



Hardwood Flooring Buying guide

Hardwood floors are a beautiful option for many rooms in your home. They are easy to maintain, hypoallergenic, and give your home a touch of classic elegance. When choosing a wood flooring product, there are several aspects that must be considered, including wood species, grade, width and thickness, edges, installation process, and application. These are important choices, and we can help you find the perfect floor for any room.

Why choose hardwood?

Buying a solid hardwood floor is an important investment. Before you invest, you should ensure that the floor you choose meets your needs perfectly. This guide is an excellent tool to help you make a sound choice. It's important to choose your flooring with care. You can't change it as easily as you can rearrange your furniture—you should be thinking long-term for this once-in-a-lifetime purchase! Among the wide array of possible floor coverings, hardwood provides some incomparable qualities. It's natural, environmentally friendly, attractive, warm and easy to maintain—giving any home's decor a rich and distinctive feel while increasing resale value. Solid hardwood flooring also helps create a healthy home environment by eliminating the allergens associated with dust-trapping carpet.

Before You Shop

Before you begin to search for the perfect hardwood flooring, you must consider a few things about your room and household.

- How big is your room?
- What floor level is your room on?
- What kind of sub-floor do you have?
- How much foot traffic does your room receive?

Answering these questions will help you choose the best type of hardwood flooring for your home.

* go to: www.masonwoodfloors.com/resources to know "how to calculate the correct footage when purchasing the hardwood flooring"

Solid Hardwood Floors

Solid hardwood floors are made of 100% solid wood. This makes them highly durable and allows you to sand and refinish them multiple times. However, solid hardwood can expand or contract depending on the humidity levels of the room. Because of this, solid hardwood should not be used for below-grade installation or in areas where it is regularly exposed to moisture. Solid hardwood floors can be installed over plywood, wood planking, or OSB subfloors and are installed using nails, staples, or glue.

Solid hardwood is also available in unfinished and prefinished styles.

Prefinished Floors: This type of flooring has a durable, factory-applied protective finish, so there is no need to finish your new floor on-site. You can use the floor immediately after installation, and you don't have to worry about sanding and staining the floor. Plus, there are no chemical fumes or dust present during installation.

Unfinished Floors: Unfinished hardwood flooring has no stain or protective layer applied and must be finished after installation. This allows you to choose your own stain to create the perfect finish color. Plus, if you use an oil-based or water-based stain, you can buff your floors to keep your top coat looking new.

The style

Even after you have analyzed all your options and decided on the type of hardwood that you want; the process isn't finished. There are still many choices to make: the color of the floor, the width of the boards, and the shine of the finish. These all depend on your taste and the look you desire... things that deserve careful consideration. An installed floor will last for decades upon decades— choose wisely



Wood Species

The first consideration in selecting a solid hardwood floor is the choice of wood species. Each species of wood has a different grain, color and texture. Personal taste and preference lead us to choose one species over another. Your room decor and your desired effect will influence your decision. Some consumers are attracted to the warmth and richness of more high-end exotic species - consider the prestige that comes with a floor made from Jatoba (Brazilian cherry), Ipe (Brazilian walnut) Santos mahogany, Tigerwood, among others. If you would like to see what a particular wood species looks like in person, you can inquire about hardwood swatch for many of the species we carry.

The color

Long considered a mere construction material, hardwood flooring is now a key decorative element. Prefinished floors offer a range of on-trend, contrasting, and multi-tone color options with exotics looks and vivid appearances.

The gloss

There are 4 levels of hardwood floor finish sheens: The sheen measures how shiny or glossy your floor's finish is. The glossier you go; the more light reflects off the floors. This in turn, shows more dirt/dust as well as imperfections in the floor.

High-gloss: Very shiny, smooth surface that reflects a lot of light but tends to amplify marks and scratches. Semi-gloss: A medium shine, the most common for prefinished floors. Matte: A matte finish that reduces the appearance of marks and scratches. Ultra-matte: A highly matte finish that gives the look of oiled hardwood floors.

Width & Thickness

Boards come in a wide range of widths, from 2-1/4", 3-1/4", 5" and wider. And thickness on most solids is (3/4"). The choice of width is a matter of preference and the desired style. Narrower boards accentuate a room's depth, while wider boards have the opposite effect. The wider the planking, the more coloration you can expect.

The grade

The grade is a way to classify wood planks according to natural color variations and the presence of knots, splits, and other character marks. It refers only to the visual aspect of wood. It is not a measure of quality. Generally speaking, there are four main grades:

- **Clear:** (also known as first grade) This is the best grade of hardwood flooring because there are few color variations, board lengths are not widely varied, and there are little to no visible knots or pinholes.
- **Select & Better:** This grade is slightly lower than the clear, it features all of wood's natural characteristics: color variation, mineral streaking, limited pin holes and small surface knots and checking. This creates a floor that is full of visual texture. Neither filled nor open knots are found in this grade.
- **Common:** This grade presents with more color variation, shorter board length with greater length variation, with an increased chance of visible knots and pinholes.
- **Cabin:** This grade is for those who are looking for a rough-hewn look in hardwood flooring; allowed checking, unfilled knot holes and wormholes, no splits, no loose knotholes.

Edges

When hardwood flooring is installed, the shape of hardwood flooring can create a groove in the floor. This is called an edge. There are several different edge styles available:

Square Edge: Square edge floors have surface edges that are not eased or beveled. The surface appears level and smooth if the subfloor is properly level. There is no space between the boards, as the full length of each piece is flush with the next.

Beveled Edge: Beveled edge floors have surface edges cut at a sharp angle. Some prefer this look because each plank is defined. Another benefit of eased edge floors is - in some cases - the bevels can hide uneven subfloors. This pattern is popular because it gives the floor a lined and broken-up pattern without taking away from the beauty of the floor.



Maintenance of Hardwood Floors

Caring for your hardwood floor is easier than ever thanks to today's modern finishes. Just follow these guidelines and consult a flooring professional for further recommendations.

- Immediately wipe up any spills or spots with a damp cloth;
- At least every other week, vacuum or sweep depending on the foot traffic. Do not let dirt and sand build up;
- Clean with the manufacturer's approved wood cleaner once per month. Never use oil soaps or wax;
- In areas of high traffic, use area rugs to keep wear to a minimum. Move the rugs occasionally to maintain an even color to your finish. Make sure the rugs have a backing with a mesh or grid pattern to allow the floor to breathe and are approved for hardwood floor finishes. Put mats at all entrances to keep dirt and moisture off of the floor;
- Use felt pads or rubber rollers on the legs of furniture;
- When moving heavy furniture or appliances, place a sheet of plywood under the piece being moved to distribute the weight and reduce denting or scratching. For light pieces, use a clean blanket or a piece of carpet face down under the piece to be moved;
- Small stones and high heel shoes that have lost their protective cap can scratch and gouge your floor's surface. Excessive sunlight should be blocked with blinds or drapes. Wet mopping and excessive water can also harm the floor, so only use a damp mop, taking care not to saturate the floor;
- Wood flooring performs at optimal performance when the interior environment is controlled to remain within a relative humidity range of 30% to 50% and a comfortable temperature range of 60° to 80° Fahrenheit;