

WOOD FLOOR INSTALLATION & FINISH SUGGESTIONS



There are MANY different ways to install and finish wood floors. Here are a few basic pointers, tips, and suggestions. Please use your own creativity and discretion to adjust to your unique application or situation.

Drying and Moisture Content

The wood flooring you are purchasing from RBM Lumber is dried to 6-8% moisture content. Maintaining this moisture content is critical to the success of your finished floor. This can be achieved by simply taking the appropriate precautions. First, do not allow your flooring to get damp, rained on, or left in a humid environment. If you are transporting it home in inclement weather, it must be wrapped. Once transported, take it immediately into a warm (heated), dry, enclosed area (home or garage). If the flooring is left in a damp, humid and/or unheated environment (such as an unheated garage), it will take on additional moisture. Then, when it is installed in a warm, dry, heated location, it will gradually lose this added moisture (dry out) and shrink, causing gaps between the boards.

When installing flooring in a newly built home, the flooring must be installed immediately. New homes have high humidity due to the drying of new building materials. **Please see note below concerning returns.*

Installation

Flooring should be installed on a good, sturdy, level, smooth underlayment (3/4" plywood is preferred but not an absolute requirement). If possible, install across the floor joists. Fifteen pound (15#) or thirty pound (30#) roofing felt, red rosin paper, or 6 mil poly-visqueen should be spread evenly over the underlayment (Note that pre-existing linoleum can be left as an alternative). This layer provides a moisture barrier, helps to even out slight unevenness, and can help to resist squeaking. The moisture barrier is imperative if you are installing flooring over an unheated garage, crawl-space or basement. It is fairly inexpensive and well worth the cost.

Start the flooring on the straightest wall possible and use a string line to determine the straightness of your walls. It is good to run a chalk line on the first run. The first and second run are face nailed. Each run thereafter is nailed through the tongue. For ease of installation, you should use a flooring nailer designed for that purpose. RBM has manual nailers that you can rent. Most tool rental businesses also carry manual or pneumatic nailers. These nailers are specially designed to easily slip the shoe over the face of the board. They are notched to perfectly position the head, allowing the nail to be countersunk into the tongue which hides it from vision. They also hold the flooring down securely allowing you to easily install the next piece. The last run may have to be cut to the proper width and be face nailed. If installing in an irregularly shaped room, in a multiple room layout, or in a complicated pattern, placement of the starting boards is critical. If you are unsure of the proper approach, please ask – we will be happy to guide you.

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Sanding

After the flooring is installed, the next step is sanding. If your floor is textured to circle-sawn, wire-brushed or a combination of the two, you will probably want to *lightly* skim the flooring with a buffer pad or a sanding screen to remove burrs and unevenness. When sanding or buffing, always follow the grain of the wood. If your floor is a smooth face, you will want to sand in steps. If necessary, start sanding with 36 grit, increasing to 60 grit, then 80 grit, finishing with about 120 grit. Again, always sand in the direction of the grain of the wood. If you are not experienced with floor finishing equipment, we recommend using a square buffing sander.

Finishing

Finishing is the Final step. We suggest that you carefully follow the manufacturer's instructions on the product you choose. RBM Lumber carries the Bona product line.

Returns

**All requests to return flooring are subject to management approval. We do not accept returned flooring that is not in its original bundle and/or packaging, and in the same condition (moisture content and cleanliness) as when it left our facility. Try to avoid returning flooring by properly measuring for your specific application and ordering only what you will need. Returns are subject to a 15% restocking fee.*

