



PROJECT GUIDE

HOW TO INSTALL HARDWOOD FLOORING



Installing a hardwood floor is a great way to enhance a room and increase the value of your home. This overview will give you a good idea of what's involved.



TOOLS

- Tape measure
- Shims (equal to thickness of planks)
- Mitre saw
- Hardwood nailer and nails
- Door jamb saw

MATERIALS

- Self-levelling underlayment
- Latex primer
- Chalk line
- Waxed paper underlayment (for wood floor installation)
- Hardwood flooring
- Staple gun and staples



PROJECT GUIDE

HOW TO INSTALL HARDWOOD FLOORING

STEP 1

ACCLIMATE PLANKS



First you should **acclimate your hardwood** to the room's temperature and humidity. This usually takes about 72 hours, but be sure to read the manufacturer's instructions for details.

STEP 2

PREP SUBFLOOR



Next, **ensure the subfloor surface is smooth, flat, dry, clean and solid.** Remove any carpet staples or adhesive residue, check for moisture and smooth out hollows with self-levelling underlayment. If you're replacing a vinyl floor installed prior to 1990, consult a professional beforehand.





PROJECT GUIDE

HOW TO INSTALL HARDWOOD FLOORING

STEP 3

REMOVE BASEBOARDS



Remove the baseboards around the room with a pry bar. Be careful not to damage the boards if you plan to re-install them.

STEP 4

INSTALL THE PLANKS

Once baseboards are removed and the the planks are acclimated, install them perpendicular to the floor joints.

STEP 5

ADD PAPER UNDERLAY (OPTIONAL)



Consider rolling paper underlay over the subfloor. It acts as a slight barrier against moisture and makes it easier to slide flooring into place.



If you do, be sure to overlap the lengths of building paper about 3 inches at the seams and staple every 8-10 inches.



PROJECT GUIDE

HOW TO INSTALL HARDWOOD FLOORING

STEP 6

CUT FIRST AND LAST ROWS



If the planks do not fit exactly across the room, you will need to **cut the first and last rows to equal widths**. If they fit perfectly, you're in luck.

STEP 7

SNAP CHALK LINES



Measure the width of one plank plus the size of the expansion space and mark the paper in several locations along the starting wall. Use the marks you made on the building paper to **snap a straight chalk line**. This is where the tongue edge of the first row of hardwood will be laid. It's important to get the first row straight as it effects the entire installation.



PROJECT GUIDE

HOW TO INSTALL HARDWOOD FLOORING

STEP 8

RIP-CUT THE FIRST ROW



Cut the first row of hardwood using a table saw with a sharp rip blade and a rafter angle to protect your hands. Be sure not to cut the tongues off the lengths of the plank.

STEP 9

ALLOW FOR AN EXPANSION GAP



Place shims between the first row of hardwood and the wall. Hardwood expands due to moisture, so allow for an expansion gap around the perimeter of the room, equal to the thickness of your plank. If you're using 3/4-inch planks, leave a 3/4-inch gap. These shims must be removed after the installation is complete. The baseboards will cover the gap.



PROJECT GUIDE

HOW TO INSTALL HARDWOOD FLOORING

STEP 10

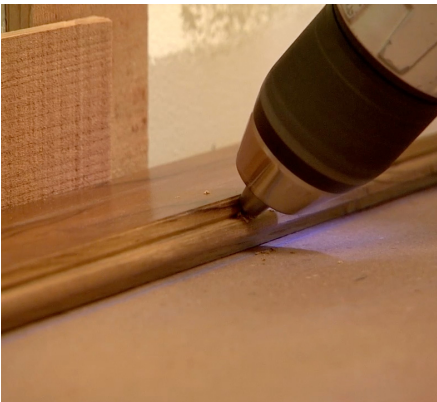
DRILL/NAIL THE FIRST STRIP



Align the first strip along the chalk line, the tongue edge facing into the room, and drill holes every 12 inches, through the hardwood and into the floor. Then drive two-inch ring shank flooring nails through the holes.

STEP 11

NAIL TONGUES FLUSH



Drive flooring nails through the tongues of the hardwood and use a nail punch to set the heads flush with the surface. Repeat the procedure of laying and nailing the hardwood across the floor.

Consider renting an air-powered or manual flooring nailer at The Home Depot Tool Rental Centre. Always wear safety glasses with wide shields when using power tools.



Position the nail head on the tongue edge of the board and strike the plunger head with a mallet. It's a great tool that will help save time and energy when installing hardwood – especially in a large room.



PROJECT GUIDE

HOW TO INSTALL HARDWOOD FLOORING

STEP 12

CROSS CUT AND INSTALL REMAINING ROWS



Crosscut the last piece in each row to fit. Turn the board around and mark the length of the cut you will need for this row, so the cut end will be against the wall. Avoid using a piece that is less than one foot at the end of a row. You can save the piece you don't need from this row to be the first piece in your next row if it is longer than 12 inches.



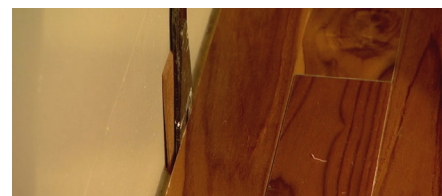
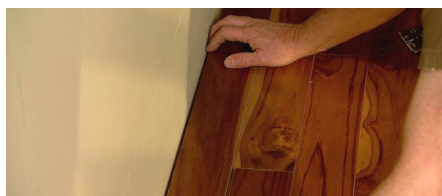
The last few rows of hardwood are often the toughest to install because of the tight space up to the wall. Since the flooring nailer won't fit, use a nail gun or drill pilot holes and use a hammer to nail the last few pieces of hardwood in place. Use a nail punch to help set the nails flush with the surface of the hardwood. Measure and cut the final row of hardwood. And remember to allow for the expansion gap.

STEP 13

TIGHTEN THE GAP



Slide the last row into place and use the shims between the final row of hardwood and the wall. Tighten the gap between the final two rows using a pry bar pressed against the shims to protect the walls. Pre-drill holes again through the hardwood and floor. Then nail the final strips into place.





PROJECT GUIDE

HOW TO INSTALL HARDWOOD FLOORING

STEP 14

DRILL/NAIL AND REATTACH THE BASEBOARDS



Remove the shims and re-attach the baseboards to complete the job.



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