

Lazerwebsites.com Newsletter

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Tips on buying and installing hardwood floors

Types of Wood Flooring - There are basically two types of wood floors to choose from: Finished and unfinished. Each comes with its own set of pluses and minuses. Each type is beautiful, luxurious and relatively easy to care for with some caveats, which we will detail later on. To start with, you can install wood flooring in just about any room in your home, a really good advantage as it creates a seamless look thorough your home. Basements and kitchens have some special considerations too.

Custom Unfinished Wood Flooring

Unfinished wood flooring it the best option to consider IF you want to design the whole color scheme, you accomplish this by staining the unfinished flooring to match your decor and color scheme. After the basic unfinished wood flooring installation, you stain the floor in the color you want, and then finish with several applications of a clear coat protective finish for durability.

A good reason to use unfinished wood flooring is this: after the staining, and multiple layers of clear coat, the floor seams and cracks are basically filled in, creating a seamless floor, which now is impervious to many of the standard hazards that a main wood floor within a house has to deal with. This also prevents liquids from penetrating the floor which would make it unstable, splintered or stained with whatever it comes into contact with. We generally suggest having this type of flooring professionally installed.

Another option is a pre-finished hardwood flooring material that comes out-of-the-box ready to install and enjoy. It comes in many textures and colors to suit your particular decorating plan or color scheme. These materials are ready to be installed and the installation goes fast, because the flooring material does not have to be treated or sealed.

Sub Types - Solid or Engineered Wood

These materials come in 5/8" and 3/4" thick and are solid wood which can be finished and sanded several times throughout its lifetime. The one big drawback here is this: This material does absorb moisture and will become susceptible to warping and expanding. It is not suggested for below-grade installations.

That's where Engineered hardwood come into play, and this material can be installed safely in sub-grade installations and it is easy on your wallet. Because it basically is a wood veneer product, it cannot be sanded and or refinished more than once or twice at the most in its lifetime unlike like real wood. Engineered wood flooring is the best bet and suggested material to use in a kitchen, durable and strong and impervious to spills and heavy foot traffic.

Species of Wood, which is best?

Bottom line, the best wood is the hardest wood. That wood is oak. Oak Flooring and Cherry flooring are two excellent choices for quality wood to use in your home. Other good choices for hard woods are more exotic species like bamboo, walnut, ash, and mahogany. There are other premium hardwoods like teak, jarrah and mesquite, and you will pay more for these species of hardwoods, but they are beautiful. Teak can turn a silver color if exposed to UV rays of sunlight.

Reclaimed Hardwood Flooring

Yes, we said it, reclaimed hardwood flooring can be obtained at many salvage yards and this trend not only is popular, but you can purchase quality reclaimed hardwood flooring at a fraction of buying it new. Also the color/character and patina is already there. This is a viable alternative to buying new product, saving up to 50% compared to buying new product. You may get lucky and find a rare and totally exotic species for under the price of regular new oak flooring. Look for reclaimed hardwood flooring that come from rare or even non-existent species, such as quarter-sawn oak, heart pine, American elm and chestnut. If you come across reclaimed wood flooring at a salvage yard, make sure it is in good condition. Most reputable dealers will discard poor quality and unusable pieces, but not all do. Tip: Make sure there is enough material to do the job your interested in covering you square footage. The color or patina will not be critical if you intend to refinish the wood flooring. We suggest having a pro do the job, because you may be able to save about 1/3 of the cost to re-sand the flooring, a mistake in sanding wood generally is permanent.

Hardwood Flooring Installation

Generally accepted installation guides dictate that installation of strip hardwood flooring parallel to the longest, unobstructed wall in the room. Doing it this way limits the amount of trimming and fitting you will have to do at the end of each run of flooring.

Important Tip:

Wood floors expand and contract with changes in humidity, so you will need to leave a ½-inch gap around the perimeter of the room. Cover that gap with base molding.

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