



Installation guidelines

From start to finish we want your experience of choosing and installing a Notch wood floor to be a fulfilling one. The journey from ordering samples to finally walking on the eye-catching floor can involve a lot of things. One vital element is the skilled installation of the floor you have chosen and the proactive steps you can take to ensure a smooth transition from the moment the flooring is delivered to the very first moment you see the striking floor installed in its intended space.

This guide is designed to help you take all the right steps and consider some important points so that all goes smoothly and without any unexpected issues.

1.0 Always thoroughly check the quality of the product

The most important thing to remember is that you can't be too thorough in checking through every detail of your wood flooring once it has been delivered. So, take great care to make all the necessary arrangements for wherever and whenever the flooring will arrive.

Once the floor is installed with all the obligatory checks done on your side, it means you are fully satisfied with what you have seen and fully accept both the technical and visual quality of the product.

Here are some helpful points:

- It's a great idea to familiarise yourself with the colour, grain and any pattern of the wood, so that throughout the installation journey you can continuously and thoroughly examine the wood floor at every point. That way you can keep a keen eye out for any potential imperfections or defects.
- If you spot any imperfections or defects, don't hesitate to contact us right away. Should the installation have been made with any unreported imperfections present, we unfortunately cannot be responsible for any loss or damage.
- Always be mindful that with the organic provenance of wood as a natural material, nuances in colour, grain and knots are not flaws but actually part of the natural DNA of the product. Similarly, don't be alarmed about any acoustic effects such as creaks, this again is part of the natural characteristics of wood floors.
- Over the passage of time a wood floor will lose its lustre, which is a natural consequence of everyday wear and tear throughout its life. This is not considered to be a fault or a ground for complaint. However, with a regular routine of cleaning and care you can help keep the floor looking in the best shape it can be. See our aftercare section for suitable products.
- Many of us love to see or feel sunlight coming in, whether it be at work, home or staying away. But it's worth knowing that exposure to sunlight within interiors will over time oxidise the surfaces of flooring, invoking a changed complexion in colour.



2.0 Intelligent storing of your wood flooring

When allowing your flooring to acclimatise, here are some top tips you should diligently follow to keep the flooring in the best and safest condition for future professional fitting.

- There are certain climatic conditions that will help you preserve your wood flooring in the very best shape. A temperature of 18°C-22°C is required for storing wood flooring along with an air humidity of 45%-65%. This gives the correct hygroscopic balance of the wood with its surrounding environment.
- You should always store wood flooring horizontally on a flat surface in well ventilated, spacious and dry rooms/spaces with the wrapped packaging intact. Do everything to ensure there is no exposure to sunlight or moisture, so the product is not susceptible to a material change. To prevent any warping of your wood flooring never store it vertically.
- If you find during colder weather (with the use of heating) that there is a material reduction in relative air humidity (45%-65%) we would advise the use of an air humidifier.
- When storing wood flooring in its designated space always ensure the building is fully closed operational, and totally secure from outside elements. For new build environments avoid storage where the building is still under construction with 'wet works' in progress.

3.0 Preparing for your wood floor installation

- A piece of great advice ahead of any preparatory work, is to have in place a professionally qualified flooring installation specialist so you're in good hands when it comes to evaluating things like room humidity, surface evenness and condition.
- Prior to professional installation, it's important to address any limiting factors such as dirt, oily deposits, surface unevenness or fragments of any old floor coverings, any of which might affect the strength of adhesion.
- Where you may encounter an uneven subfloor, this should be made level using suitable levelling products. Please consult your flooring installation specialist for advice.

Required room conditions

- The right climatic environment needs to be maintained throughout the journey of installing the wood flooring, from start to finish. It's well worth bearing in mind the requirements below:
Room temperature, 18°C-22°C
Air humidity, 45%-65%
- A good tip is to keep a keen eye on the room temperature and humidity right through the journey of flooring installation.

4.0 Installation of the wood flooring

- Considering the specialist expertise involved, the whole installation should be undertaken by a skilled and experienced wood flooring professional.
- Where fitting over floorboards with an underlay, the planks should be laid in the opposite direction to the existing boards.
- When choosing to fit the wood directly to the subfloor, the professional installer must use a suitable and approved adhesive.
- Be absolutely sure to check the floor is clean, level and even before starting the process of fitting of the wood flooring.
- Always allow a minimum tolerance of 7-12mm between the finished floor and any perimeter walls/surfaces.
- When fitting wood flooring around fixed interior elements such as door and window frames, central heating pipes and other items; it is necessary that you allow a gap for expansion.
- Please remember that herringbone and chevron patterns can only be directly stuck to the subfloor.



5.0 Installing wood floors on underfloor heating

- Skilled installation of wood flooring on underfloor heating is without doubt a specialist job for a well qualified floor fitter working to the highest professional standards.
- The surface temperature of a wood floor installed over underfloor heating should be no higher than 26°C.
- If you have an underfloor heating system set in concrete or cement, do be very careful to ensure that this subfloor is completely dry, which very often requires several weeks.
- We highly recommend running the underfloor heating twice, this just helps iron out any residual moisture issues.
- Once you have had your underfloor heating system fitted, you should resist heating it too early and considering the following:
 - Anhydrite subfloor: anytime from 7 days
 - Cement subfloor: anytime from 21 days onwards (rapid hardening cements can accelerate drying time – as directed by the manufacturer of the material)
- To achieve the right humidity for the subfloor that is accommodating the engineered wood, you should take into consideration the heating system being used, having a professional flooring fitter detail the process in full.
- There may be circumstances where only a partial area of a room or space houses an underfloor heating system, an expansion gap will be required between the area with and without underfloor heating.
- Between the screeding of the floor and installation of the engineered wood boards, there should be clear hand over information written by the screed fitter for the professional floor fitter, pertaining to the measuring points of screed moisture.
- It will be invaluable for the professional floor fitter to receive from the underfloor heating fitter, a briefing / report detailing the layout, insulation and depth of the heating system pipes within the subfloor.
- In good preparation for installing your wood flooring, the heating should be turned off to attain room temperature.
- Once the floor has achieved the desired temperature and humidity levels, the fitting professional can get cracking with assembling the wood flooring.
- You may gradually switch on the underfloor heating just as soon as the wood flooring is installed. But do let your professional fitter make this decision.
- One thing to be mindful of is the sight of hairline cracks which is nothing to give cause for concern. This is something inherent in the natural DNA of wood and will occur unavoidably where low air humidity hovers over the floor surface. In essence it's not a defect.
- Something to take good care with and avoid is placing carpets upon heated wood flooring. This will cause gaps, splits and cracks to occur that damage the floor. In effect covering the wood floor with carpet and indeed furniture items creates a heat zone and no exchange of air.



6.0 Once installation is complete

- With the installation successfully complete, there's still some important steps to take before you can enjoy walking on it and furnishing it. To allow the wood to reach a hygroscopic balance and iron out any stresses arising from installation, please avoid sanding the floor for up to two weeks following completion.
- Within the first week following installation, the Notch team highly recommends you provide us with verifying documents carefully prepared by your professional flooring fitter / contractor which typically will include:
 - Installation techniques used at the site of fitting
 - Client/customer acceptance of the installation
 - Installation details where floors fitted on underfloor heating
- If you are unable to submit the necessary documentation, we will regrettably be unable to provide any warranty.

7.0 The optimum conditions for using wood floors

- Wood is sensitised to fluctuations in conditions within its surrounding environment which can result in an altering of its shape and dimensions. This is because of the hygroscopic characteristics inherent in wood and the tendency to expand when absorbing moisture through increased air humidity and conversely to shrink when the air humidity decreases.
- Installed floors are susceptible to shrinking, cracking and drying up if the air humidity in rooms is too low.
- On the other hand, installed floors can expand if the air humidity in rooms is too high.
- It's always worth remembering that maintaining the optimum climatic environment in the spaces where a Notch floor is installed, will help keep your floor in great shape. To give you some guidance:
 - Floor surface temperature (above underfloor heating): maximum 26°C
 - Air temperature: 18°C-22°C
 - Air humidity: 45%-65%
- In certain circumstances a space/room may require added moisture through the use of an air humidifier. This intervention is needed when the optimum air temperature or humidity has exceeded recommended levels. If necessary, the room temperature can be adjusted, always bearing in mind these actions are best gradual.
- You may encounter low levels of humidity in air-conditioned spaces/rooms.
- With wood flooring in waxed or oiled finishes, an inconsequential oil extrusion (amidst the floor elements) may occur during the summer months, when air humidity is at its greatest. This is a natural occurrence.
- During the winter months is when it is most likely for wood shrinking to occur, sometimes with negligible hairline cracks. As the air temperature is higher and humidity lower this is a natural occurrence.



8.0 Caring for your wood flooring

- Determining how frequently to care for your floor should reflect the density of traffic in that space. A regular cleaning regime that removes any dirt will serve you well.
- There are certain spillages such as water, sand and mud that should be removed without any delay. In doing so you will help protect your floor from damage.
- When considering easy removal of dirt from footwear such as grit, sand and water; we recommend the use of door / brushing mats to be placed externally to the entrances of the rooms.
- A brush with soft bristles or vacuum cleaner with soft brushes is ideal to collect any form of dirt and help protect against any scratching of your floor.
- To guard against furniture causing scratches and damaging the floor, place felt pads under tables, chairs and other interior items.
- One thing to avoid at all costs is the interior use of flower pots and any containers housing liquids, which could inadvertently spill and cause damage to your floor.
- Use as little water as you can when damp cleaning a wood flooring surface, wringing the cloth well.
- You'll find only residual moisture should remain following any damp cleaning, and this will dry out naturally. You will not need to polish the floor.
- You could cause the wood floor to change colour or warp, if using water excessively when cleaning.
- It's best to use water along with a specially formulated cleaning agent when damp cleaning. Always read the label and instructions for use of any cleaning agent.
- You should act immediately if water or any liquids are spilled onto the floor, blotting them dry.
- You should avoid using any alkaline solutions such as soap and ammonia as well as bleach, scrubbing agents and acids. Similarly avoid doing any steam cleaning.
- Following installation, if it is necessary to protect your wood floor, please ensure that a suitable and breathable product is used.



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