

# Engineered Fitting Guide

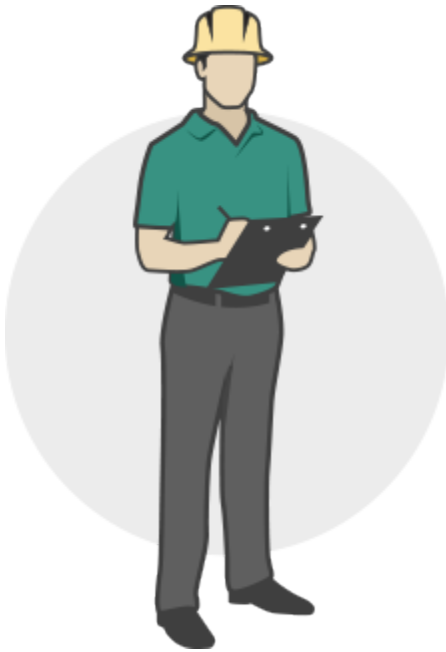
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## How To Fit Your Engineered Floor

In this quick and informative guide we will take you through the various steps involved in the process of laying your Engineered flooring. We cover all aspects from start to finish, including advice on preparation, the use of different underlays, as well as fitting and cutting around obstacles such as radiator pipes. Furthermore, we have also included several handy recommendations on maintenance and ways to prolong the life of your new floor.

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### Prep Work



Prior to laying your floor, you will need to allow your Engineered Wood to acclimatise. As a natural product, your Engineered wood needs to adapt to the conditions of your home before it is installed. This will help reduce movement such as shrinking and expansion once your floor is laid.

To acclimatise your floor, simply leave your brand new flooring as they are in the box, in the middle of the room for a period of 48 hours. During this acclimatisation process, the room should be kept at a steady normal temperature. While acclimatising, ensure that the flooring is placed in the room that you are going to fit your floor in.

Next, it is crucial to check the condition of your subfloor. You can use a device such as a spirit level or an electronic laser leveler to inspect the area. Ideally, there should be no more than 3mm deviation over every 1m<sup>2</sup> area. It is also vital to ensure the subfloor is cleaned thoroughly (hoover, sweep or damp mop).

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### Underlay

Once your subfloor is fully prepared, you can lay and apply your underlay across the entire room. Start by placing the roll of underlay at one end of the room and unroll from wall to wall. As you go along, make sure the edges of your underlay meet, but don't overlap, as this will create an uneven floor.

This next stage varies depending on the type of subfloor you have:

1. If you're fitting your floor over concrete, you will need to use a specifically designed underlay that has a built in DPM (damp proof membrane). Tape the underlay and its edges together, making sure it extends up the wall by at least 5cm. We also recommend that you leave a minimum of 10mm gap around radiator pipes.
2. If it's a wooden floor (Floor Boards), it is not compulsory or necessary to use an underlay with a DPM. You can simply tape your selected underlay together, making sure you slightly run it up the wall to help protect the edge of your boards.
3. If you're installing your flooring above underfloor heating, you must ensure that your underlay is fully compatible, i.e. it can distribute heat evenly across the surface of your room. We recommend you look up and follow the manufacturers guidelines when choosing an underfloor heating underlay.



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## Securing Your Engineered Floor

There are five main methods used to secure your Engineered boards.



### Click System:

A majority of Engineered floors now come in click system joining methods, which makes fitting and installation very straightforward. Essentially, every plank should fit together like jigsaw pieces, with no glue or screwing involved.

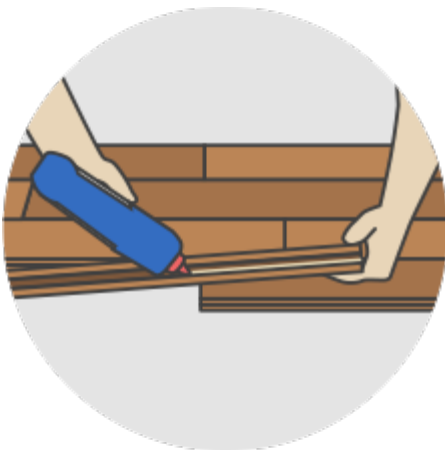
## Gluing:

Glue-down installation requires the use of a special adhesive; a flexible glue that is directly applied onto the subfloor. This specialised flexible glue allows the base of your floor to be fairly flexible so that the glue does not crack over time and keeps your flooring secure without damaging your Engineered wood.

If you're laying your floor over a concrete subfloor, you will first need to check the moisture level of your concrete. If there's a moisture level of over 5% you should either wait until the subfloor dries to meet the required level or use an appropriate moisture barrier.

This is to ensure that no damp rises into your new flooring, as this could cause swelling over time. Your subfloor must be dry, smooth and level with no structural defects. Alternatively, if you have a wooden subfloor (floorboards), you should lay a sheet of plywood (minimum of 4mm) prior to installation, which will help give you a consistent surface level throughout your room in order to lay your flooring.

Remember not to apply too much adhesive whilst fitting your floor, and always wipe any excess glue using a cloth, immediately. Your layer of glue should ideally be no thicker than a one pound coin. As you lay every section, apply the adhesive evenly and place a consistent steady pressure along every board, making sure that your flooring is fully secure as you go along.



## Floating Floor Method:

One way that a tongue and groove floor can be fitted, is to glue along the joins of the floor. As you are placing each board down, simply apply a layer of PVA glue along the entire length and width of the plank, in order to strengthen the bond with the next plank. Then simply slot the planks together, as you would normally, and be sure to wipe up any excess glue immediately.

This is called the floating method, as your floor simply floats over an underlay, without being adhered to it.

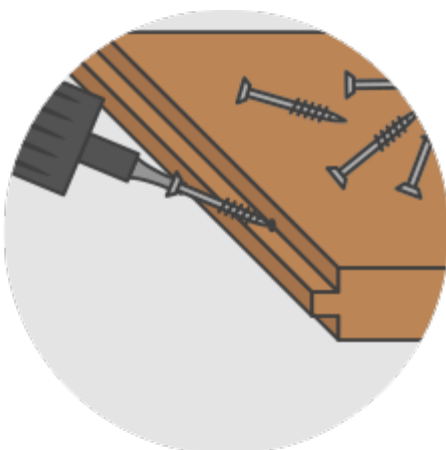
## Nailing:

Engineered boards can simply be nailed into existing wooden subfloors such as floorboards or plywood, providing that they are in good condition and most importantly level. If not, we recommend you first lay a 4mm thick plywood down prior to fitting your floor. Cautiously assess the subfloor, making sure that you securely fasten any loose floorboards, to avoid squeaking noises in the future. Furthermore, you can also use a simple foam underlay to create a barrier that supports noise reduction.



You can also nail down Engineered flooring over a concrete subfloor, providing you lay battens or thick plywood (10-12mm) on top of the concrete. Remember to use a damp proof membrane prior to laying the battens. Also ensure that the battens used have at least a 50mm depth density to provide the right strength.

When nailing your Engineered flooring, ensure you use a nail gun to place the nails into the floor. Nails should be angled at 45 degrees towards the centre of the board, going straight through the tongue of the board and into the subfloor. To get the perfect secret nail into the boards, try to use a good Porta-Nailer. It is also very important to adjust the nail gun cautiously, so that the nails are shot at a steady pace. If a nail is accidentally fired too deeply into the wood, your flooring may crack and even result in severe damage to the subfloor or pipes beneath the ground level. We therefore recommend you test your nail gun prior to installation.



## Screwing:

Another effective method is to screw your hardwood flooring down onto your joists, subfloor, battens or floorboards. In theory and practice, the procedure is very similar to nailing, but with the use of screws. There are specialised tongue-tite screws, which you screw through the tongue and into the subfloor. You simply position each screw between 30 to 40 degree angle and screw them in towards the centre of your board. The screws will then pull the boards firmly together, making them extremely secure and tight.



## Fitting

We recommend you avoid using Engineered boards that are less than 50mm wide at the edges of your room. To do this, we advise you measure the width of your room and divide it by the width of your Engineered board. The outcome will indicate how many boards wide the room is, and will show you how wide the last board at the edge of the room will be. If your last board is less than 50mm wide, you can simply cut

your first board slightly thinner so that both boards at the start and at the finish edge are wider than 50mm. (This does not always apply to all floors, as some boards are fashionably thinner in style)

A majority of Engineered wood flooring is fast and easy to fit, as long as they have a click system locking mechanism. Essentially, the Engineered boards will fit together like jigsaw pieces, without any sort of complications. However some Engineered flooring consist of a tongue and groove that may require gluing, screwing or nailing, which is slightly trickier and more time consuming (see 'Securing your Engineered Floor').

The very first board on your first row should be a full plank length Engineered. The second row should be started with a board two thirds of the size of the plank. Next, the third row should be started with a plank one third of the size of the plank, and the fourth row would start with a full-length board again and so on. We recommend you follow this pattern as you go along until the full area is covered with your new floor.

Once the fitting process of your flooring is complete, you can then start to cover the expansion gaps with your new beading/scotia or skirting boards.

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## Fitting around objects (Cutting & The Use Of Tools)

### Marking your floor:

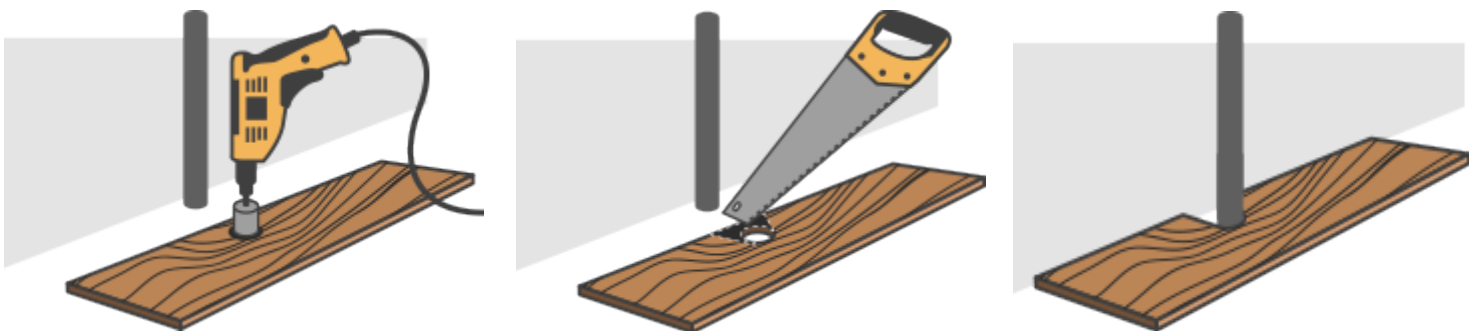
Always try to label and mark your floor prior to cutting, as this will keep your work consistent and tidy. You should also try to use a pencil or a chalk when marking your floor, as it's least noticeable and easy to remove. This is the most efficient method that usually prevents errors from occurring.

### Picking the right tool:

Chop saws are usually very stable when it comes to cutting your floor, however the blade in place has to be exceptionally sharp. Circular saws on the other hand are commonly used for cutting long straight lines. Jigsaw's usually come into play when you're required to cut around objects such as pipes, toilets, and stairs. Whilst fitting, try to avoid accumulation of dust in the house by using these tools outside.

### Cutting your floor:

Remember that the top layer of your flooring can chip very easily whilst cutting. To prevent any damage or chipping of the boards, you must use a saw that has very fine teeth/blades, and cut only downward into the board. If you're using a hand saw, you can cut the board whilst it's facing upwards, only place pressure on the saw when applying the downward strokes. Make sure you don't allow the saw to come in contact with the uncut sections whilst pulling the saw back up, as this could cause the surface of the board to chip. If you're fitting around pipes, you should mark the position of the pipe on the board you are planning on laying. Then simply drill a hole about 10mm larger in diameter than the actual pipe and make two angle-saw cuts from the edge of the board (cutting a wedge out of the board). Finally, fit the board passing by the pipe and carefully glue the small off-cut wedge at the back of the pipe.



## Maintaining your Engineered floor:

The challenge with any floor is to ensure that it continues maintaining its appearance and purpose for as long as possible. The average lifespan for Engineered flooring is between 20 – 30 years, depending on the thickness. The difference in life expectancy usually depends on the quality of the floor, whether it was fitted correctly, and the amount of traffic it experiences. However, inappropriate maintenance, such as the use of potent cleaners and regular contact with water, can heavily reduce the floor's durability and lifespan.



Here's a quick list of things you should and shouldn't do, followed by some useful tips to help increase your floor's life expectancy.

### Things to do

### Things to avoid

Use doormats to keep water, damp and grit outdoors	Avoid bleach or chemical products
Use a very light mop or cloth to remove stains	Wet mopping can damage the floor over time
Sweep and vacuum regularly	Avoid steam cleaners
Wear soft/heel shoes	Ensure toilet or furniture spays do not come into contact with the floor
Always lift furniture when moving it around	Avoid walking over the floor with high heels
Place pads beneath table legs, chairs and other furniture around the room	Avoid wearing muddy/dirty shoes in the house

### Useful Tips & Information

- ⇒ When sweeping or vacuuming, always be aware of the beveled edges as these can carry considerable amounts of dirt and dust.
- ⇒ Products with bleach/soap content can leave unwanted marks and can sometime dissolve the top layer of your flooring.
- ⇒ Quickly mop up any spillages that may stain your floor. Beware of liquid such as red wine, as these can forever stain your floor if not dealt with immediately.
- ⇒ The use of doormats is highly recommended, as they take in considerable amounts of moisture and grit before you step into your property.