



FLOOR-2-GO



How to Lay Laminate Flooring

A general guide on how to install laminate floors

Before You Begin

It's important to inspect your laminate flooring before laying. If you find any defects at all, DO NOT INSTALL THE FLOOR. First, speak with your supplier to determine the best way forward. Many manufacturers will not validate a warranty if defective flooring is installed.

It is not uncommon to find what appears to be very slight damage to the edges and especially the corners of laminate floors. This will mostly be superficial as the machining process can create small imperfections along the click system that will have no effect on the quality or performance of the floor. However, large broken areas or large areas of damaged click systems are a cause for concern, and you should contact your supplier before proceeding with the installation.

Site Conditions for Laying Laminate Flooring

Poor site conditions are the number one reason for a laminate floor to fail. Learning how to lay laminate flooring is really only important after you have checked site conditions. The most important checks to make are for moisture and sub-floor levels. It is always the responsibility of the installer to determine if the site conditions are acceptable, although you may wish to check this yourself before purchasing a floor. This essential testing should be carried out as follows:

- Humidity levels should be between 45% and 65%. This can be tested with a hygrometer. We recommend reading our guide on [Humidity and Flooring](#).
- Concrete or timber sub-floors should have a moisture content of no more than 12%MC on a surface prong test, or below 3% on a more common concrete moisture metre. Note that different metres have different scales, so it is important to check their documentation.

- Sub-floor levels should be no more than 3mm over a 1m distance in any direction. This should be checked and measured with a long spirit level and ruler before commencing installation. Uneven floors should be leveled using leveling boards, plywood, or self-leveling products.

Your supplier will likely accept no liability for problems with laying a laminate floor if they find any evidence of incorrect job site conditions. If you are not sure about any of this, please contact us at Floor-2-Go and we will be happy to help.

How To Acclimatise A Laminate Floor

Only when the correct site conditions are met can you acclimatise laminate flooring. Store your laminate floor closed in the packaging and flat on the ground in the room of installation. Most manufacturers will insist on 48 hours acclimatisation but read the instructions to ensure you have the correct time period.

If installing laminate flooring onto under-floor heating, ensure that each pack of flooring is resting flat on the ground separately. Do not stack the boxes. Also, check manufacturer's instructions for any specific requirements relating to under-floor heating acclimatisation. Some manufacturers may insist on a longer acclimatising period.

While acclimatising, living conditions should be normal in the room with the heating on. Your laminate floor will not acclimate correctly if the room is cold or if wet trades such as painting or plastering are being carried out around it.

Once acclimated your laminate may expand or shrink very slightly. It is also not uncommon to see some bowing in each plank. Don't worry – this isn't a defect. It is merely the laminate HDF core acclimating to the heat and humidity of the site.

For more in-depth information on this, read our article on - [How to Acclimate Laminate Flooring](#).

How To Lay Laminate Flooring

Always read the manufacturer's own recommended installation guides before installation. Learning how to lay laminate flooring is usually carried out in the same way, but often some specific methods are needed on some types of flooring.

Ensure all existing flooring and underlay is removed to give a level base before beginning your installation. As there is an expansion gap needed around the outside of any laminate floor, you have the option of removing your existing skirting boards,

installing your new floor, and then installing your skirting again. Or instead, use a beading to hide the expansion gap after installation.

Laying laminate flooring is quick and easy and it can be fitted into most areas of any home (usually with the exception of wet rooms). Floating using an underlay is the most common method as it can then be fitted over any type of sub-floor. It is very DIY friendly and won't need any training or experience. Laminate flooring just clicks together without the need for any type of adhesive. Different floors will click in varying ways, so ensure you are familiar with how the floor clicks together before beginning.

Laminate Floor Underlay

It is important to use the right kind of laminate flooring underlay. Onto a concrete sub-floor, you must use underlay which has a damp-proof membrane. There is a range of underlay for both concrete and wooden sub-floors. There are various features and benefits to each, such as leveling and insulating underlays.

Installing The Laminate Floor

After installing the underlay, begin clicking the floor together. Start at a straight wall and lay your first row joining all the edge boards. The first board should be a 1/2 board then continue along the row. Use spacers to ensure you maintain a 10mm gap against the wall. If you don't have spacers, some cut-offs from your laminate floor will work.

Now start the next row with a full board. This will ensure you have well-spaced-out joints. You can use offcuts to start future rows, provided the joints will be more than 300mm apart. When the joints are too close it can often look poor and may affect the strength of the installation. Continue this process until you reach the other side of the room ensuring that you leave a 10mm gap around everything.

This includes:

- All Walls
- Radiator Pipes
- Door Frames
- Skirting
- Stairs
- Other Flooring

- Kitchen units

Once the floor has been installed, you can hide the perimeter gap using beading (also known as scotia) or skirting that needs to be at least 12mm thick to allow for any shrinkage that may occur. In addition, the expansion gap must be left at doors where the floor goes from one room to the next and against any other obstacles such as stairs or radiator pipes. Floor-2-Go carries a large choice of moulding, profiles, and accessories to match your floor and hide expansion gaps.

Do not rest extremely heavy weight (in excess of 200kg) on top of the laminate flooring, as this can restrict movement causing issues with peaking. Often the flooring can be installed under a plinth or a rebate. Commonly this would include:

- Kitchen units
- Island units
- Grand piano
- Stone fireplace & Surround

After installing a laminate floor, you can use it right away. For installing Herringbone laminate, please refer to our [Herringbone Installation Guide](#).