

Installation Guide



Laminate Flooring and Aqua Armor Tech™

Laminate Flooring

Before you start

- **Storage.** Store and transport Laminate Flooring on a flat surface to prevent warping. Do not leave floors in areas of extreme temperature or moist rooms. Never store boxes upright. Do not stack pallets more than three high, and make sure to keep the boxes from forklifts, trucks, or other traffic.
- **Acclimate.** Ultimate Floors Laminate is designed for indoor, climate-controlled floating installations and must be acclimated to the installation room between 65-85°F (relative humidity should not exceed 65%) for 48 hours before installation. Keep this temperature maintained during & after the installation. Do not open boxes until the time of installation.
- **Tools.** Some recommended tools are a utility knife, tape measure, safety goggles, spacers, chalk line, tapping block, circular saw, gloves, pencils, speed square, underlayment, & pull bar, moisture test/reader.
- **Inspection.** The installer's responsibility is to visually inspect all planks before and throughout installation in a well-lit area. Defective planks should not be used. Materials should also be inspected for color, finish, and wear layer. Ultimate Floors cannot assume responsibility for the suitability of Ultimate Floors and accompanying products for each individual's installation because Ultimate Floors has no control over the installer's proper application. Should an individual plank be doubtful as to appearance or dimension, the installer should not use this piece. Complaints about visual defects will only be accepted before with a submitted claim. Ultimate Floors will provide a replacement in a timely fashion. Ultimate Floors does not cover claims for repair labor or when a visual defect is installed.
- **Things to Remember:**
 - o Flooring should be one of the last items installed in any new construction or remodel project & should not be installed underneath cabinetry.
 - o It is an excellent idea to save extra planks in case of accidental damage.
 - o Underlayment **MUST** be used
 - o Never install Laminate in high-humidity areas such as steam rooms or saunas.
 - o Never attach the floor to any surface
 - o Mobile Home installations must have a temperature of 65-85°F and a solid subfloor.
 - o Installations in facilities with consistent walker and wheelchair usage (i.e., Nursing homes or extended care) or facilities with heavy displays, racks, dentist chairs, etc., may exert extreme stress and compromise the locking system.
 - o Laminate Flooring provides a very tight fit. Ensure that all seams are tight at the end of the install. An unprofessional installation or use of improper tools can result in damage to the click profiles.

The Subfloor

The quality of your subfloor will significantly affect the results of the installation. Ensure the subfloor is dry, flat, stable, clean and free from debris, grease, and chemicals. While the Laminate planks will camouflage **minor** imperfections-unevenness or major imperfections may translate through the planks, necessary corrections need to be made. **All subfloors must be free of deflection, and variations should not exceed 1/8" in 6'.**

- **Existing Floor coverings.** You may install Laminate over many existing floor coverings as long as they are firmly fixed, level, and stable. Installation over carpet, needle felt, cushion vinyl, floating floors, damaged floors, and soft floors are not recommended and will void your warranty.
- **Wooden Subfloors.** The moisture content of the wood floor should not exceed 12%. Ensure the subfloor is dry, structurally sound, clean, and leveled. Be sure the wood is free from mold and insects.
- **Concrete Subfloors.** Moisture arising from new or old concrete can create a high level of moisture vapor emissions, hydrostatic pressure, and high alkalinity levels. This combination is highly corrosive and will damage the floor over time. Calcium chloride and pH level test should be performed before installation. Be sure to measure and record your findings. New concrete must be cured for at least 60 days before installation.
- **Radiant Heat.** Installation over radiant heat is acceptable if the surface temperature of the system does not exceed 82°F. The system must be operational for a minimum of 2 weeks before installation (use of an in-floor thermostat is recommended). Before installation, operate newly constructed systems at maximum capacity to force any residual moisture from the cementitious topping of the radiant heating system, then set the thermostat to a comfortable room temperature. At the time of installation, the floor's temperature may not exceed 64°F; wait for at least 24hrs to gradually increase the temperature (a max of 5°F per day). Throughout the floor's life, the maximum floor surface temperature should be 82°F, and the homeowner should only increase or decrease temperature settings by 5°F per day so the Laminate can gradually adapt. During heating seasons, minor gapping is a regular occurrence, and proper humidity control will help minimize this natural reaction. Use a humidifier to maintain humidity levels. Use a transition profile to separate rooms with and without radiant floor heating or rooms with different temperature controllers.

Measurements

Measure the room before installing underlayment and floor. Additional expansion joints will be required if a single room has a length or width greater than 23ft. Additional expansion joints are accomplished by providing a greater than 5/16" amount of expansion at all fixed vertical surfaces. Extra caution must be exercised when transitioning from a larger area to a smaller area. Be sure to maintain adequate expansion in the doorways by using t-moldings and undercutting the door frames.

- Ultimate Floors recommends leaving an expansion gap between the perimeter walls and any adjacent hardwood floor.

Installation

- Shuffle Planks - this flooring replicates the look of a natural product which has natural variations in color. For best visual effect, shuffle planks or tiles from several cartons and do not install similar planks next to one another.
 - Agree with the client on which direction the floorboards should run since this influences the visual size ratio of the space. Installation parallel to the longest wall or the primary light source is recommended for best visual effects.
 - The end joints of the planks in two successive rows should never be in line; they should be staggered by at least 8 inches (see image below).
 - Expansion of 5/16" should be maintained around the room's perimeter and when using transition moldings. Note: expansion should be equal to the thickness of the product.
 - Make cuts using a circular saw or reciprocating jigsaw.
1. All flooring installations require underlayment. Run the foam underlay in the same direction as the laminate panels. Underlay should be butted side by side with no overlap. Tape seams together.
 2. You will need to remove the tongue on the side of the panels that face the wall to ensure that the decorative surface of the laminate floor is well under the finished trim when installed. Use a utility knife to score through the tongue several times until it easily snaps off.
 3. Start in a corner by placing the first panel with its trimmed side facing the wall. Use spacers along each wall to maintain an expansion space of 8 or 12mm (5/16" or 3/8") between the wall and the flooring (depending on the thickness of your floor).
 4. To attach your second panel, insert the end tongue of the board into the end groove of the first panel at a 45° angle. Lower the panel flat to the floor and line up the edges carefully.
 5. Continue connecting the first row until you reach the last full panel. Fit the last board by rotating the panel 180° with the pattern side upward, place beside row, mark, and saw off excess. Attach as described above.
 6. When using a handsaw, cut on the decorative surface - if you use a jig or circular saw, cut with the decorative side down to avoid chipping.
 7. Begin the next row with the off-cut piece from the previous row to stagger the pattern. Pieces should be a minimum of 20cm (8") long, and joint offset should be at least 40cm (16").
 8. To start your second row, push the side tongue of the panel into the side groove of the very first panel at about 45°. When lowered, the plank will click into place.
 9. Attach the second panel of the next row on the long side as described above. Push this panel as close as possible to the previous row. To attach this second board to the last board, tap the end using a tapping block and a rubber mallet. Continue along in the same fashion.
 10. To fit the last row, lay a panel on top of the previous row. With the tongue to the wall, lay another panel upside down on this one to be measured and use it as a ruler. Don't forget to allow room for spacers. Cut the panel and attach it into position.
 11. Door frames and heating vents also require an expansion room. First, cut the board to the correct length, then place the cut board next to its actual position and use a ruler to measure the areas to be cut out and mark them. Cut out the marked points allowing the necessary expansion distance on each side.
 12. You can trim door frames by turning a panel upside down and using a handsaw to cut away the necessary height so that the panels slide easily under the frames.
 13. Remove spacers, and you are ready to install finishing molding.
 14. Finishing Molding
 - *when nailing, first pre-drill holes & never nail into the flooring*
 - *when gluing, allow the adhesive to cure before allowing foot traffic fully*

- a. **Reducer:** used to finish flooring when the adjoining surface is lower than the Laminate or when flooring meets carpet. Position the U track between each edge of the flooring. Screw, nail, or glue down the track directly to the subfloor and then insert the reducing strip into the track.
- b. **T-Molding:** used to finish flooring when two-level surfaces meet in doorways or for expansion joints. Install the same as above. Expansion joints use t-molding and can be positioned in an inconspicuous place.
- c. **Stair nose:** used to finish flooring on landings or stair edges. Moldings need to be glued and screwed down into the subfloor for safety and stability. Use colorfill to cover countersunk screws.
- d. **Quarter Round:** used to finish the perimeter of the room. Install the quarter round using finishing nails. Quarter round molding is nailed directly into the baseboard.
- e. **End Molding:** provides a smooth transition from laminate flooring to carpeting or tile and exterior doorways and hearths. When transitioning from laminate flooring to carpet, leave a 1" space between the finished floor and the front edge of the carpet. Install the molding track by gluing or nailing it ¼" from the edge of the flooring. Push the molding into the track working from left to right. Finish the carpet by tucking it between the molding and the tack strip.

Installing in Wet Areas (Kitchens, Laundry Rooms, & Bathrooms)

Laminate Installation in Bathrooms voids the Ultimate Floors Warranty

- When installing in any area where moisture or leaks may become an issue, the room must have a 100% sealed perimeter. Expansion gaps at all vertical surfaces such as walls, cabinets, etc., must be filled with high-quality silicone caulk.
- When installing laminate planks in a bathroom (not recommended by the manufacturer), remove the toilet and fit flooring to within 5/16" of the toilet flange. Fill this expansion gap with high-quality silicone caulk.
- Install *Quarter Round* moldings directly into the wet silicone caulk. Install *T-Molding* and wall base over the silicone caulk-filled expansion gaps. Nail *wall base* directly into the wall, not into the laminate flooring. In areas where a square edge profile cannot be installed, fill the 5/16" expansion gap with silicone caulk.

Repairs

Although Ultimate Floors are inherently tough, they can be accidentally chipped by falling objects. If damage occurs after installation, you may disassemble the planks back up to the damaged area. Determine the closest wall to the repair area and remove the molding. Lift to disengage tongue and groove and unlock the planks. Install a conditioned plank to replace the damaged one and reassemble the flooring. Replace the trim molding.

Please note that the traditional method of single plank replacement can also be used with Ultimate Floors Laminate.