

# Tips For A DIY Laminate Floor



## *9 Crucial Laminate Flooring Installation Questions Answered*

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## 9 Crucial Laminate Flooring Installation Questions Answered

Laminate flooring has developed into one of the most popular home remodeling fields.

Thanks to technological advances, this flooring material is designed with DIY enthusiasts in mind. An average-sized floor can be ready for use within as little as a day, depending on the size of the room.

If you are new to this type of project, you may have a number of laminate flooring installation questions in your mind. Let's see if you can find some answers here...

### 1. Is a new laminate floor really easy to install?

Well, perhaps 'easy' is always a relative term. No DIY project happens without a hiccup or two. So, you will need patience and careful planning. However, the days of battling to fit messy, sticky, glued laminate flooring planks are long gone. This came about with the introduction of what is called snap together laminate flooring or click together floors.

This is a glueless option, meaning that you will be creating a floating floor, so to speak. The planks are not glued or nailed to the floor surface below. Rather, the unique tongue and groove design of the



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planks is such that one plank simply fits into the next one, forming a tight, neat joint. This can be one of the most gratifying do it yourself jobs to tackle, as progress is measurable and the end result quite spectacular.

## **2. My budget is limited. Is it costly to prepare the sub floor for installation?**

The beauty of these snap together flooring planks is that they can often be laid directly over ceramic, vinyl, tiling or real wood floors. This saves you the time and trouble of ripping out an old floor first. You need to do some prep work, of course, but this doesn't have to be expensive. For instance, you need to make sure that the floor is clean and smooth. It is a good idea to carefully sand down any bumps or peaked joints.

If you have carpeting on the sub floor, you will have to remove this. It is also recommended to do fittings of cabinets or cupboards first, before tackling your flooring project. If you already have a hardwood floor that is installed over a concrete sub floor, you will need to remove the wood planks. Get detailed advice about your options when you talk to your supplier.



## **3. Can I install the flooring immediately after my purchase?**

To be on the safe side, acclimate your floor planks by leaving the

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cartons in the room where they will be installed, for a period of 2 to 4 days. Ask your supplier what the recommended period is for the brand you decide on. This precaution will give you a floor that is more likely to remain firmly clicked into place.

#### **4. Can I use laminate flooring in a bathroom or my kitchen?**

Again, this depends on the brand you choose. If you want to do the installation in a bathroom or kitchen, be sure that you are buying a brand with a surface that is highly water resistant. The manufacturer should state clearly that the planks can be used in high humidity areas, such as bathrooms, kitchens or basements.

In these areas however, the expansion spaces (we will get to these in a minute) need to be sealed with a special sealant or a similar mildew-resistant silicone product before installing the trim or molding. The same should be done where the planks were cut to make room for cupboards or a dishwasher. Some experts also recommend sealing the joints by using glue. Again, your supplier will be a valuable resource.

Think in terms of long term durability when deciding on the best installation process, even if it will mean investing a some extra time and effort. Just remember that even if the planks are water resistant, they are not made to handle standing water. You still need to mop up any spills as soon as possible, to be on the safe side.

#### **5. Can I install laminate flooring on stairs?**

Yes, unless otherwise indicated, laminate can do well on stairs. On stairs, you will probably need to glue the flooring to the sub floor. You can usually purchase a stair nosing to help you with a neat finish on

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the steps. The nosing is adhered with a quality construction adhesive and finishing screws.

## **6. Do I need to provide for expansion spaces around the perimeter of my installation?**

Due to its floating nature, these floors expand and contract along with changes in humidity and temperature.

It is therefore vital to measure and leave the recommended expansion space between the flooring planks and the adjacent walls or cupboards.

If you don't do this, you will have unsightly buckling floors in no time. Floor moldings can be used to hide these spaces after installation and to ensure a professional finish. Use spacers to keep your distances even. If you are tackling a very large floor area, the expansion space needs to be increased.

Each brand comes with its own recommended expansion space. Make sure that you adhere to this, in order not to void your warranty.

## **7. I have heard that laminate flooring has a hollow sound when used. Is this true?**

The sound depends on 3 factors:



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1. The sub floor
2. The quality and type of underlayment padding attached to the flooring planks, or placed separately between the floor and the planks
3. The thickness and quality of the laminate flooring planks

One way to reduce the hollow sound, is by installing a sound underlayment and resin polyethylene film underneath your floor planks. This can be a highly effective way of dampening the sound.

Another benefit of this protective layer, is that it can act as a moisture barrier as well. This can lengthen the life of the flooring, so it is wise not to skimp on this.

An additional advantage is that you could be ensuring a more comfortable floor underfoot by adding a quality cushioning layer.

## **8. Can I expect to get a professional finish when I do a DIY installation?**

The great thing about installing laminate flooring, is that every brand comes with a satisfactory range of color-coordinated transition moldings. These are specifically available to give an elegant and stylish finish to your flooring project.

T-Moldings are used in doorways, while end moldings are used along sliding doors and around tubs and basins. If you need to go from a raised flooring area to a lower hard surface such as vinyl, you would choose a hard surface reducer.

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## 9. Is it possible to repair a laminate floor?

Mishaps are inevitable in a bustling household, particularly if you have kids or pets!

You can repair small nicks with something like a putty made for this purpose. Simply neaten the edges of the chipped area with a small knife, make sure the area is clean, and fill the hole with putty according to the instructions. A spatula gives a neat finish and the excess is wiped away with a clean cloth.

It is with good reason that you are advised to purchase an extra supply of planks from the get go. With these floors, plank replacements are possible if a more major repair is needed down the line. At that time, the flooring may have been discontinued, or the shading may be somewhat different. If you prepared for this happening when making your purchase, you will not be in trouble. You will have planks from the same shading lot available, allowing you to easily do a section replacement.

Hopefully this has helped to answer some of your basic flooring questions!

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