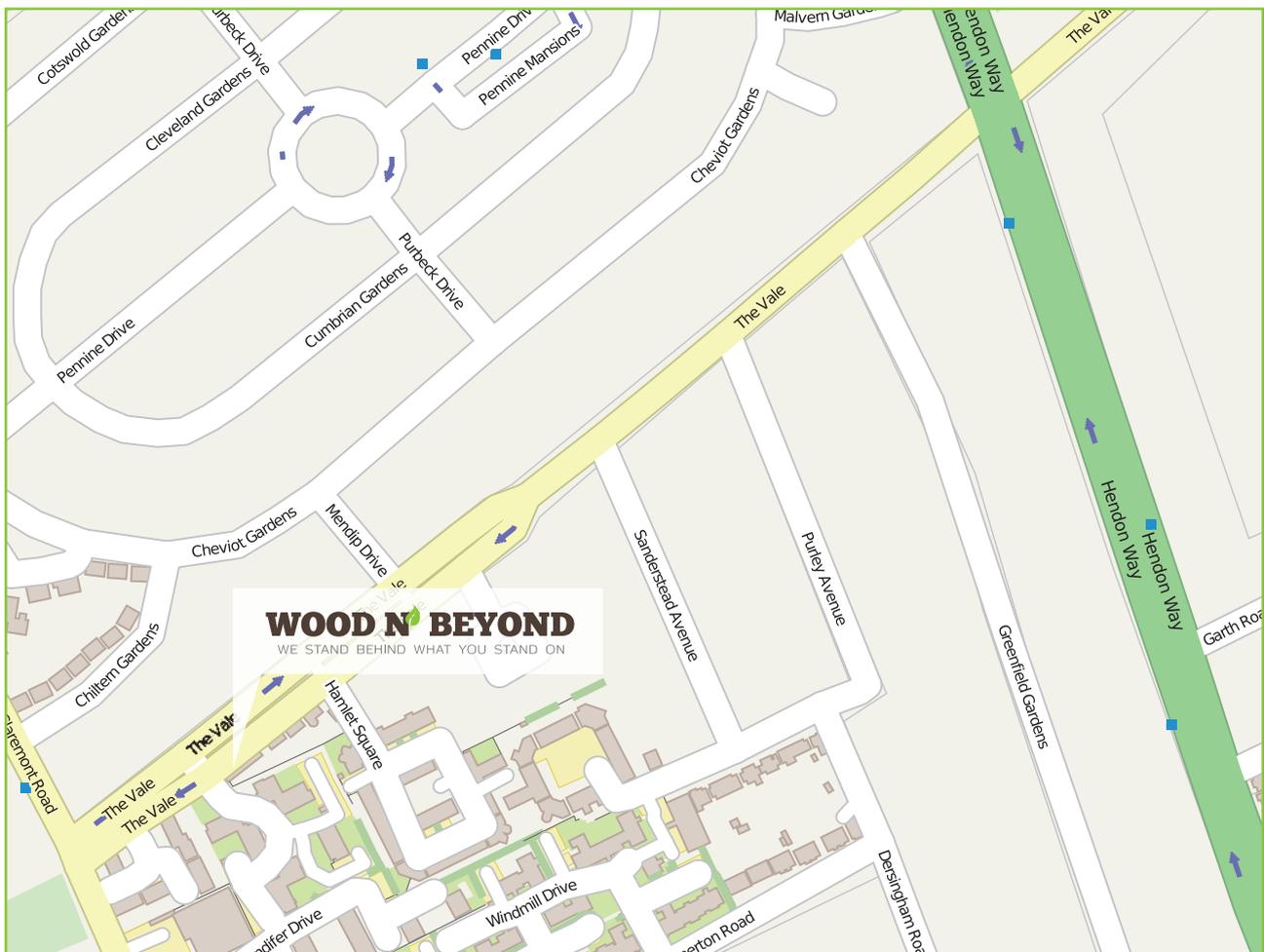
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*Written by **Wood and Beyond Ltd.***



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