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Choosing the Right Flooring

There are more flooring choices than ever before, all offering a combination of style and purpose. However, all the choices may leave you confused about what option will best suit your specific need. If you need help choosing the right flooring, keep reading to understand many of the considerations to take into account when deciding on flooring. As always, your friendly Curtis Lumber salesperson can also assist you with the perfect flooring choices.

Appearance

The most important aspect of choosing a new floor is determining the look you want to achieve. Are you looking for a modest elegance, or a warm family feel? The flooring you choose will make a big difference in how you use and decorate your room. You should choose the furniture and room color scheme before choosing a flooring. This will allow you to limit the number of flooring choices and get exactly what you want.

Solid flooring has become the standard choice for most new homeowners, with wood floors continuing to grow in popularity. With its attractive appearance and natural warmth, a beautiful wood floor can enliven a drab room, enhance any architectural style, complement furniture and design schemes, and add value to any home or building. Wood flooring is available as solid wood or as engineered, meaning a layer of solid hardwood on top of a plywood substrate. Both achieve the look and feel of real wood, with some different uses.

For those trying to achieve the look of wood or stone on a budget, laminate flooring has become a popular option. Today's laminate floors replicate the natural beauty of wood or stone while being durable and attractive.

Performance

How will your floor be used? Will it be installed in a high traffic area or in a rarely used dining room? After you have determined what you want your flooring to look like, you should take into consideration the environment in which it will be expected to perform.

Solid and Engineered Hardwood flooring can last a lifetime if properly maintained. The structural integrity of the floor does not degrade. It is important to remember that solid hardwood scratches and may become damaged by pooled liquids. Prefinished flooring typically carries a warranty and will resist scratches better than site-finished floors. No matter the finish, this flooring will need to be resurfaced every 15-25 years.

Laminate flooring, a manufactured product, will perform differently. The floor may wear, fade, stain, and lose its resistance to moisture after 15-30 years. Pooled liquids will damage this flooring, however unlike wood flooring, it is very scratch resistant. Because of this characteristic, it is commonly used in homes with pets.

Getting Started

Whether you are finishing off your latest project or changing the appearance of a room, installing a new floor is one of the easiest ways to add value and style to your home. With so many selections on the market today, it can be hard to know where to begin. Our experienced salespeople will guide you through selection and installation to achieve the look you want.

Existing Floor

To determine the types of flooring that you can choose for your new floor, you must first determine what type of subfloor you currently have. A subfloor is the supporting structure underneath your existing floor and is typically a plywood, stick lumber construction or concrete. If the subfloor is plywood or stick lumber, all flooring options are available to you, however if your subfloor is concrete or particleboard, engineer or laminate floorings are the best choice.

The best way to determine your subfloor is to remove a piece of your current flooring and whatever padding or underlayment may exist. Once you remove these, you will be able to give your salesperson the right information in order to select the right flooring. If you are unsure of what the subfloor is made of, be sure to talk to a salesperson before starting your project.

Types of Flooring

The most common types of flooring available are solid hardwood, engineered wood flooring, and laminate. It is important to consider where you will be installing the flooring before making a decision. Kitchens have high traffic and are likely to have dirt and moisture from an entryway. Living rooms are the centerpiece of a home and any flooring selection should add to the décor of the room. Bathrooms and basements are high moisture areas which require special considerations.

Solid Hardwood

Considered to be the most popular flooring options, solid hardwood, or wood strip flooring as it is sometime referred, is a timeless, durable, and natural material used for flooring. It is available in prefinished or unfinished to fit your application. The durability of the floor is determined by the hardness of the wood from which it is made. Solid wood flooring can be domestic or exotic, meaning made from trees growing in North America or from trees that grow around the world. Some examples of domestics are oak, cherry, birch, ash, and maple. Exotic species include purple heart, bamboo, mahogany, tigerwood, and many others.

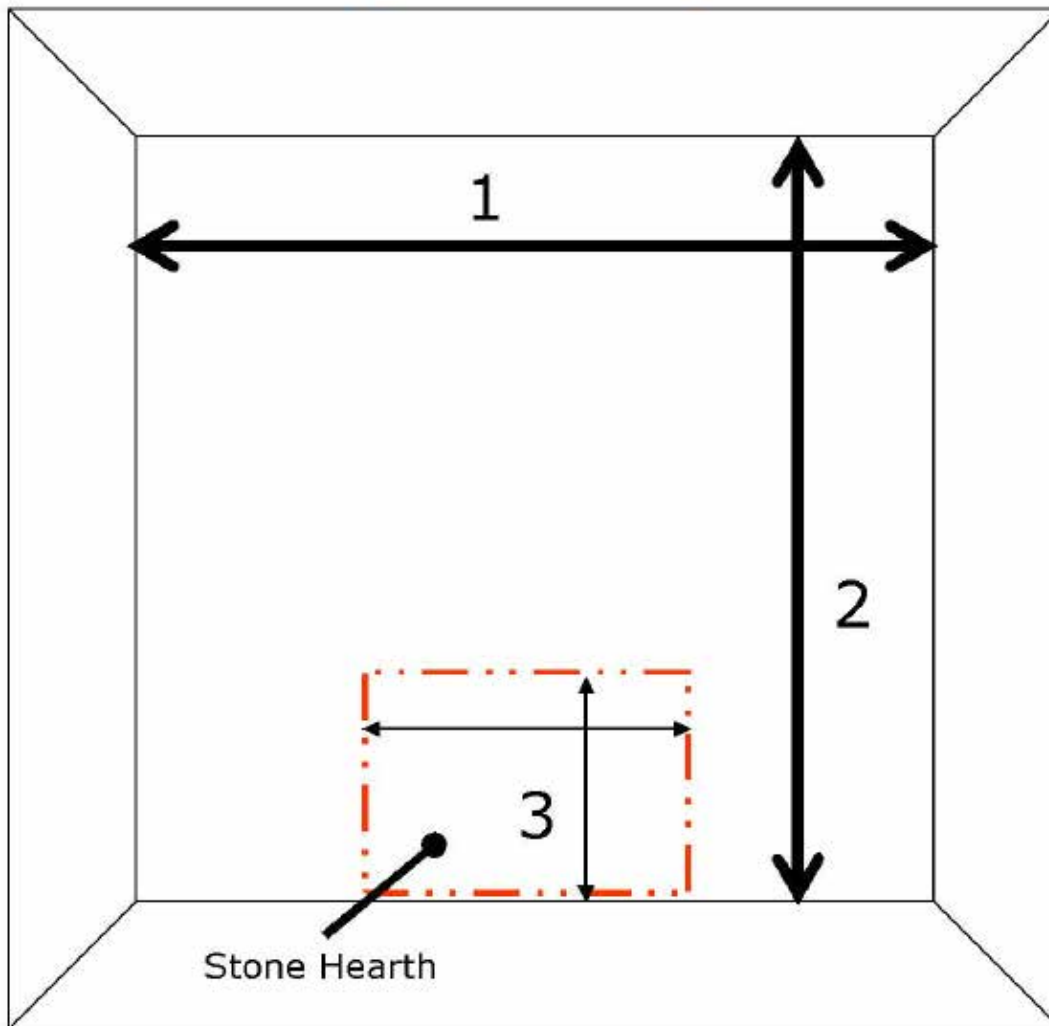
Engineered Wood

Engineered hardwood flooring offers an advantage over solid hardwood flooring by being able to be installed where typical hardwood cannot. Since engineered wood is an actual layer of hardwood on top of plywood backing, it is much more stable. This allows it to be installed over radiant heat, in basements, and over a concrete subfloor. Depending on the type of engineered hardwood flooring, it can install without fasteners by locking together or glue together at the seams. Both types lay on top of your subfloor and do not attach. The surface of the flooring is as durable as the hardwood that it is made from and still offers all the natural beauty that solid hardwood flooring can offer.

Laminate Flooring

Laminate flooring looks like wood or natural stone, yet is made of synthetic materials. A popular alternative to other hard surface products, high-quality laminate flooring resists staining, wear, and fading much better than wood and natural stone while providing a unique look and appeal. It's durable and water-resistant, with the ability to use in bathrooms and kitchens in addition to high traffic areas. Laminates have greater dent and scratch resistance than hardwood flooring, but will become damaged if abused. Best of all, laminates take more patience than skill to install, so nearly anyone can do it.

Flooring Measuring Guide



Measuring for your new floor is easy. Flooring is sold in boxes measured by the square foot.

To determine how much flooring you will need, follow these simple steps:

1. Measure the width of the room (1) wall to wall or baseboard to baseboard if you have it in place.
2. Measure the length of the room (2) wall to wall or baseboard to baseboard if you have it in place.
3. Multiply the length (1) times the width (2) to come up with room's total square footage.
4. If the room has areas where new flooring will not be needed (3), as in the example above, repeat steps 1 and 2, measuring the largest rectangle you can fit within the area and deduct it from the total square footage.

For Example: If the width of the room is 10 feet, and the length is 12 feet, the room's total square footage is 120 feet, $10 \times 12 = 120$. Then, determine the hearth size, 4 feet by 3 feet, or 12 square feet ($4 \times 3 = 12$).

Deduct the hearth from the total room and come up with the finished square footage needed, 108 square feet ($120 - 12$).

5. Add a waste factor to your finished measurement of 2% for laminate flooring or 5% for solid wood.
The solid wood waste factor is determined by not only cuts, but also by imperfect boards in the box the you will want to discard.

For Example: The waste factor in the above example would be 3 square feet for laminate and 6 square feet for solid wood, $2\% (.02) * 108 = 3$ or $5\% (.05) * 108 = 6$. Therefore, the total square footage needed in this example is 111 square feet ($108 + 3 = 111$) for laminate and 114 ($108 + 6 = 114$) square feet for solid wood.

When in doubt, bring your room measurements into your nearest Curtis Lumber to have our salesperson calculate the amount you will need.

Installation Considerations

What was the previous flooring in your room? Who will be installing the floor? These are just a few questions that you will need to answer before making the final decision on the type of floor you need.

Solid Wood Flooring

Solid wood flooring is installed by nailing or gluing. Special tools are needed and typically it can be installed over a solid subfloor (the material underneath your current flooring). If your subfloor is in poor repair or not solid, you may need to replace it before installation can proceed. The subfloor can be wood, concrete, or existing flooring (except carpet).

It is not recommended to install solid wood flooring over radiant heat or in a basement, because it may warp or crack. Bathroom installation should have the seams glued to avoid water pooling underneath the floor. Water on the surface of the floor should be cleaned up quickly and the product can be sensitive to humidity. Consult a flooring specialist at our store to discuss your specific bathroom installation.

Engineered Wood Flooring

Engineered flooring can install like solid wood, or can “float” over the existing subfloor. Floating means that the individual sections of the flooring lock together into a sheet that lays on top of the subfloor without being fastened to it. It typically is pressure fit to the walls and requires more patience than skill to install. Engineered flooring can install over wood, concrete, or existing flooring (except carpeting).

Choose engineered flooring to install in a dry basement or over radiant heat as the plywood substrate keeps the hardwood and free from warping. Bathroom installation should have the seams glued to avoid water pooling underneath the floor. Water on the surface of the floor should be cleaned up quickly and the product can be sensitive to humidity. Consult a flooring specialist at our store to discuss your specific bathroom installation.

Laminate Flooring

Laminate flooring is a floating floor. Most quality laminates install on a “click system” where once it locks together it is nearly impossible to separate without trying. Laminate can install over wood, concrete, or existing flooring (except carpeting).

Choose laminate flooring to install in a dry basement or over radiant heat. Damp areas will not harm the product as long as there is no standing water. If you want to install laminate in a bathroom, the seams should be glued to avoid water pooling underneath the floor.

Regular Maintenance

Maintaining the beauty of your new hardwood or laminate floor is as simple as sweeping with a soft bristle broom and vacuuming with a soft floor attachment if your floor includes an edge or groove that could collect debris. To make sure your floors retain their original shine and luster, you should clean your floors periodically with a professional grade floor cleaning product designed for your type of floor, available from any Curtis Lumber store.

Preventive Maintenance

To maintain the beauty and minimize the maintenance of your new wood or laminate floor follow these simple tips:

- Use only cleaning products that are meant to be used on your type of flooring. While Murphy's Oil Soap works well for certain applications, using it on your flooring will dull the finish and make it slippery. Refer to the instructions that were included with your flooring for the proper cleaner, or stop by your local Curtis Lumber.
- Prevent grit, dirt and other debris from being tracked onto your floors by placing throw rugs inside and outside of doorways. This will prevent scratching and absorb excess moisture to extend the life of floor.
- Do not wet-mop a wood or laminate floor. Standing water can dull the finish and warp or damage the floor.
- Do not use abrasive cleaners, steel wool or scouring powder which can scratch your floor's finish.
- All spills should be wiped up immediately using a slightly dampened towel.
- On Laminate Floors, remove tough spots like shoe polish, tar, and asphalt driveway sealer with nail polish remover containing acetone (May be combustible/flammable; please follow label instructions) and then wipe with a damp cloth.
- Place felt or soft material glides under the legs of furniture to prevent scuffing and scratching. The heavier the item, the wider the floor protector should be.
- Avoid walking on your wood floors with cleats, sports shoes and high heels. This can dent any floor surface.
- When moving heavy furniture, do not slide it along the floor. It is best to pick it up and move it.
- In the kitchen, place an area rug in front of the sink.
- In rooms that become damp or dry, use a dehumidifier or humidifier throughout the year to keep movement to a minimum.

Be sure to consult with the manufacturer's recommendations to ensure optimal maintenance.

A Lifetime of Beauty

No matter your maintenance concern, be sure to stop in or call your local Curtis Lumber for troubleshooting help. Our experienced salespeople will effortlessly guide you through the maintenance process to be sure your floors' beauty and functionality lasts a lifetime.



Ask Us For Help or Advice!

Your Curtis Lumber specialist has the experience and professional training to help you plan and answer any questions you may have about flooring and installation.



Flooring Checklist

Please fill out this planning sheet to the best of your ability in order to help you refine what you might want for a new floor. Our salespeople will walk you through the process in-person, however, this checklist will help you to think about what you might want. Bring this sheet to a store to share with your salesperson.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Cell: _____

Email: _____ Fax: _____

Jobsite Location: _____

About Your Project

How did you hear about Flooring at Curtis Lumber? _____

When was your house originally built? _____ Age of current floor? _____

When would you like to begin the project? _____

Are you working with a Contractor? _____ If yes, name: _____

Contractor Phone Number? _____

Is the home new construction? _____

What room are you considering for a new floor? _____

What are the room dimensions? _____

Is there any floor space in the room that would not require flooring? _____



Flooring Checklist

What is the subfloor?

Cement Plywood Other: _____

What type of heating is used in the room? _____

Is the room damp? _____ Does the room ever have standing water? _____

What is your flooring budget overall or per square foot? _____

Do you want a floor that is:

Uniform color? Varied color? Looks like tile or stone? Rustic?

What other woods are currently/will be present in your home? _____

Is there a specific width of floor you are considering? _____

**Be sure to bring this completed questionnaire to your initial store visit.
It is not required, but will help us to understand your project and get you accurate pricing.**