

Installation Instruction, Cleaning & Maintenance Guideline

Requirements on the subfloor

- Basic requirements for installing laminate flooring are that the substrate is stable, clean, dry and even.
- Irregularities exceeding 3mm per 1m have to be evened out with a suitable filler/ spackle.
- When installing on an old hardwood floor or on particleboard flooring any loose planks need to be screwed with the sub-structure to help silencing potential squeaks in the old floor. The new floorboards should be installed in transverse direction to the old boards.
- For both stability and health reasons, textile floors are not suitable as a substrate and have got to be removed.
- Installation on PVC-, CV- and linoleum-flooring is possible only if the floor coverings are glued-down over their entire surface and no loose areas are present. Also, the floor coverings must not have subfloor heating underneath.

Generally, moisture level measurements of screed floors should always be conducted with a suitable measuring device. For reasons of precaution a 0.2mm thick PE-foil should always be used as a moisture barrier on top of the screed floor (the individual foil strips need to overlap at least 30cm, overlaps are fixed with adhesive tape; all around the room the foil needs to run up the walls for several centimeters and can be trimmed down with a cutting knife after the skirtings have been installed).

Installation

1. Inspection for material defects

Inspect your laminate flooring boards thoroughly for their quality prior to and during installation. Flooring planks with visible defects or damages must not be installed. The installation must take place under daylight conditions or with excellent artificial light to make sure that any possible damages or faulty planks can be detected.

2. Acclimatising prior to installation

The laminate flooring elements must acclimatise for a period of at least 48 hours at temperatures above 17°C and humidity levels between 50 - 65 % in that room in which they are to be laid. That means the closed packages have to adjust to the climatic conditions in the room. If the climatic conditions in the storage location and the installation room are considerably different, the acclimatisation period should be longer. If the climate differences are very small the acclimatisation time may be shorter. Please store the packages flat on a base without opening them. Paying attention to these guidelines is especially important for new buildings, because humidity levels tend to be particularly high here.

3. No installation in areas subject to splashing water

No installation in permanently moist rooms / wet zones

Laminate flooring must not be installed in areas where splashing shower water may get onto the floor. Standing water will permeate into the laminate flooring boards and can lead to permanent damages. Laminate flooring should not be installed in permanently moist rooms or wet surroundings (saunas, small bathrooms etc.) because the danger of penetration with moisture can never be ruled out completely. If laminate flooring is supposed to be installed in a bathroom, it is important to make sure that it is not installed in areas subject to splashing water (i.e. shower, bathtub, lavatory or sink) and that the relative humidity in the room stays within the normal range between 50 and 65% continually. Any formation of puddles and moisture penetration must be avoided all around the corners of the room, for the joints as well as for the whole flooring area.

4. Condition of the subfloor

Any existing subfloor must be even (max. tolerance 3 mm per 1 m in length), dry and sufficiently stable. Larger depressions should be evened out using standard commercial fillers. The surface of the subfloor should be free of cracks and without any breaks or tears. Loose subfloors or insufficiently stable subfloors (PVC-/ textile flooring) need to be removed.

5. Moisture barrier with mineral subfloors

Generally, when installing on any dry, mineral subfloor a 0.2mm thick Polyethylene foil or alternatively

Duo-Protect should always be used as a moisture barrier to prevent any residual moisture getting through to the backside of your laminate flooring. The purpose of the Polyethylene foil is that of a moisture barrier only and the joints of the foil need to overlap approx. 30cm and need to be glued together. In no way does the PE-foil act as waterproofing for the building!

6. Keeping expansion joints / wall spacings

Being a derived timber product, the substrate of laminate floorings is subject to swelling and shrinking processes depending on the climatic conditions, just like natural timber. That is why an installed laminate flooring requires sufficient spaces, called expansion gaps, towards all fixed constructional parts, i.e. walls, sustainer, heating pipes and the like. Furthermore, expansion gaps are required if the installation area exceeds certain defined values in length and width. One of the most common installation mistakes is actually insufficient wall spacing. Often, this will only become evident during the summer months when higher temperatures and humidity levels lead to a swelling of the laminate flooring. The expansion gap/ wall spacing should be at least 8mm* on each side; with large areas it should be proportionately more. For laminate flooring the rule-of-thumb is: Every meter of installed flooring requires at least 1.5mm of expansion space on both sides of the room. (Example: Room width 5m = min. 8mm expansion gap on each side).

*Note: 15mm minimum with relative humidity > 65%.

Even if the installed material abuts only on a single point in the room the „floating material“ may start to warp and press on. Popular areas where this is repeatedly happening are architraves, transition areas to stairs, heating pipes as well as end profiles.

Heavy pieces like for example kitchen islands and closets (where movements of the flooring are possible in one direction only) require the expansion space on one side to be doubled. For heavy pieces and fitted furniture (e.g. fitted kitchens, built-in closets or aquariums) we recommend having them assembled prior to installation of the flooring. The flooring boards however should be laid to reach just under the base allowing easy dismantling of the flooring at any time. All along the walls the expansion gaps are covered with skirtings, in other places special flooring profiles are used. With metal architraves you can also use Acrylic sealants.

7. Layout of expansion gaps

Due to the fact that the laminate flooring will shrink and expand depending on the climatic conditions – the following situations do require additional expansion joints / spaces of at least 8mm:

- With larger areas (exceeding 8 x 12m)
- With angular areas
- With installations that cover more than one room

Conceal expansion gaps with the suitable adapting or other transition profiles.

8. Installation patterns

Laminate flooring can be installed either in a symmetric or in a random, asymmetric pattern. In either case it is imperative that between rows the short-end joints are staggered at least 40cm.

9. Installation direction / incidence of light

For optical reasons, the longitudinal sides of the planks should be installed so that they run parallel to the incidence of light. That means, the longitudinal side runs in the same direction as the light. When several windows are present, please make your decision based upon the largest one of them. With extreme floor plans the decision for a certain installation direction can also be based upon the specific room layout.

10. Installation direction / floor plan

Again, for optical reasons the longitudinal sides of the flooring should run across to the longitudinal side of the room. That will make the room look larger and also give it a slightly more “square” appearance so it won’t look quite as narrow and tube-like.

Cleaning & maintenance

Avoiding damage

As with all other floor coverings, your new laminate floor should be protected from dirt particles by providing “walk-off zones” (outfitted with doormats/ carpet runners). To protect the laminate flooring against scratches all chairs, tables and other movable furniture pieces need to be fitted with appropriate, soft felt glides. Use only soft castors on office chairs, filing cabinets and wheeled containers. Additionally, areas subject to heavy castor-traffic may be covered with special protective mats that are available in most stores specializing in office supplies. Putting up additional wax-layers or adding other surface treatments to your laminate flooring or to its edges is not necessary, because these measures are neither going to improve the looks nor enhance the serviceability of the flooring.

We recommend regular dry cleaning of your laminate floor using a vacuum cleaner (brushes up!) and/or a broom. Wiping of the floor with a damp cloth is necessary only for severe soiling. When wiping, it is important to remember that the cloth always has to be extremely well wrung out so that never any puddles of standing water will form.

Maintenance

General advice on the maintenance of your laminate flooring:

- Relative humidity between 50 and 65% is the optimum condition for laminate flooring as well as for your personal well-being.
- Sand and dirt can act like abrasive paper on your floors and should be avoided.
- Liquids spilled and/ or standing on the floor have to be removed immediately.
- Damp wipe only.
- Do not use any scouring / abrasive cleansers, no waxes, hot steam cleaners or polishes. They will cloud the floors’ visual appearance.
- Fit furniture, tables and chairs with soft felt glides. Use only soft castors on office chairs and cover the main castor-traffic areas with commercially available protective mats.
- Do not use steam cleaners.

Building contractor cleaning

- Remove drilling dust and other loose particles directly with a brush or vacuum cleaner.
- Remove adhesive streaks and residue with glue remover. To do this, put some glue remover onto a cloth and clean the soiled areas.
- Finally, damp-wipe with concentrated cleanser (Wring cloth out well and avoid pools of water on the floor).

Stubborn stains

- Severe stains such as those from shoe polish, lacquers, tar, oil, grease, ink or lipstick are best treated with a cloth dipped in solvent. For this purpose, you can use solvents such as acetone, nail polish remover or Petrol for home use. When using these, please obey all safety instructions and use solvents sparingly only on the respective areas.