

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

Hardwood



YOUR HARDWOOD FLOORING OPTIONS

Natural Charm. The rich look of hardwood floors adds warmth and charm to any room in your home. For centuries people have used wood floors in homes, churches and even stores.

Today's hardwood flooring comes in a variety of wood species. Besides the popular and well-known North American hardwoods (like oak, maple and ash) many companies now offer a variety of exotic hardwood species from all over the world. Exotic hardwoods offer unique visual character and give homeowners the chance to express their personal decorating tastes.

Another popular trend are the handscraped hardwood floors offered by hardwood manufacturers, such as Mannington and Mohawk. If you want the rich look and charm of hand-made flooring then you won't want to miss previewing the hand-scraped hardwoods.

Homeowners have the option of purchasing three different types of wood flooring. Although the end results may look the same there are distinct advantages for using each type under different applications. Once installed it is extremely difficult to tell these three different wood flooring construction types apart; solid, engineered and longstrip.

- **Solid** - Like it sounds, is milled from a single 3/4" thick piece of hardwood. This thickness allows a solid hardwood floor to be sanded and refinished over several generations of use. One of the characteristics of solid wood flooring is that it expands and contracts. Normally, installers compensate for this movement by leaving an expansion gap between the floor and the wall. Base molding is often used to hide the extra space.
- **Engineered** - This is actually produced with three to seven layers of hardwood. Each layer is stacked in a cross-grain configuration and bonded together under heat and pressure. As a result, engineered wood flooring is less likely to be affected by changes in humidity and can be installed at all levels of the home.
- **Longstrip** - These are really an engineered construction but with a long and wider plank. This allows the top layer to splice 2-3 rows of thin hardwood strips into one plank. Longstrip planks can be glued-down, stapled or floated over a wide variety of sub-floors and used almost anywhere in the home, including dry basements.

PRE-FINISHED VS. UNFINISHED

Another choice you have is pre-finished or unfinished hardwood floors. The pre-finished floors offer a wider variety of wood species and save hours of labor and cleanup. While the unfinished wood floors allow you to have a really custom, job-site finish and a completely smooth, uniform surface. You also get an extended factory finish warranty with pre-finished floors, but not with most job-site finished flooring.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

Where will this flooring be located?

On Grade (at ground level), Above Grade (second level or higher) or Below Grade (floor below ground level, including basements or sunken living rooms).

What type of subfloor do you have?

If you plan to install over concrete, you must use an engineered product to ensure structural integrity. Solid wood flooring or Engineered flooring may be used over plywood, wood or OSB subfloors. OSB is a type of plywood subfloor.

Will there be moisture in the room?

If so, you'll want to select an engineered hardwood. Moisture resistant engineered hardwood makes it suitable for rooms where moisture is a possibility, such as bathrooms. Traditional solid hardwood flooring is not well suited for high moisture areas such as below-grade installations.

MOLDING OPTIONS

Coordinated hardwood moldings add the finishing touch to your hardwood flooring and are available for all styles and colors of the hardwood flooring you choose.

Stairnose - This coordinating piece provides the proper transition for all the steps in your home.

Reducer - The proper transition when your hardwood flooring meets other floor coverings, such as vinyl, thin ceramic tile or low-pile carpeting.

Threshold - Typically used at exterior doorways as a transition between flooring and the doorway threshold. It can also be used as a transition from wood floors to different flooring surfaces when the reducer won't do.

T-Molding - Commonly used in doorways to join two wood floors in adjoining rooms. It's also recommended when making transitions from a wood floor to another floor that is approximately the same height. T-Molding is also used to provide expansion joints when a floor dimension exceeds a length of 40' or a width of 30'.

Quarter Round - This molding not only adds a finishing touch, but conceals the expansion space. It may also be used under cabinets where wall base won't fit or at the base of a stairway to provide a subtle blend between the horizontal and vertical surfaces.

Wall Base - A dramatic finishing touch with borders at the base of your wall. Like the quarter round, this molding conceals the required expansion space between the wall and the hardwood flooring. It may also be used under cabinets as a cover for toe kicks.