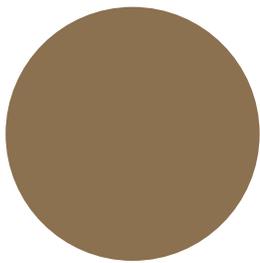
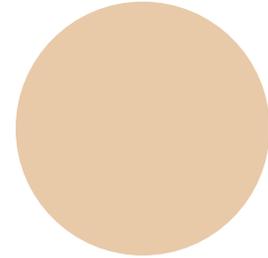
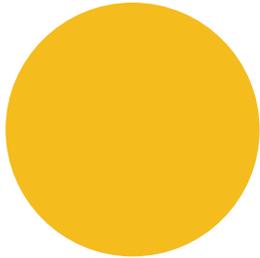


IMPROVEMENT CENTER



Guide to Laminate Flooring



Guide to Laminate Flooring

Laminate flooring is an excellent choice if you want a beautiful, durable floor that is economical and easy to maintain. Laminate mimics wood, tile, stone, and other materials at a considerably lower price. It is designed primarily for light domestic use.

Laminate flooring styles

Laminate flooring is available in a variety of styles. This plank style flooring has a high-resolution photographic layer that can make it look like just about any type of flooring material. Whether you want the look of a formal dark wood floor for a living room or library, a slate or marble floor for a striking entryway, a rustic pine floor for a country kitchen, or a mosaic tile for a bathroom, you can achieve the effect with laminate flooring.

Laminate flooring construction

Four layers of material are fused together in a high-temperature, high-pressure process to form a laminate floor. These layers are:

- **Balancing:** This is the bottom layer, used to stabilize the plank and resist moisture.
- **Core:** A resin-saturated, high density fiberboard that is water-resistant and tough.
- **Pattern:** This layer is a photographic appliqué on thin paper that gives the flooring the look of wood, stone, tile, or other materials.
- **Wear:** This is the protective coating of clear melamine resin. You can choose different levels of durability based on the intended use.

After this fusing process, the boards are cut into planks and then run through profiling saws to create the tongue and groove edges.

Laminate flooring prices

Since the manufacturing process for laminate flooring is the same no matter what the style, there is very little variation in price between wood, tile, stone, or other styles. Installation is also very easy, so labor costs are lower than with other types of flooring. The major price variable in laminate flooring is the durability rating, also called the AC rating. AC5 is the most durable, with AC1 suitable for low-traffic areas only. AC3 is appropriate for average household use. Prices for laminate flooring range from under \$1 to around \$6 per square foot.



Laminate flooring installation

Laminate flooring is easy to install. First, make sure the subfloor is clean, level, and free of contaminants. Whether you choose planks or squares, laminate requires a plastic underlay sheet to seal out moisture. Some laminate flooring comes with an attached underlay, eliminating the requirement for a separate underlay. Laminate floors are held together by glue. The original laminate floors required special glue, but newer floors have tongues and grooves pre-glued, and they snap together. Trim and moldings will complete the installation. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions when installing laminate flooring.

cleaner regularly. You can also damp mop a laminate floor, but it should be wiped dry with a clean cloth immediately to prevent swelling from water absorption. Never use abrasive cleaners, scouring powder, or steel wool. If spot cleaning of spills is required, only use products recommended by the manufacturer.

Avoid scratching the surface by dragging furniture across it, or walking on it with shoes that have sand or grit on the soles.

With proper installation and care, your laminate floors should give you many years of use.

Laminate flooring care and maintenance

Laminate flooring is not only easy to install, it is also easy to maintain. Keep it clean using a broom, dust mop, or vacuum

