

Oakley Wood Timber

Help Choosing Engineered Wood Flooring

The choice of wood flooring can be somewhat overwhelming. Many floors may look the same however there will be some differences and below is brief guide to hopefully help you in your selection. We have hundreds of floors in store plus more online.

SOLID VS ENGINEERED - Most experienced floor fitters would always recommend engineered wood over solid wood. Engineered wood flooring has a solid surface of wood that can be sanded back if needed. Engineered wood can also be floated over dry concrete sub-floors or under-floor heating. We do offer solid wood from our Oxford collection however we do recommend sticking these floors down and consulting with your fitter first to check solid wood is suitable for you.

You will find that with solid wood the widths and lengths of the boards tend to be shorter & narrower than the engineered flooring. If you are looking for a wider & longer plank affect, then stick with engineered.

WEAR LAYER - Some floors will have a 2.5mm solid wear layer and some may have 6mm. The reality is a 2.5mm wear layer can be sanded giving you at least 20 years and a 6mm wear layer could be sanded 3 or 4 times if needed. Most people wouldn't need to sand their new floors for at least 15 years.

BOARD THICKNESS - If you need a structural floor that can be laid directly over joists at no more than 400mm centres then you need an 18mm or thicker floor. Most floors are laid on to flat sub-floors so any thickness of floor will be fine.

GRADE - Between an ABC, Character, or Classic grade there isn't much difference, these floors will all contain some knots plus natural colour variation found commonly found in a real wood floor. When you move to ABCD, Traditional or Rustic the appearance can look a lot knottier and again will contain some natural colour variation. If you are looking for a clean floor without too many knots, then stick with an AB grade or for really clean look then go with a Prime/Select grade.

For a full list of our grading rules please visit our website.

CONSTRUCTION - Our floors come with either with a 3-Layer base or a Multi Plywood base. Both are fine over under-floor heating, and both are very stable. Some customers prefer multi plywood however this isn't something you will ever see when laid. All floors are built to last, so we stand by both constructions.

FINISH - If you prefer a more textured surface then go with a Brushed finish as these floors have been deliberately brushed in the factory to make the grain stand out more and give you more depth and surface texture. All our floors are finished under ultraviolet lighting (UV) giving them a much harder surface finish than regular floors. Unfinished floors will need finishing in your home.

APPEARANCE - Probably the single most important factor when choosing a floor is getting the look right. Make sure you understand the grade and then pick the colour you like followed by the board size. We do offer small one square metre sample packs which can be purchase online. Wood varies from board to board so it's important sometimes to see this.

CLICK OR TONGUE & GROOVE - Click floors require no gluing in the joints making them that little bit easier and quicker to lay. Tongue & Groove floors however require a little bit of PVA glue down each joint making them stable and secure. Click can sometimes be tricky to lay around doorways as the board enters from the top whereas T&G can be slotted in from the side.

FLOATED OR STUCK FLOORS - If you are a novice at laying floors then we recommend you float your floor on to one of our underlays. Simply glue any joints using PVA glue if it's a T&G floor and leave as a suspended floor. The weight of the boards followed by your perimeter beading or skirting will help hold the floor down. Providing your sub-floor is level you should experience very little movement. Always remember to leave an expansion gap around the edge of the room between the floor and wall.

If you want your floor to feel completely solid or have an uneven sub-floor, then we recommend either levelling the floor first or bonding the floor down using our Polymer Adhesive. We do strongly recommend sticking all herringbone floors because of the small plank size however, these can also be floated. It is always important to try and lay our floors on to a nice flat sub-floor to avoid much movement. Floating a floor on to a badly uneven sub-floor will cause bounce.

UNDER-FLOOR HEATING - All our floors are compatible over under-floor heating however always consult with your under-floor heating supplier first to check with any guidelines. Make sure to test the heating before laying the floor to check it's all working and then switch it off prior to installation. Once laid you need to switch the heating back on and turn it up just 2 degrees a day until you reach your required heat.

Turning the heating right up straight away will result in roasting of the floor and may cause splits and problems. You need to gradually work the heat up and never exceed 28-30 degrees. Under-floor heating is a constant heat rather than an instant heat so it will work fine on either 15mm thick or 20mm thick floors when at its desired temperature.

FITTING - It is always important to try and use a qualified floor fitter or someone who has experience of laying wooden floors. Laying real wood floors isn't difficult however the little doorway cuts can be a little tricky. **FACT** - when floors go wrong it's almost 99% of the time because it's been laid badly. Wet sub-floors or damp conditions, uneven sub-floors, no expansion joint or lack of glue these are all crucial factors to check when laying a real wood floor.

ACCLIMATISING MY FLOOR - We recommend leaving your flooring in the room for at least 3 days prior to laying so it can acclimatise to the conditions. Make sure all wet works i.e. plastering and screeding are complete and dry before having your floor delivered as the floor will suck up the moisture causing it to split when it dries.

AFTER CARE - Real wood floors can be very easy to look after simply use a soft headed Hoover and a lightly damp mop to clean off any dirt. Never too much water and **NEVER** use anything other than a cleaner designed for real wood floors. All our floors come with a tough UV finish making them highly durable and fairly maintenance free.