



General Guide for Wood Flooring

Before starting any installation, read the following instructions carefully. These are guidelines and do not replace official rules, building regulations and/or instructions by architects, engineers or contractors.

For any warranty to be valid a professional installer must be used and this installer must complete our "Guarantee Certificate" and send this back to us within 30 days after installation.

For further information please refer to our website, www.WoodTrend.co.uk where we provide you with up-to-date information, legislation and regulations as well as further tips and advice.

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1. Introduction

a) Coverage

Wood is a beautiful product of nature and WoodTrend's Floors are graded in accordance with established criteria. Up to 5% must be allowed for on-site selection and/or repair. In addition, 5% is recommended to allow for necessary cutting during installation (depending on layout). We also do recommend extra boards, to be stored in a dry and level place, for possible replacements. Therefore we always recommend an extra 10% to be ordered, slightly less for bigger areas.

b) Colour

Wood, to a varying extent, tends to darken over time. This is a natural process and not a defect. Rugs, or carpets, should not be put down for about 4 weeks after installation. Even with this precaution a difference in colour should be expected over time, between any covered and un-covered area. Individual boards normally vary as well.

c) Equilibrium Moisture Content (EMC)

A wooden floor is a completely natural product. Natural timber is hygroscopic and thus continually takes up and gives off moisture to keep in balance with its surroundings. The point where the wood is in balance is called the equilibrium moisture content or EMC. However, continuously changing temperatures and humidity results in a continuous, natural shrinkage and expansion, mainly seen on the width of a board. This can be reduced by correct installation and especially by controlling temperature and humidity levels.

The importance of the EMC above and below the floor is highlighted by the fact that if one is too different from the other, then instead of the normal shrinkage and expansion, the floor is at risk of either cupping or becoming concave. Cupping results if the humidity is much higher above the floor than below it and caution must be taken when installing above under-floor heating, as the heat dries not only the sub-floor but also the underside of the wood floor. The floor becomes concave if too much moisture is present below the floor compared to above the floor. This emphasizes the importance of a dry sub-floor and the use of a damp-proof membrane (DPM) and possible a primer or vapour barrier.

d) Relative Humidity (RH)

In the air relative humidity (RH) is expressed by the percentage of the amount of water vapour the air can hold before it is totally saturated, reaching a maximum of 100%. The higher the temperature of the air, the more water vapour it is able to hold before it condenses out as water droplets.

Indoors, we can control the humidity by controlling the temperature and using (de)humidifiers, remembering the principle that if we increase the temperature of the air, the relative humidity drops. An ideal indoor RH is 45-55%. This is best obtained by keeping a temperature of 18-21 deg. C. combined with the use of a (de)humidifier¹.

e) Moisture Content (MC)

Moisture content (MC) is the percentage of water in the wood.

f) Sub-floor

We can control the effect of the sub-floor by ensuring there is a built-in damp-proof membrane (DPM), by applying primer or laying separate vapour barrier – and especially to give the sub-floor time to dry properly before any attempt to install wooden floors.

Failure to comply with moisture content recommendations and site condition requirements can result in excessive shrinkage or expansion of the boards – or worse – cupping or concave floor boards.

g) Acclimatisation

Each region of the UK has its own mini-climate and each site will have its own conditions. Acclimatisation must take place for a period of normally 3 to 7 days, in an area of the room not affected by the sun, direct heating, moist walls etc. The actual time for acclimatisation is determined by the wooden floors reaching a MC suitable for the site conditions which must already be prevalent and remain so during installation and once the floor is in use.

Service conditions:

	Estimated Equilibrium Moisture Content (EMC)		
	WoodTrend	CFA ²	BSI ³
Above under-floor heating	6- 8%	-	6- 8%
Full continuous central heating (24 hours a day)	7- 9%	7- 9%	9-11%
Intermittent Central Heating (heating on / off)	9-10%	9-10%	10-14%
Traditional heating like from an open hearth	11-12%	11-12%	-
Unheated	13-16%	13-15%	15-19%

¹ As per British Standard regulations, a work area temperature within 15-27 deg. C. and a RH between 35-65% are to be maintained not only during installation but also before and after. However, this is very broad and could give unwanted movements after installation. The temperature should therefore be maintained within a comfortable 18-24 deg. C (recommended 18-21 deg. C.) and the RH at 40-60% (recommended RH of 45-55%) as prevalent once in use.

² **The CFA guide to contract flooring, fifth edition.** Informative publication for Architects, Specifiers and Buyers. See www.cfa-org.uk.

³ **BSI British Standards, bsi-global.com** is the National Standards Body of the UK and develops standards and standardization solutions to meet the needs of business and society. They work with government, businesses and consumers to represent UK interests and facilitate the production of British, European and international standards.



2. Under-Floor Heating

Your floor has been kiln-dried (KD) to a MC of about 10% and is therefore close to the recommended MC for our normal environment with 40-60% relative humidity (RH) and a temperature at 18-24 deg. C.

If your floor is to be installed above under-floor heating, a longer acclimatisation than the normal 3-7 days is likely to be required. However, properly acclimatised wood floors are not automatically suitable for use above under-floor heating!

Engineered flooring is much more stable, due to its construction, than solid floors. For solid floors, only certain species should be used and unstable species, such as Beech, should not be used at all.

Width is important too. Gaps between boards will be more visible in wider boards as both shrinkage and expansion are a percentage of the width. We therefore recommend that only engineered flooring up to 150 mm be used above under-floor heating.

This does not mean that wider engineered flooring cannot be laid with very good results above under-floor heating. However, more movement in the floor with bigger gaps must be expected, prepared for and accepted.

Important Points:

- The sub-floor must be sufficiently dry. For a generic sand and cement screed, this means MC of max. 3%. Once the screed is dried naturally, the under-floor heating is to be turned on and gradually increased until the maximum loading is reached. To assist drying and to achieve uniformity of temperature within the screed it is helpful, during this phase, to cover the screed with a light coating of sawdust. Maximum loading is to be maintained for at least 7 days, same time adequate ventilation is performed to ensure that the released humidity can escape.
- All under-floor services (not only heating services) beneath the floor to be tested fully before laying starts.
- It is essential that hot water or steam pipes, other than those for floor warming purpose, are lagged or otherwise insulated in order to reduce movement of the flooring in that area. They must also be fixed at a sufficient depth to avoid possible damage from fixings for the new flooring.
- Slowly acclimatise the floor before installation, bringing the M.C. down to 6-8%.
- Maintain a consistent temperature of 18-27 deg. C between the screed and the floor. Never increase the temperature above 27 deg. C., not even for a short period! High temperatures will dry the wood too much and not only provide bigger gaps, but also increase risk of cupping and splitting. Any increase or decrease in temperature must be done gradually 2-3 deg. C. every 24 hours.
- Maintain a consistent RH between 40-60%, if required by using (de)humidifiers. The lowest RH normally occurs during the winter and the highest RH during the summer.
- Maintain a room temperature of between 18-24 deg. C. (we recommend, for your comfort, 18-21 deg. C.)
- If nailed down (solid only) or glued down (solid and engineered) then the T&G must not be glued together (to avoid cumulative movement and risk of fixings becoming loose). An extra expansion gap of 2 mm should be put into the floor for every 2 M width, maintaining the normal expansion gap of 12 mm at all sides of the floor.
- If laid as a floating floor, either using click-system or gluing the T&G together (engineered only) then for each linear meter a cumulative expansion gap of 3.0 mm is to be catered for at each side, with a minimum of 12 mm. Please note this normally requires slightly thicker skirting up to 30 mm instead of the normal approximate 15 mm skirting. If the floor is very wide, above 8 M, then additional expansion gaps of 2 mm for each 2 M width are to be included in the floor itself (only possible for glued T&G).
- Wooden floors always expand and contract. The main problem is normally that the wood shrinks and gaps appear. So the question should be asked: "why have extra expansion gaps?"
 - Reason is that we aim to get the floor to a M.C. as close to working conditions as possible, before installation, as this will reduce the risks of these gaps appearing at a later stage.
 - Natural differences occur throughout the year.
 - During the warmest summer months, to save on the heating bill, the under-floor heating should be put at the lowest temperature, i.e. 18 deg. C – but not be turned off. This is to avoid a significant humidity rise from beneath and subsequent risk of concave. During the summer, the RH indoors normally increases to a level of 60%, compared to 40% during the winter, and expansion is likely to take place. To reduce risk of the floor buckling and lifting, we counter this with extra expansion gaps around the floor and, depending the room size, within the floor itself.
 - Paying attention to humidity wooden floors can be installed throughout the year. A floor laid during winter is more likely to expand than to contract. The opposite is the case when the floor is laid during summer.



3. Sub-Floor

The sub-floor normally consists of either suspended timber boards on wooden joists, usually in older buildings, or a concrete/cement and sand screed floor, usually in newer buildings. It can, however, also be metal/glass, plaster, brick, mastic asphalt, chipboard / strandboard (OSB), hardboard, anhydrite/gypsum, magnesite, as well as other, often unsuitable, previous floors. If unsuitable, they must be removed.

Approved document E of the Building Regulations (1991) sets out sound transmission values which the floor/sub-floor must pass in relation to airborne and impact sound. If requirements are not met, further insulation is necessary.

a) Sub floor Flatness and Integrity

Sub floors must be flat to within 3 mm in a 2m radius depending on existing conditions and restrictions. Flat denotes a smooth, continuous and consistent surface free from undulation. Please note that the terms SR1 and SR2 relate to screed subfloors but can be used as a reference to explain regularity. The subfloors should be clean, dry, structurally sound, smooth, free of squeaks and free of protruding fasteners. Please note that the term flatness relates to the overall plane of the floor.

If undulations in the subfloor exceed the tolerances specified above, level with approved material for use under wood flooring. However, it is the builder's or general contractor's responsibility to provide the wood-flooring contractor with a subfloor that is within the tolerances listed above.

Inspect the sub floor carefully. If there is movement or squeaks in the subfloor, refasten the subfloor to the joists in problem areas.

Protruding fasteners are easily remedied by driving those fasteners deeper into the subfloor.

b) Panel Products Sub floors

Make sure the panels are flat to within 3mm in a 2m radius

If the panels are out of specification, consider sanding.

When sanding care must be taken to minimize the amount of dust produced.

For panel products subflooring it is important to check for loose panels and secure securely.

Ensure that there is proper expansion space (3mm) between the panels. If the subfloor panels are not tongue-and-grooved and if there is not sufficient expansion space, use a circular saw to create the specified space. Do not saw through joints on T&G subfloors.

Also check for delaminated or damaged areas and repair those areas as needed.

Make sure the subfloor is free of debris before beginning installation.

c) The sub-floor must be sound

'Sound' means that it is appropriate to the occupancy of the building, taking structural considerations and design into account. The structure and design should be based on stress figures published by the Institute of Structural Engineers. Floors subjected to heavy loading or abnormal concentrated loads should be designed by a corporate structural engineer or be tested in accordance with the procedure for prototype testing as per BS 5268.

d) If the sub-floor is sound it must also be dry

Even though a damp-proof membrane (DPM) is normally applied either between the screed and the concrete or, alternatively, below the concrete, a vapour barrier may still be required.

If the humidity is too high, it can be due to lack of drying due to the lack of suitable DPM. A 6" concrete floor slab will take about 6 months to dry. Remember: site conditions at time of installation are to be as prevalent, once in use.

BS 8201 (1987) – British Standard recommends that the moisture in concrete slabs and screeds does not exceed 75% RH or 5% MC measured with a sealed humidity box. However this corresponds to a wood equivalent of 16%.

As per following simplified scale, 75% RH is too much and not recommended, even if the installation is taking place in a non-heated, covered environment. To install wooden floors in an environment with an MC >16% is also not recommended. The cause for the high MC or damp condition is to be found and rectified, likely by letting the concrete and/or screed dry properly!



Service conditions:

	MC⁴	MC	RH
	Generic Wood	Generic Sand & Cement Screed	Air
Above under-floor heating	6 – 8%	< 3.0%	25 – 35%
Full continuous central heating (24hours a day)	7 – 9%	~ 3.0%	30 – 40%
Intermittent Central Heating (heating on/off)	9 – 10%	~ 3.7%	40 – 45%
Traditional heating like from an open hearth	11 – 12%	~ 4.5%	50 – 55%
Unheated	13 – 16%	~ 5.5%	60 – 75%

The importance of maintaining a uniform temperature and humidity throughout the year is highlighted by the fact that just a small change in MC of the wooden floor, (2-3% - from using under-floor heating to intermittent heating, or simply the natural difference between winter and summer), can produce an approx. 1.0 – 1.5 mm expansion / contraction per linear meter across the grains.

There must therefore be an expansion gap all around the room, including at radiator pipes etc., of minimum 12 mm (1/2"). If installed above under floor heating, then please see below. You must ensure that the MC of your floor, at time of installation, is a maximum of 1-2% within the expected EMC when in use.

Even with all the precautions, under normal conditions it is natural to expect small gaps to appear, especially during winter, with its cold and dry periods and where the heating has been turned up. During summer, when the RH increases, the floor will absorb moisture, seek EMC, and gaps will normally close up again. Sufficient expansion gaps must have been allocated to avoid the wooden floor to buckle and lift.

e) If the sub-floor is sound and dry then it must also be level

Localized variation in levels should not exceed ± 3 mm from the mean when measured over a 2 M distance using a straight edge⁵. If required a proprietary levelling compound is to be used to make the sub-floor smooth to avoid undulations and surface irregularities which otherwise can affect the fitting of the floor and result in unevenness between planks, as well as squeaking.

f) If the sub-floor is sound, dry and level it must also be clean

All debris must be removed to avoid irregularities and especially risk of unwanted noise once the floor is installed.

⁴ Combined guidance values from **Protimeter – GE** and the **CFA guide to contract flooring – fifth edition**. Informative publications for Architects, Specifiers and Buyers produced by the Contract Flooring Association (www.cfa-org.uk)

⁵ BS 8201:1987 – Design Considerations – 6.4.2: Surface finish and levels.



4. Installation

a) Site-conditions

Before the wooden floor is brought to the site it is very important that:

- the sub-floor is dry
- all windows are in place
- all radiators have been bled
- all plaster is dry
- all painting and wallpapering is done
- all tiling works finished at least 3 weeks earlier
- no water leakage from sanitary and heating elements
- the Temperature is 18-24 deg. C
- the Relative Humidity is 40-60%

In general, all wet jobs should be completed prior to installation. This means that your wooden floor ought to be the last to be installed, followed only by skirting and other similar finishing, which should be deferred until after the floor has been laid. If any work, for some reason, is still to be carried out after installation, then a protective cover of cardboard or similar material should be placed on the wooden floor. Before the floor is taken into use, an adequate cleaning and maintenance should be carried out.

b) Check-list

A check-list should be made before installation takes place. This must include:

- preferences of the customer
- intended usage of area and its designed loading
- type and construction of sub-floor, location of the DPM including for walls in contact with the ground
- correct structural requirements for the sub-floor, spacing between and size of the joints⁶ or battens⁷
- installation method (whether nailed down/ glued down / use of elastilon or similar / a floating floor)
- sound insulation related to airborne and impact sound
- vapour barriers or primers to control passing of moisture from the sub-floor or walls
- if above under-floor heating or not
- dimensions of the full area with all measurements, observing that walls are not necessarily straight
- sufficient floors for coverage, wastage (and future replacement), available and fully acclimatized
- maximizing stability by having the direction of the planks following the length of the area
- directions of the planks, recommended to be laid in the direction of incoming light
- connections with, and considerations to, adjacent rooms
- positions of T-bars, if any, to adjacent rooms
- thickness of skirting which must be adequate for the required expansion gaps
- position of expansion gaps, if any, within the floor

c) Methods of installation

There are 4 methods to install a wooden floor, used for following types of floors – and above following sub-floors:

	<u>Type of floor</u>		<u>Type of sub-floor (the layer just below the floor itself)</u>					
	Solid	Engineered	Joists	Battens	Old Wooden floors	Hardboard Chipboard OSB, Ply	Concrete	Tiles, Vinyl, Carpet
Nailing	ok	-	ok	ok	ok	ok	-	-
Gluing	ok	ok	-	-	ok	ok	ok	-
Elastilon⁸	ok	ok	-	-	ok	ok	ok	ok
Floating	-	ok	-	-	ok	ok	ok	ok

⁶ BS 8201:1987 – 10.1: the maximum span for T&G softwood boards above 16 mm thickness is 505 mm and for 19 mm it is 600 mm (centre to centre). The maximum spans for hardwood boards equal or above these thicknesses will depend upon the specie. Maximum span for sports halls, gymnasias is not to exceed 300 mm. This info refers only to floors of single family houses not more than 3 storeys.

Any deviation from these standard, legal requirements, due to span, expected load, size and usage of building etc., to be calculated by a structural engineer. Generally, hardwood floorings are much stronger than their softwood counterparts. When T&G is on all 4 sides it is not a requirements that the joints are centred above a joist (or batten) – but it is an advantage for added support. We recommend a span between 300 – 400 mm considering the lengths of the planks.

⁷ BS 8201:1987 – 10.1: Battens for fixed floors should be not less than 36 mm basic width and those for floating floors not less than 50 mm basic width. To be of sufficient depth to accommodate the length of the fixing used with a minimum dept of 36 mm.

⁸ See www.elastilon.com. When using Elastilon or Elastilon-Lock (latter for above under-floor heating), their 'Laying Instructions' must be followed.



Type of Floor

Solid floor: Only nailing, glue-down or Elastilon methods are to be used.
T&G must not be glued together due to risk related to cumulative expansion and shrinkage.
Due to higher movements compared to an engineered floor, a solid floor is not recommended to be laid as a floating floor.

Engineered floor: Suitable for gluing down, on Elastilon or as floating floor.
Due to its thickness and construction an engineered floor is not a structural floor and thus depends on a structural sub-floor or support.

Type of Sub-Floor

Joists and battens: Maximum span of 400 mm for solid floors 18 mm or thicker.
The solid floors are to be secretly nailed through the top of the tongues, at a 45 degree angle and at each intersection with a joist or a batten. A hand-operated powernailer or a pneumatic flooring-nailer is to be used.
Battens should be either fixed to the concrete or screed with masonry nails or bedded in mastic.

Old wooden floor: To be sound, dry, level and clean.
Any loose boards are to be secured and there must not be any visible, protruding nails.
No DPM or vapour barrier to be included between old wooden floor and new wooden floor.
New floor planks to be laid crosswise to the old boards for increased stability.

Hardboard etc.: If above joists or battens, it should provide adequate support to ensure proper rigidity.
To be nailed to the joists, battens or old wooden floor – or glued to the screed, concrete etc.

Concrete: To be sound, level, dry and clean.
Where adhesives are used, the adhesive manufacturer's instructions must be followed.
Adhesive should be cold, comply with the requirements of either BS 1204 or BS 4071 or be of the bitumen rubber emulsion type. Adhesive should be spread evenly, using a serrated trowel. Unless otherwise recommended by the adhesive manufacturer, the serrations should be V-shaped, 3 mm deep by 3 mm wide.
Where under-floor heating is to be installed, it is essential that the adhesive is able to withstand the effects of the heat and when gluing as a floating floor, the adhesive is to be applied on both the side as well as the end of the floor planks.

Tiles, Vinyl etc. As likely to be unsatisfactory bonded to the base, ideally to be removed and sub-floor prepared as for any sub-floor before installation of wooden floors. If not removed then they must be sound, level, dry and clean in addition to be firmly bonded to their sub-floor.

- Tiles and Vinyl: They are to be primed prior to applying a smoothing compound in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. Special precautions to be taken for moisture and possible need of vapour barrier. Tiles are not suitable to receive nails. Gluing is possible on tiles and vinyl but only if they are bonded satisfactorily to their sub-floor.
- Carpets: Only to receive a floating floor or an Elastilon-layer, provided the carpet has a short-dense pile.

d) Expansion gaps

	Conventional heating	Above under-floor heating
Nailed/Glue-down	Minimum 12 mm at all sides	Extra 2 mm, within the floor, for each 2 M across the grains
Elastilon (floating)	Minimum 12 mm at all sides	Extra 1 mm, added at both sides, for each 2 M across the grains
Floating	Minimum 12 mm at all sides	Extra 1 mm, added at both sides, for each 2 M across the grains

For widths above 8 M, extra expansion gaps of minimum 2 mm for each 2 M width are to be included in the floor itself, with a maximum distance of 8 M between each expansion gap. This can be done either by dividing the floor into sections and placing an expansion gap in the middle or, to be less visible and to avoid gap(s) to appearing where heavier traffic and cleaning are expected, smaller expansion gaps can be placed. Possible placement of very heavy furniture must be considered as can hold back the natural movement of the planks. The minimum 12 mm expansion gaps at all sides are to remain. Note: Flooring with clic-system is not recommended for areas wider than 8 M.

Though wood mainly expands and contracts across the grains, there is also a small movement over the length. For that reason, floors longer than 12 M must have, within the floor, an extra 1 mm expansion gap for each meter the floor is longer than 12 M, with a maximum distance of 12 M between each expansion gap. The minimum 12 mm expansion gaps at all sides are to remain.

e) Installation

Due to the risk of high humidity and possible spillages of water in bathrooms, wet-rooms and basements, wooden floors are not to be installed in such areas.

- Make sure you have all necessary tools for installation, cutting and cleaning
- Use wedges to ensure the right expansion gaps are obtained, and maintained, during installation
- Use tapping blocks to avoid damaging the planks
- Install one row at a time, working from either left to right, or right to left, depending on the position of the first row



Solid flooring:

- If to be nailed, start with the tongue facing away from the wall. This will ensure possibility for nailing.
- If to be glued down, start with the grooves facing away from the wall. This will ensure easier assembly of the planks when pushed together. Ensure for the first row that the tongue, facing the wall, is cut off to avoid affecting the expansion gap.

Engineered flooring:

- If to be glued down, start with the grooves facing away from the wall. This will ensure easier assembly of the planks. Ensure for the first row that the tongue, facing the wall, is cut off to avoid affecting the expansion gap.
- If to be laid as floating floor, start with the tongue facing away from the wall. This will make it easier to apply glue to the grooves of the planks which are subsequently to be laid down.
- If provided with a clic-system, start with the lower lip facing away from the wall. This will ensure that the upper lip can enter the lower lip and get the clic over the protruding part. Ensure for the first row that the upper lip, facing the wall, is cut off to avoid affecting the expansion gap.

Calculate the number of full planks to be used across the width of the room and note the remaining space, deducting the required expansion gap at each side. Then add this measurement to the full width of a plank and divide into two. The result is the width which should be used for the first and the last plank, at each extreme, to ensure that the room will have a symmetric feel.

Adjust door-frames by using a plank to mark the bottom of the frame and cut with a fine-toothed saw.

As the structure and grains differ between each plank, it is best to work with 3-4 packs at a time, mixing the planks as they visually fit the best. Any planks which have a substantially different, natural appearance should be put aside in order to be laid where it suits furniture to be placed, or behind doors, in less illuminated areas etc.

Create a perfectly straight starting line parallel to the wall, by a distance equalling the width of the floorboard + required expansion gap. Either draw on the sub-floor or mark with a string.

As per the pre-made plan, the first 2-3 rows should be loosely laid down before any attempt at fixing. This is done to ensure that the planks look the best possible together, as well as fitting together.

Each board must be checked for conformity in size and for damage. Unwanted, natural defects can be cut out and the balance used either at the start or at the end of the various rows, paying attention to the location of the T&G.

Generally the leftover piece from the previous row is to be used to start the next row. These last and first pieces should both be min. 250 mm long if glued down or floating, or sufficiently long to be secured to two joists or battens. Any adjacent end-joints should also be staggered at least 250 mm apart. Avoid ends meeting in line with the ends of adjacent planks to avoid creating unwanted lines in the floor, unless it is part of the overall architecture and design.

For pipes, drill a hole 25 mm greater than the diameter of the pipe to provide an expansion gap. To enable a plank to enter, cut out the part of the plank between the pipe and the wall in a format of a self-closing lid in a 45 degree angle. Once the plank has been installed, glue this piece back in place. The shape of the piece will help to keep it in place. Fit the pipe rose to cover the expansion gap.

Fix the skirting and mouldings to the wall, never to the floor. Otherwise it will take the skirting/mouldings along when the floor contracts and expands.

Consider the length of the skirting / mouldings and use the shortest pieces where least visible, i.e. behind doors, behind where furniture is expected to be placed etc. If the joints will be in a visible area, then make the joint at an angle in order for the cut to run away from the main area of entrance and occupation, i.e. not to be in a regular sight-line. This way the joint will be hidden and the moulding / skirting will appear to be one, long piece.

Correct installation entails many considerations and details. However, following the guidelines ensures that the finish and end-result are of the highest quality and workmanship to do justice to your new wooden floors.

WoodTrend does not advise using our engineered floors in kitchen and bathroom areas.



5. Maintenance

All pre-finished floors should immediately be maintained, using the correct treatment, upon installation.

a) Pre-Oiled floors

An oiled floor is an environmentally sound choice, as the penetrating oil is absorbed in the wood fibres and cells and hardens the floor to a considerable depth. It is surprisingly resistant to impact and, importantly, easy to maintain. Unless there is substantial mechanical damage (individual planks or sections can be substituted), the oiled floor will not require re-sanding to restore it to its original condition. This means that your floor can literally last a life-time.

Buffing and maintenance

Buffing: before using a newly-laid floor for the first time, it must be cleaned and buffed. Buffing makes the surface more hardwearing. This treatment can be carried out either by hand or with a polishing machine. Wait for a few days before cleaning machine-polished floors; floors polished by hand may only be cleaned after a week. Make certain that during this period the floor remains water-free since it is necessary for the oil to harden completely.

Refurbishment and maintenance

Oil-treated floors need to be treated with maintenance oil at regular intervals. This would be annually for floors subject to normal wear and more frequently for floors subject to greater wear. Maintenance should ideally not be restricted to just those areas which are subject to the greatest wear, but should be treated on the whole surface.

Regular maintenance with soap (natural or white)

We recommend that during the first month you give your floor a soaping once a week. Natural soap, formulated for wooden floors, dissolved in water removes dirt and provides all floors with a protective surface. Use as little water as possible when cleaning the floor and remove water that has not dried after 5 minutes. Do not walk on the floor until it is completely dry (about 15 minutes). Subsequently, you can soap it as need arises, when the floor is dirty or has a dry look. In between, you can sweep or vacuum-clean the floor. Never clean your oiled floor with only clean water!

Stain and excessive soap residue

Special cleaners are available for particularly stubborn stains such as grease, red wine, blood, coffee stains etc. Occasionally (about once a year) a wood cleaner is needed to remove excessive soap residue as well as stubborn dirt spots. Afterwards apply a coat of maintenance oil and then treat with natural soap for wooden floors, ref. above.

To avoid risk of combustion, the pieces of cloth that are drenched in oil must be soaked/wetted thoroughly in water before being disposed off in a tightly closed container after use.

b) Pre-Varnished Floors

Varnished floors are extremely easy to deal with as the hard coating is a combination of anti-scratch properties as well as elastic layers (overall 5-7 layers) which provide great resistance against the day-to-day activities. The quality of the coating is today so good that extended warranty is provided. With simply precautions and maintenance, a varnished floor will stay beautiful for a long time. Should damage occur, individual boards can be substituted and if required, after prolonged usage and wear and tear, the floor can be sanded and a new coating can be applied. A new varnish can be clear or stained, mat or gloss or, if desired, the whole floor can be changed to an oiled finish!

Maintenance

A lacquer soap or floor polish, either diluted in water or ready to use, not only cleans the varnished surface, but it actually strengthens the lacquer as it protects against wear and scratches and thereby prolongs the lifetime of the lacquered surface. Application as required.

Cleaning

Special cleaners are available for particularly stubborn stains such as grease, red wine, blood, coffee stains etc. Occasionally (about once a year) a wood cleaner is needed to remove excessive soap residue as well as stubborn dirt spots. Afterwards apply a lacquer soap or floor polish (refer above).

Remove water spills promptly. Water can damage a wooden floor!

Clean wooden floors with minimum quantity of water using a well rung out mop, especially in the case of engineered flooring.

Refurbishment

Small scratches can be repaired with readily available repair kits. Slightly worn areas where only the top layer has been affected can be redone with a 2-component varnish from specialized manufactures (specialist job). However, for best result and to avoid differences in finish and look, the whole floor should be sanded down to bare wood and a new coating applied (refer above).



6. Tips and Advise

a) Protection of the floor

- Place a good quality mat at the entrance to the building
- Daily maintenance by sweeping or vacuum-cleaning
- Never use a lot of water when you are cleaning your floor
- Immediately wipe up all spillages with a damp (not wet) sponge or a neutral, gentle detergent
- Never use aggressive detergents, ammonia products, scouring agents or silicone
- Protect your floor by placing self-adhesive felt-pads at the bottom of all furniture
- Do not use rubber or foam packed plastic mats, as they may discolour the floor, as well as trap humidity

b) Airborne particles

An RH above 70% increase risk of dust-mites and respiratory illness such as asthma whereas, when the RH falls below 50% the dust mites actually desiccate and die. If, however, the RH falls below 30%, it could have an adverse effect and increase the risk of sore throats!

Good ventilation is always important and reduces the amount of airborne particles. The clear advantage of a wooden floor is that dust particles cannot be trapped and especially for children playing, sitting or lying on the floor, there are no particles suddenly whirled up into the air by their play.

Wood is one of nature's few truly renewable resources

It feels good

It is strong

It is beautiful

