

**SMARTCORE**<sup>®</sup> **Naturals**

# INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS

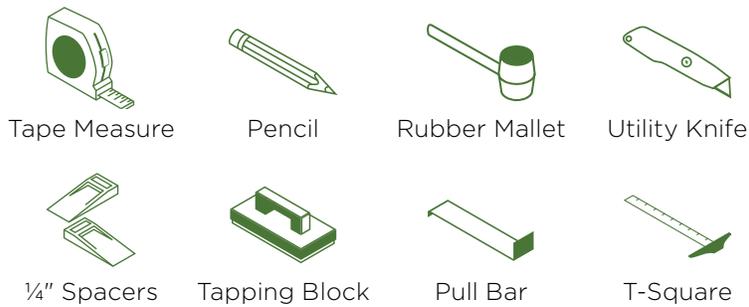
Simple, easy-to-follow instructions for the handy DIYer.

Start to finish, everything you need to know to install  
your SMARTCORE floor like a professional.

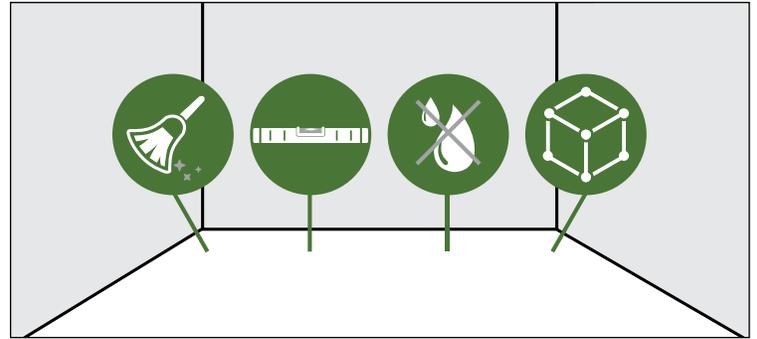
## INSTALLATION 101

Follow these simple steps for an easy DIY installation with quick, professional results.

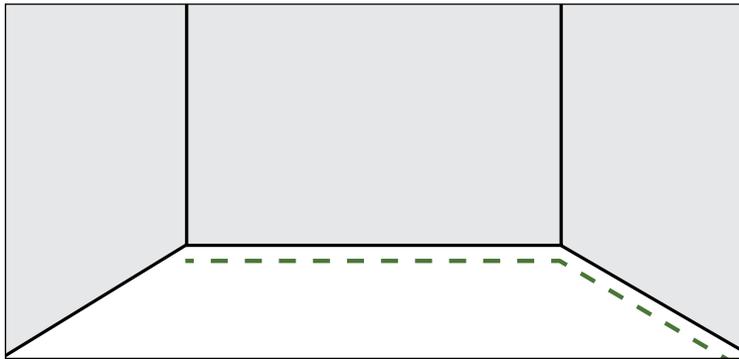
**STEP 1** Gather your tools



**STEP 2** Make sure your space is: clean, flat, dry and structurally sound.



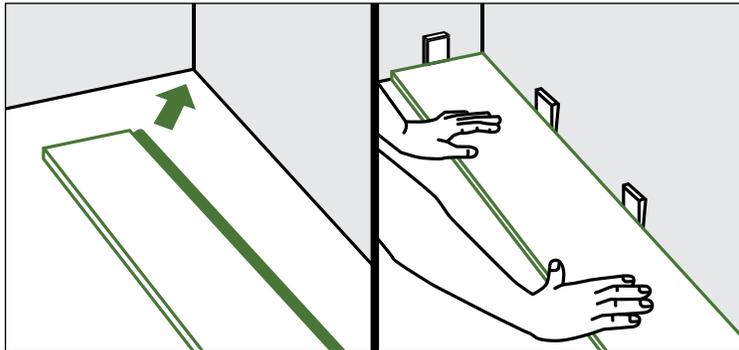
**STEP 3** Measure your space



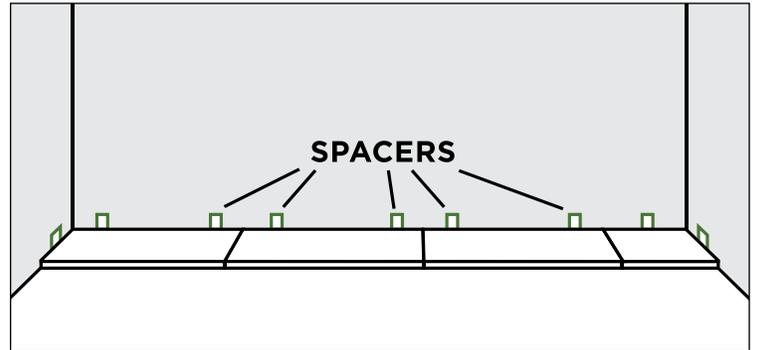
**STEP 4** Choose your starting wall



**STEP 5** Place tongue side in the starting corner (work from left to right).



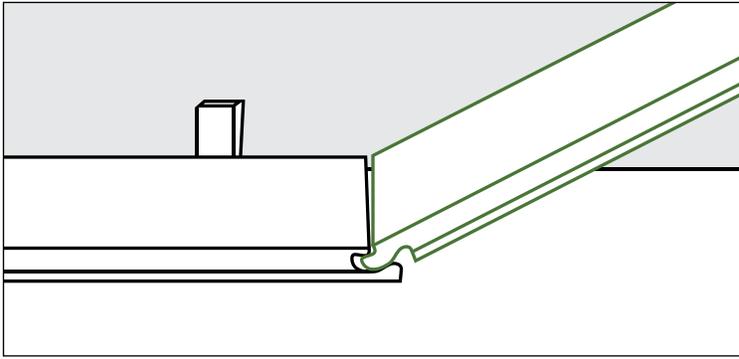
**STEP 6** Use several spacers to maintain 1/4" expansion gap along the walls.



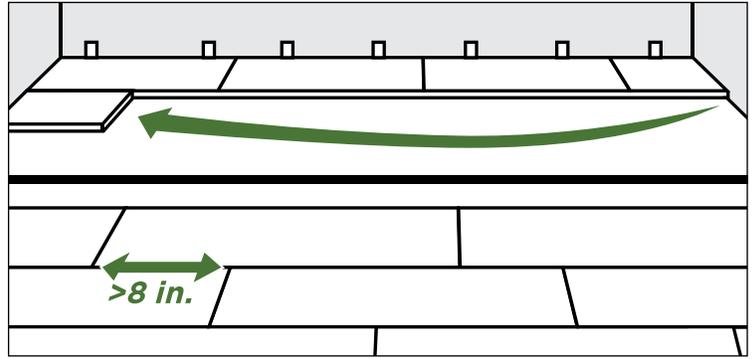
An easy way to distinguish the tongue from the groove is that the tongue comes off the top of the plank.



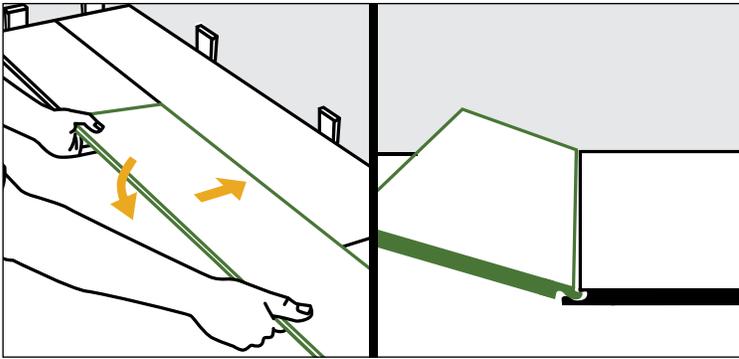
**STEP 7** Lock the short ends together to complete your first row. Cut the planks as needed to fit the space.



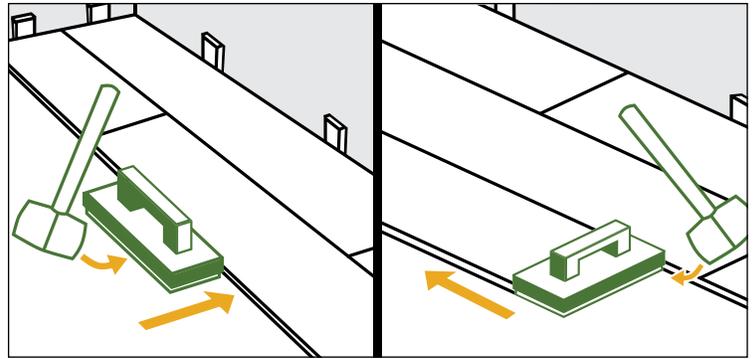
**STEP 8** Start your second row. With a cut-off that is more than 8" long or start with a new plank.



**STEP 9** Connect the length side at a slight angle and rotate down.



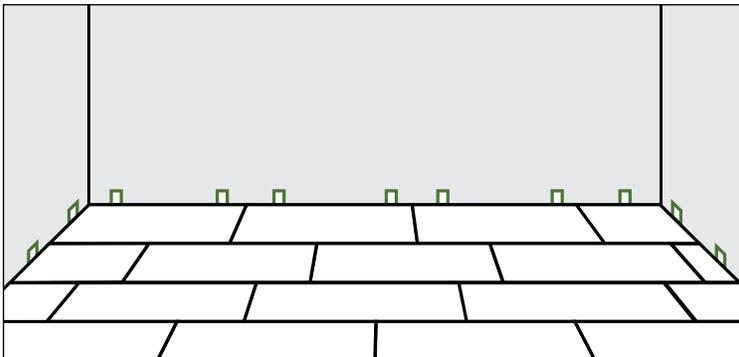
**STEP 10** Tap the length end to ensure a tight fit, then tap the short end to drive down the short end tongue into groove.



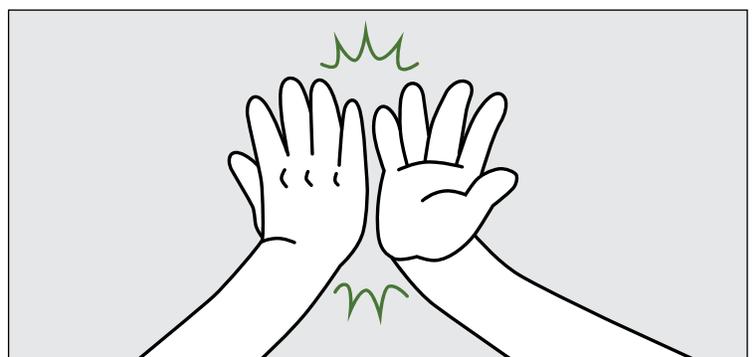
Use a scrap piece of plank to keep the joints lined up. This is called a "bridge."



**STEP 11** Repeat steps to finish the room



**STEP 12** Enjoy your new floor!



# SMARTCORE<sup>®</sup> NATURALALS

## SMARTCORE<sup>®</sup> NATURALALS FLOATING INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS

**When properly installed in accordance with USFloors Installation Instructions, this product will not swell, cup, or crack due to exposure to water from topical spills or moisture from the sub-floor when exposed to such conditions. This product is not designed to withstand submersion from standing water or flooding.**

**READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS THOROUGHLY BEFORE BEGINNING INSTALLATION.** If the following instructions leave any unanswered questions or if additional information is required, please call USFloors toll free at 800-404-2675. This flooring is a natural wood product on a solid polymer core, which has natural variations in color, texture, and sheen/gloss. For best visual effect, install planks working from several cartons.

### Installer/Owner Responsibility

- **We urge you, as the final inspector to inspect for proper color, finish, style, and quality PRIOR to installation. Verify that the flooring is the correct material. Care should be taken at this time to remove or repair particular characteristics you do not desire. Manufacturer declines responsibility for any costs incurred when plank(s) with visible defects have been installed.**
- **The use of stain, filler, or putty stick for the correction of minor defects during installation should be accepted as normal procedure. 5% cutting allowance, depending on layout, must be added to the actual square footage amount needed.**

**NOTE:** SMARTCORE<sup>®</sup> Natural floors may be installed with a direct glue-down method on approved wooden (or) concrete substrates on or above grade only. For below grade installations, use the floating installation method. Use only USFloors approved adhesives. Please consult with the adhesive manufacturer (or) contact USFloors directly to determine if the selected adhesive is suitable for use with this material.

- **Do not** install SMARTCORE<sup>®</sup> Naturals flooring as a floating floor where it will be exposed to temperatures greater than 140° F. In areas where the floor may be exposed to direct, intense sunlight resulting in excessive heat to the floor, use the full spread glue down method. Avoid exposure to direct sunlight for prolonged periods, doing so may result in discoloration. During peak sunlight hours, the use of the drapes or blinds is recommended.

### PRE-INSTALLATION JOBSITE REQUIREMENTS

**It is the installer/ owners' responsibility to ensure that the jobsite conditions and jobsite subfloor are environmentally and structurally acceptable prior to the installation of any hardwood flooring. The manufacturer declines any responsibility for failures or deficiencies of hardwood flooring resulting from or related to sub-floor, sub-surface, or job-site environmental conditions. All substrates must be clean, flat, dry, and structurally sound.**

- Flooring should be one of the last items installed in any new construction or remodel project.
- Install flooring after cabinets have been installed to prevent damage to the flooring.

Room temperature and humidity of installation areas should be consistent with normal, year-round living conditions for at least one week before installation of flooring. Maintaining an optimum yearly room temperature of 70° F and a humidity range of 35- 55% is recommended.

**WARNING: Drilling, sawing sanding or machining wood products can expose you to wood dust a substance known to the State of California to cause cancer. Avoid inhaling wood dust or use a dust mask or other safeguards for personal protection. For more information go to [www.P65Warnings.ca.gov/wood](http://www.P65Warnings.ca.gov/wood).**

### PRE-INSTALLATION SUBFLOOR REQUIREMENTS

**Note:** All subfloors must be flat to within 3/16" in 10' or 1/8" in 6'

## Wood Subfloors

- **Do not** install material over wood subfloors that lay directly on concrete or over dimensional lumber or plywood used over concrete. Refer to ASTM F1482 for panel underlayment recommendations.
- **Do not** apply sheet plastic over wood subfloors.
- Basements and crawl spaces must be dry. Use of a 6 mil black polyethylene is required to cover 100% of the crawl space earth. Crawl space clearance from ground to underside of joist is to be no less than 18" and perimeter vent spacing should be equal to 1.5% of the total square footage of the crawl space area to provide cross ventilation. Where necessary, local regulations prevail.
- All other subfloors - Plywood, OSB, particleboard, chipboard, wafer board, etc. must be structurally sound and must be installed following their manufacturer's recommendations. Local building codes may only establish minimum requirements of the flooring system and may **not** provide adequate rigidity and support for proper installation and performance. If needed add an additional layer of APA rated underlayment, fasten and secure according to the underlayment manufacturer's recommendations.
- Resilient flooring is **not** recommended directly over fire-retardant treated plywood or preservative treated plywood. An additional layer of APA rated 1/4" thick underlayment should be installed.

## Concrete Subfloors

- Floors shall be smooth, permanently dry, clean, and free all foreign material such as dust, wax, solvents, paint, grease, oils, and old adhesive residue. The surface must be hard and dense, and free from powder or flaking.
- New concrete slabs must be dry. Maximum moisture level per CaCl test method is 5 lbs. per 1000 in 24 hr. Maximum level for ASTM 2170 In-situ Relative humidity test method - 85%.
- **Do not** install over concrete with a history of high moisture or hydrostatic conditions.
- Ph level of concrete should be between 7-10.
- The final responsibility for determining if the concrete is dry enough for installation of the flooring lies with the floor covering installer.

**WARNING! DO NOT SAND, DRY SWEEP, DRY SCRAPE, DRILL, SAW, BEADBLAST OR MECHANICALLY CHIP OR PULVERIZE EXISTING RESILIENT FLOORING, BACKING, LINING FELT, ASPHALTIC "CUTBACK" ADHESIVES OR OTHER ADHESIVES.**

These products may contain either asbestos fibers and/or crystalline silica. Avoid creating dust. Inhalation of such dust is a cancer and respiratory tract hazard. Smoking by individuals exposed to asbestos fibers greatly increases the risk of serious bodily harm. Unless positively certain that the product is a non-asbestos-containing material, you must presume it contains asbestos. Regulations may require that the material be tested to determine asbestos content and may govern the removal and disposal of material. See current edition of the Resilient Floor Covering Institute (RFCI) publication Recommended Work Practices for Removal of Resilient Floor Coverings for detailed information and instructions on removing all resilient covering structures. For current information go to [www.rfci.com](http://www.rfci.com)

## Existing Floor Coverings

- SMARTCORE® Naturals flooring can be installed over most existing hard-surface floor coverings (including ceramic tile) provided that the existing floor surface is clean, flat dry and structurally sound.
- Existing sheet vinyl floors should **not** be heavily cushioned and **not** exceed more than one layer in thickness.
- Installation is **NOT** allowed over any type of carpet.
- **Do NOT** install over wood subfloor or wood floors adhered to concrete.
- Ceramic tile.
- Never use solvents or citrus adhesive removers to remove old adhesive residue. Solvent residue left in and on the subfloor may affect the new floor covering.

## STARTING YOUR INSTALLATION

- Because houses and buildings, as well as adjacent hardwood or laminate floors, expand and contract, USFloors recommends leaving a gap between the perimeter walls and any adjacent hardwood floor.

# SMARTCORE® Naturals

- For floating installations an underlayment is generally **not** required. However, if you prefer an even quieter installation you can include an underlayment approved for resilient products.
- **Note:** Larger rooms require additional expansion space. Add 1/16" to the width of the expansion space for every 3' the room extends beyond 25'.

Work from several open boxes of flooring and "dry lay" the floor before permanently laying the floor. This will allow you to select varying textures, colors, and sheens, and to arrange them in a harmonious pattern. Remember, it is the installer's responsibility to determine the expectations of what the finished floor will look like with the end user first and then to cull out pieces that **do not** meet those expectations.

Begin installation next to an outside wall. This is usually the straightest and best reference for establishing a straight working line. Establish this line by measuring an equal distance from the wall at both ends and snapping a chalk line. The distance you measure from the wall should be the width of a plank. You may need to scribe cut the first row of planks to match the wall in order to make a straight working line if the wall is out of straight.

You may want to position a few rows before starting installation to confirm your layout decision and working line. When laying flooring, stagger end joints from row to row by at least 8" (20 cm) for planks. Use the cut-off end to begin the next row when cutting the last plank in a row to fit. If cut-off end is less than 8", discard it and instead cut a new plank at a random length (at least 8" in length) and use it to start the next row. Always begin each row from the same side of the room.

## INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS

These installation guidelines apply to the SMARTCORE® Naturals product. All instructions and recommendations should be followed for a successful installation.

Tools: Tape Measure, Utility Knife, Jigsaw, Tapping Block or Rubber Mallet, Pull Bar, ¼" Spacers, T-Square, Safety Glasses, Broom or Vacuum and, if necessary, tools for subfloor repair.

- SMARTCORE® Naturals floor covering is an interior product and must be stored/installed in a temperature-controlled interior environment, maintained between 55 and 85 degrees F or 13°-29°C.
- Excessive moisture in the subfloor could promote mold, mildew, and other moisture related issues that will contribute to an unhealthy indoor environment. USFloors is **not** responsible for damages related to these moisture issues. USFloors recommends a 6 mil polyfilm when installing over concrete subfloors.
- Flexible silicone caulking should be used around the perimeter of the installation in areas being exposed to excessive topical moisture.
- Flooring should be installed after all other trades have completed work that could damage the flooring.
- Use cementitious patching and leveling compounds that meet or exceed maximum moisture level and pH requirements. Use of gypsumbased patching and/or leveling compounds, which contain Portland or high alumina cement and meet or exceed the compressive strength of 3,000 psi are acceptable.
- Inspect all planks for damage prior to installation. If you have any concerns about the product fit or finish, call USFloors Tech Services at 800-404-2675 Claims>Returns will **not** be accepted for any flooring that has been cut to size and/or installed.

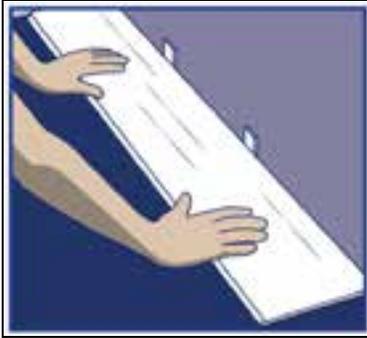
**Radiant Heat:** SMARTCORE® Naturals flooring can be installed over radiant heat using either the floating or glue down method. When gluing floor, use only USFloors approved adhesive over manufacturer's recommended substrate. Radiant heat systems must have a minimum of 1/2" separation from the product. Maximum operating temperature should never exceed 85°F (30°C). Use of an in-floor temperature sensor is recommended to avoid overheating.

- **Turn the heat off for 24 hours before, during and 24 hours after installation when installing over radiant heated subfloors**
- Failure to turn the heat off may result in significantly shortened working time of the adhesive
- Floor temperature must **not** exceed **85°F (30°C)**.
- Once the installation has been completed, the heating system should be turned on and increased gradually (5 degree increments) until returning to normal operating conditions.
- Failure to strictly follow adhesive manufacturer's guidelines may result in failure and void the warranty.

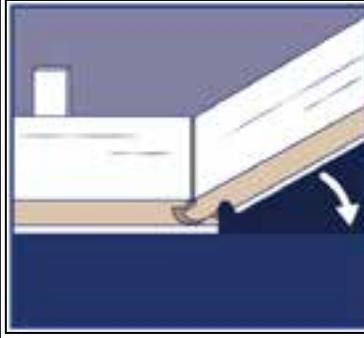
**Warning: Electric heating mats that are not embedded into the subfloor are not recommended for use underneath SMARTCORE® Naturals floors.**

**Installation:** SMARTCORE® Naturals flooring is engineered to be installed utilizing the floating method. **Do not** install cabinets or fixed objects atop the flooring. Proper expansion space is required. Undercut all doorjamb. **Do not** fasten wall moldings and or transition strips to the floor and planks.

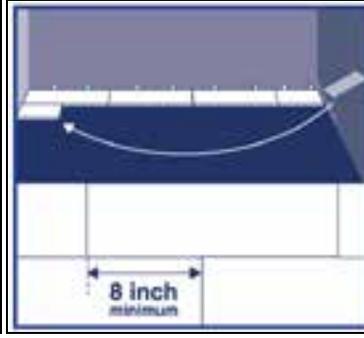
# SMARTCORE® Naturals



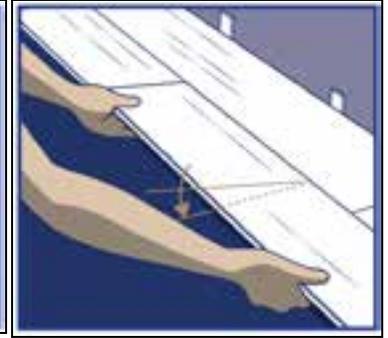
**Step 1:** Begin installation working from left to right. Insert spacers at ends and edges where planks meet wall to maintain 1/4" expansion space



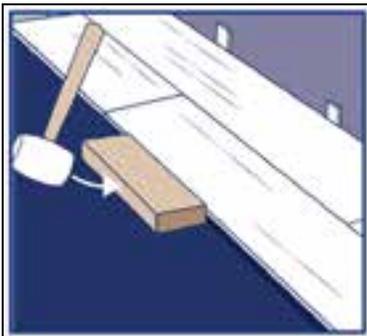
**Step 2:** Lock short end of plank by inserting tongue into groove at an angle and drop in place. Continue to end of first row.



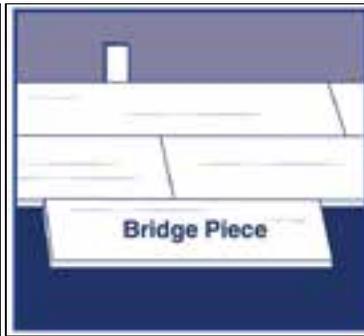
**Step 3:** Use leftover plank from first row as starter for second row. Minimum 8" stagger between plank end joints.



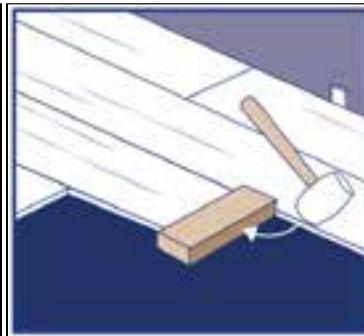
**Step 4:** Lock long edge of plank by inserting tongue into groove at an angle and drop in place. Slide plank toward end of previously installed plank until the tongue just touches the groove.



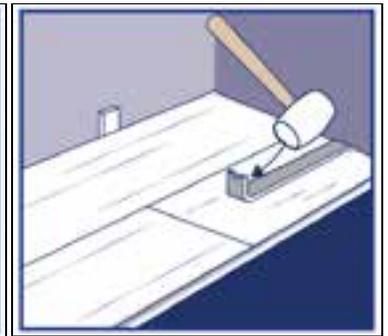
**Step 5:** Use hammer and tapping block to engage plank and ensure tight fit.



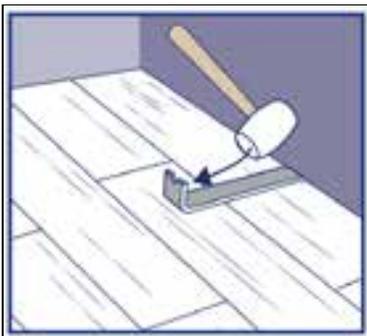
**Step 6:** Attach a scrap piece to align planks and bridge gaps between planks.



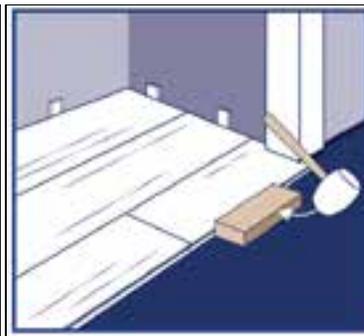
**Step 7:** Tap end of planks with hammer and tapping block to engage ends.



**Step 8:** Use hammer and pull bar to engage final piece, insert spacers and continue to next row.



**Step 9:** Use hammer and pull bar to lock planks on final row.



## INSTALLATION UNDER DOOR JAMBS

- Wooden jambs should be undercut.
- Metal jambs require an expansion gap – use a colored flexible caulk to fill the expansion gap.
- If fitting under the jamb – Tap the long edge with tapping block and hammer to lock the long edge.

## COMPLETING THE JOB – ALL INSTALLATIONS

- Sweep or vacuum floor

For reference purposes only if printed or downloaded  
Clean the floor with proper hardwood floor cleaner

# SMARTCORE<sup>®</sup> NATURALALS

- **Install transition pieces -i.e. – thresholds, t-moldings, base boards and quarter round. Nail moldings to wall, not the floor.**
- **Inspect final floor for nicks and or minor gaps – fill with appropriate color wood putty.**
- **Unused material should be left with owner and stored in a dry place in case of future repairs are needed.**
- **Use plywood or hardboard when moving heavy appliances or furniture across floor.**

## Preventative Maintenance:

- Always protect floors from direct exposure of sunlight that can cause the wood or stain to change colors. Warranties **do not** cover damage from UV exposure. Recommended humidity levels are between 35% R.H. - 55% R.H.
- Protect floors when moving heavy objects to prevent permanent scratches and tears. The use of plywood and heavy cardboard are examples of protective barriers.
- Use appropriate wide floor protectors under tables, chairs, and any other heavy home furnishing to avoid permanent damage. As a rule, the heavier the object, the wider the floor protector.
- Walk-off mats should be used at all entrances to absorb soil and moisture. The use of appropriate mats will help avoid scratches and damages to the floor. If mats are placed directly on top of the hardwood floors, use proper indoor mats. Mats that can trap moisture underneath have potential to cause possible discoloration. Latex and rubber backings should **not** be used.
- Area rugs are recommended in high traffic and pivot areas. Avoid shoes with spiked or damaged heels. Also keep pets' paws and nails cleaned and trimmed.

## Floor Care and Maintenance

Remember, like any floor covering, our factory finished wood floors will show signs of wear over time, depending on the size and lifestyle of your family. By observing a few precautions and setting up a regular cleaning routine and maintenance program, you can expect years of beauty from your floor. The following are examples of the reasonable and necessary maintenance you are expected to perform. They are **not** intended to be an exclusive list.

- Sweep or vacuum regularly since built-up grit can damage the surface of the wood. The vacuum head must be a brush or felt type. Be certain the wheels of the vacuum are clean and **do not** damage the finish. **Do not** use a vacuum with a beater bar head.
- Remove spills promptly using a soft cloth and cleaning products recommended by the manufacturer.
- Mist a Neutral Ph hardwood floor cleaner to damp-mop your floor. **Do not** use hardwood floor cleaning machines or steam cleaners as this can severely damage the flooring and will void the warranties. See section on Improper Maintenance.
- Use the manufacturer's recommended Hardwood floor cleaners with a clean terry cloth mop. Always sweep or vacuum the floors prior to using wood floor cleaners. **Do not** allow excess cleaner to remain on the floors surface as this may permanently damage the wood fiber.
- **Important: Do not** use oil soaps, liquid or paste wax products or other household cleaners that contain citrus oils, lemon oil, tung oil, silicon, or ammonia since these warranties **do not** cover damage caused by non-recommended products. Use of these and other such products will harm the long-term performance of your floor and may also affect its recoat ability.
- **Do not** use 2 in 1 cleaners with polish that may contain acrylics or urethane polish to restore gloss – the use of these products will void the finish warranty and may produce unsatisfactory results when **not** applied properly.
- Keep pets' nails trimmed, and paws clean and free of dirt, gravel, grease, oil, and stains.
- Place protective felt pads beneath furniture legs and feet to reduce scratches and dents. Replace pads as needed.
- Use a dolly and protective sheets of plywood when moving heavy objects, furniture, or appliances.
- Make certain furniture casters are clean and operate properly (a minimum 1" wide vinyl surface where it comes in contact with wood is recommended). Clean wheels periodically to remove dirt and debris.
- Remove shoes with spiked or damaged heels before walking on floor.
- Exposure to the sun and its UV rays accelerates the oxidation and aging of wood. This can cause the stain and/or wood to fade and/or to change color. We recommend that you rearrange rugs and furniture periodically so the floor ages evenly. Exotic species such as Brazilian Cherry are more susceptible to color change during the aging process. These warranties **do not** cover damage from the sun and its UV rays.
- Use area rugs in high traffic areas and pivot points (e.g., stair landings, room entries, etc.), especially if you have a large family or indoor pets.
- Maintain the proper Relative Humidity in your home between 35% - 55%. The use of a humidifier during heating seasons may help reduce shrinkage of the wood due to low humidity.