

Choosing wood

Wooden flooring is authentic and individual, with its naturalness making each and every floor unique.

Because it's a natural product, you can expect lots of quirkiness in a wooden floor – with knots and grains, markings and colour variations all adding to its appeal.

Solid or engineered wood?

There are two types of wooden flooring – **solid wood**, which is wood all the way through; and **engineered wood**, which comprises layers of softwood boards topped with a layer of solid wood.

One of the greatest advantages of solid wood is that it can be re-sanded numerous times, allowing it to be 'rejuvenated' every few years and ensuring it will last a lifetime.

Engineered wood makes for a strong and durable flooring – the layers run at right angles to the length of the top layer of wood, giving it added dimensional strength.

Sanding engineered wood flooring can only be done a few times in its lifetime, depending on the thickness of the top, solid wood layer

Which room?

Wooden floors look beautiful in every area of the home and are perfect with both traditional and contemporary décors. Because it's hardwearing yet flexible and supple, wood can take the knocks of family life and retain its good looks, whilst at the same time being-

easy to keep clean and maintain. Wood is inherently warm and has great resilience.

Bear in mind that solid wood flooring cannot be installed in bathrooms or areas of high humidity: as a natural product, it will swell or contract depending on the moisture in the air. Engineered wood is treated to avoid this problem, and so stands up well to areas with light moisture – although it is probably not the ideal choice for children's bathrooms which see a lot of splashing!

Right from the start

For best results, wooden flooring should be professionally installed. If you do fit the flooring yourself, you could run into problems such as the floor lifting, insufficient room for natural expansion and contraction, a poor finish round radiators and other fittings, and inconsistent wear.

Thicker engineered floors can be installed directly onto existing sub-floors as a 'floating floor', although thinner varieties will need to be nailed to a sub-floor

Keep it looking good

Hardwood and engineered wood floors are easy to keep clean, as long as you remember not to use an overly wet mop on them. Your retailer will recommend products which should be used, as many of the over-the-counter oil-based soaps and waxes may result in damaging or dulling the colour of your wood.

Wooden floors should be vacuumed regularly with the brush attachment to ensure that grit and gravel doesn't scuff or scratch the wood. Doormats at the entrances to the house will lessen the chance of stones and gravel coming into your home in the first place.

Felt protectors or casters are a good idea for any furniture resting on a wooden floor as wheels, sharp wooden legs and metal furniture legs can easily scratch and dent the surface. Very heavy objects, such as pianos or clocks, should rest on wide, non-staining, rubber protectors.

Life's little accidents

However careful you are, spills will happen. When they do, immediately clean the area with a damp cloth or paper towel. Red wine, in particular, can seep into the grain of the wood, which can result in a permanent stain. Most spills won't be permanent if you clean them straightaway.

Wear and stain guarantees

Please see the 'Our Warranties Explained' leaflet for further information.