

Laminate Flooring Installation Guide

Tools & Materials

- Laminate installation kit (including spacers, tapping block, and pull bar)
- Premium grade laminate flooring underlayment (for flooring without an attached pad).
- Hammer
- Table or hand saw
- Carbide-tipped circular saw blades
- Vacuum
- Tape measure
- Duct tape
- Wood Glue (where modifying the profile is necessary)
- Sandpaper
- Level
- Age-resistant, non-permeable polyethylene vapor barrier (0.006 inch) - for installations over concrete
- Moisture Meter
- Felt Furniture Pads
- Gloves
- Safety glasses
- Dust Mask or Respirator

Caution: use safety glasses, gloves, and a dust mask or respirator when cutting this product. During the cutting process, laminate may create wood dust; install in a well-ventilated area.

General Requirements for all Subflooring

Substrates should be structurally sound and immobile. Before installing flooring, ensure the subfloor is leveled within 3/16 inch in 10 feet. Irregularities in the subfloor should be smoothed using a leveling compound.

Wood

- Suspended wood subfloors should have a minimum of 18 inches of well-ventilated air space above the ground.
- The moisture content of the wood subfloor should not exceed 12%.

Concrete

- New concrete subflooring should be cured for at least 90 days prior to installation.
- A moisture test should be performed on the subfloor. Using a calcium chloride test, values for moisture vapor shall be <5 lbs./1,000 sq. ft. /24 hours per ASTM 1869.
- You must install a 0.006 inch age-resistant, non-permeable polyethylene vapor barrier over the concrete subfloor. Tape seams with an adhesive tape. The vapor barrier should be installed up the wall by 1 inch.

Carpeting

- Remove all carpeting and padding prior to installation.

Vinyl / Sheet Vinyl

- If existing flooring has underlayment it must be removed.
- Vinyl must be well secured, level, and in good condition.
- If subfloor under the vinyl is concrete you must install a 0.006 inch age-resistant, non-permeable polyethylene vapor barrier over the floor. Tape seams with an adhesive tape. The vapor barrier should be installed up the wall by 1 inch.

Radiant Heating Systems

- Laminate flooring can be installed on under-floor radiant heating systems if the heating element is installed into wood or concrete subfloors.
- Lower heating system to 60°F for 1 week before installation.
- After installation, slowly increase the temperature in increments of 10°F per day.
- Surface temperature must not exceed 85°F.
- Follow installation instructions for wood or concrete as outlined above.

Room & Material Preparation

- Remove all existing moulding.
- Allow laminate flooring to acclimate to room temperature (between 60°F -80°F) by placing the packaged flooring flat in the room for a minimum of 48 hours prior to installation. Do not remove the plastic wrapping. **[1]**
- Flooring should be installed and maintained in a climate controlled environment with ambient temperature between 60°F - 80°F and a relative humidity of 35% - 70%.
- Check door clearances and make necessary adjustments before laying the flooring. Door mouldings (jambs) should be undercut to accommodate the thickness of the flooring as well as the underlayment (whether pre-attached or installed separately). **[2]**
- For product without underlayment; install premium grade laminate flooring underlayment per the manufacturer's instructions. DO NOT install more than one layer of underlayment. Doing so will void the warranty.

Important Information Before Starting

- If room has electric baseboard heaters, leave a minimum of 1/2 inch between the surface of the flooring and the bottom of the heaters, allowing heat to circulate.
- Use T-mouldings for rooms wider or longer than 40 feet and openings less than 4 feet.
- Determine which direction to lay the planks. If installing in narrow hallways or small rooms, the area will appear larger if flooring is laid parallel to the longest wall.
- Inspect each plank for defects prior to installation. Do not install defective planks; installation of defective planks implies acceptance of material. Work out of several cartons at the same time to ensure a mixture of color and shade.
- A 3/8" spacer must be used along any vertical surface. When the project is completed these spacers will be removed leaving a 3/8" expansion gap. This gap is necessary because laminate expands and contracts with temperature and humidity changes. The gap provided will prevent your flooring from being damaged during those changes.
- To provide a flush edge, any plank edge that would contact a spacer can have its profile cut off.
- The minimum length of a plank to either begin or end a row is 8". The minimum joint offset between rows is 12". **[3]**
- When assembling the planks, especially in the first row, you must make sure that the pieces are locked in square and flush. This will make subsequent row assembly easier.

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Installation Procedure

1. Measure the width and length of the room. Determine the width of your starting row so that the first and last rows in the room are the same upon completion.
2. Flooring should be laid from left to right with the long side groove facing you.
3. Using the predetermined measurements from step 1, cut the first plank **[4]** and place it against the spacers along the wall. **[5]** In the event of an uneven wall, trace the contour onto the plank and cut.
4. Prepare a second plank and place its short side tongue on the floor near (2-3mm) the short side groove of plank one. Tap the short side groove of plank two with the tapping block and hammer in the direction of plank one to assemble the joint. **[6]** Continue this process until the end of the row.
5. At the end of the row use a pull bar in place of a tapping block to close the gap between the two planks to complete the row **[7]** while leaving the proper expansion gap. **[8]**
6. Begin installing the second row, from left to right, by angling the plank to allow the tongue on the long side to slide into the groove of the plank in row one. Maintain inward pressure (toward the previous row) while gently moving the plank up and down as you slowly push the plank to the floor. Do not force the plank to the floor if the tongue is only partially inserted into the groove. **[9, 10, 11]**
7. Install the next plank by placing it near (2-3mm) the previous plank in the row and again angle the long side tongue to slide into the groove of the previous row. **[12]** Slowly push the piece to the floor.
8. Once the plank is lying flat gently tap the planks short side groove towards the previous plank, to assemble the joint and then tap towards the previous row to ensure joint is locked. **[13]**
9. Continue laying the floor from left to right completing rows. **[14]**
10. Trim the planks to be used in the final row to the desired width while taking into consideration the necessary gap of 3/8" needed between the planks and the wall. **[15]** Install the final row as described in the previous steps.
11. Remove all spacers and install appropriate trim and/or moulding.

Installing Around Mouldings and Door Jambes

In challenging areas such as door mouldings where planks can't be installed at an angle it may be necessary to modify the joint. Begin by removing a portion of the groove from the planks being fitted to in the previous row by either planing or sanding. Once the material is removed apply a small amount of wood glue to the top of the subsequent planks tongue and install it by sliding it on the floor into place. Wipe up excess laminate glue with a damp cloth and warm water.

Care and Maintenance Do & Do Nots

Do	Do Not
Do vacuum using a soft bristle attachment	Do not use vacuum with beater bar
Do use a humidifier, dehumidifier, or air conditioner to help maintain temperature and humidity levels	Do not let your ambient temperature in the room fall outside the range of 60°F - 80°F
Do use cleaning solutions specially formulated for laminate flooring	Do not use oil soaps, wax based cleaning solutions, or other chemicals that have abrasive properties
Do use a slightly damp cloth or paper towel to clean up spills immediately	Do not wet mop or use a steam mop
Do clean up spills immediately	Do not leave standing liquids of any kind
Do apply cleaning solution directly to cloth or mop	Do not spray liquids directly on floor
Do use protective mats under chairs with castors. Place felt floor protectors under furniture legs	Do not try to slide heavy objects across floor
Do use entry mats	Do not try sealing your floor with any aftermarket floor sealer

Minor Repair Instructions

In the event that accidental damage occurs, minor scratches or dents can be repaired using a Flooring Touchup or Color-fill Kit.

Laminate Board Replacement Repairs

Laminate may be assembled and disassembled several times. In the event a plank is damaged enough that it must be replaced you can disable the flooring back the point of the damaged plank. Simply replace the damaged plank with the new one and reassemble your floor.

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