

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR WOOD FLOORS

Wooden flooring is a hygroscopic material and will change size with variations in moisture. After your flooring has been fitted you will notice the joins in the boards changing slightly, getting larger, or smaller as the atmosphere in your property changes. This is completely normal.

Your home should remain within a controlled temperature range, no cooler than 18° and no warmer than 26°. You also need to maintain the relative humidity in your property between 40% and 65%.

Not controlling the environment may cause excessive expansion, shrinkage, splitting, dimensional distortion or structural damage.

Note that if you're undertaking building works, plaster may take several months to dry satisfactorily and concrete screeds, depending on the thickness may take considerably longer.

As a rule of thumb drying time for cement and water-based screed is 1 day per millimetre for the first 50mm and up to 2.5 days for each subsequent millimetre. As with all screeds please consult the manufacturer for precise drying times and accelerated drying with heat must be avoided as it will damage the screed and cause issues in the future.

Decorating should be completed, and paint should be completely dry before your floor is laid. Painting and drying paint can add moisture to the room. Sanding should be done before the floor is laid as fine dust can permeate into the wood and can be impossible to remove.

Before your floor is installed, we will deliver the wood to you to allow it to acclimatise to your property's normal conditions. Packs should remain sealed and be stored flat, ideally in the room in which they are being installed or as close to typical living conditions as possible.

Do not move the wood outside or anywhere with different ambient conditions to the rooms where it is to be installed. If your flooring is not properly acclimatised planks can warp and bow and become difficult or impossible to install.

Engineered wood floors should be acclimatised for at least 4 days and solid wood floors should have at least 7 days. A certain amount of bowing in engineered wood is common and if the bowing is no more than 25mm then these boards can be installed and will lay flat.

If you are not currently living in the property, or the heating is not yet operational, you will need to ensure that a temporary heating or dehumidification system is in place that mimics the normal temperature of your property prior to the wood being delivered for acclimatisation.

We will leave you with a portable device to monitor both temperature and relative humidity and you should let us know if the readings move outside of the range above. This is a vital step to ensure your flooring is suitable for installation.

Before fitters arrive sweep and vacuum to remove any dust and debris. Decorator's dust should be removed as this can be very abrasive and hard if not impossible to remove from the surface of a floor without drastic sanding and resealing.

The subfloor must be free from excessive undulation and flat to within 3mm over 2 linear meters across the whole floor area. If the floor is not level, you may experience squeaking or deflection which stresses the joints and causes gaps between planks and with bonded floors may result in inadequate contact between flooring and adhesive. We recommend professional installation by 123floor.

If your property has underfloor heating, you must check with the manufacturer of your system that it can be properly controlled to ensure the maximum temperature of the timber floor at any point will not exceed 27°.

Some electrical underfloor heating systems are not compatible with timber flooring, and you should check with the manufacturer before ordering your wood floor. There may be some particular requirements regarding species of wood that need to be considered.

Underfloor heating systems must be overlaid with a fibre reinforced smoothing compound of not less than 5mm. None of the electrical matting should come into contact with the wood itself. If you are using 123floor to fit as well as supply flooring, we will take care of this aspect.

Underfloor heating beneath wood floor presents special problems because of the wide range of temperature to which the flooring is subjected. During the summer or when the heat is turned off for long periods, high atmospheric humidity causes an increase in the moisture content of wood flooring which has been specially dried for heated conditions. This may produce a little lifting or distortion.

When the heat is turned on again the moisture content decreases, therefore a greater seasonal moisture content variation is to be expected with underfloor heating and movement of the panels should also be expected.

To minimise any effect on the wood it's vital that the floor is gradually cooled as the weather warms and that it's gradually warmed as the weather cools, aim for a maximum of 1° per day. Never turn the heating on or off suddenly as this can result in dimensional changes causing the wood to split or crack.

This is critical, when your floor is installed, it will have a moisture content around 8%. Using under floor heating may reduce this to around 6% or lower. Once your floor has been installed you must gradually warm up the floor, as turning the system to warm too soon will cause your floor to shrink and lead to splitting of the boards.

Underfloor heating systems are designed to operate as a slow heating source, warming gradually over a long period of time. If you demand a higher temperature too quickly, you will damage the floor.

The temperature of the floor only needs to exceed 27° for a very short period of time to damage your floor. With a properly insulated property and a correctly installed underfloor heating system, it should be possible to reach a room temperature of 22° running your under floor heating up to 26°.

We strongly recommend a dual thermostat system is used to monitor both the surface temperature of the wood and the ambient temperature of the room. Throughout the life of the flooring avoid any rapid or large temperature changes as fluctuating the heat within the wood runs the risk of drying out the timber which can result in dimensional changes and cause the floor to split and crack.

Never use rugs, or place large items of furniture on a wooden floor that has underfloor heating in place, you will damage your floor. Items such as sofas on feet are fine. If you have furniture around the perimeter of your room, for example bookcases, ensure your installer avoids these areas when fitting the underfloor heating.

If you have an open plan area (e.g., an open lounge-diner area with underfloor heating in just one area), your flooring will be separated by a T section to avoid any problems with different expansion or shrinkage in these two areas.

You must turn off your underfloor heating system at least 5 days before the installation of your flooring.

Once your new floor has been installed, DO NOT commission your underfloor heating for at least 48 hours after installation is complete, failure to do this will damage your floor.

FLOOR CARE

It is very important to keep your new floor regularly swept to remove any dust or debris from the floor. Failure to do this will cause abrasion to the finish which will dramatically reduce both the appearance and life of your floor.

If you intend to vacuum your wooden floor, you must ensure your vacuum cleaner has suitable settings for wooden floors so that any rollers or beaters do not damage your floor.

Never be tempted to wet mop your floor. Using too much water to clean your floor will cause damage, exacerbated if you also have underfloor heating.

Never attempt to steam mop your wooden floor.

You should never use furniture polish on your floor as this will leave a slippery residue on your floor with is both unsightly and potentially dangerous.

We recommend a microfibre mop with a PH neutral cleaning spray, if the floor is swept daily with any marks being removed once seen, weekly should be sufficient.

QUICK GUIDE

Keep dirt and gravel outside, get a good quality doormat to clean and dry shoes before coming in. Ideally you need one outside and one inside your door.

Wipe away any water spills or moisture immediately.

Remove outdoor footwear before walking on your floor.

Use felt protector pads and never drag heavy items across the floor.

If you have light wood floors, you'll need to clean them a little more often as they are more prone to wear.

Sweep away dust and dirt daily.

Never use a steam mop, wet mop, furniture polish or an abrasive product.

Avoid products containing ammonia.

Clean your floor using a microfibre mop and wooden floor cleaning spray.

Always follow the manufacturer instructions for cleaning and polishing your flooring, we can supply a full range of materials if required.