Heritage Products

SOLID OAK FLOORING INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS

Please retain for future reference

Your New Heritage Solid Oak Flooring

Thankyou for purchasing Heritage solid oak flooring. Your flooring has been carefully manufactured at our Sheffield factory, and is amongst the best quality oak flooring on the market today. Unlike imported low grade floorings, Heritage oak floors are made to traditional standards adn when correctly installed will provide generations of service and enjoyment.

Please follow the instructions below carefully. Your flooring needs to be installed correctly to ensure trouble free performance. There is a clear and correct process for installing oak flooring and it is very important that you follow this as it can be very hard or impossible to rectify problems further down the line if the correct steps are not followed.

Construction

Your flooring is machined from long lengths of solid oak, either American or European. The oak is purcashed from good quality joinery grades and is kiln dried to be suitable for use in normal domestic environments. The boards are tongue and grooved to all 4 sides and unless you specify differently will have been supplied to a full 20mm thickness. This means that the floor is considered structural, essentially they are solid oak floorboards, and opens up a number of installation options which are detailed below.

Choosing Square Edged or Microbevel Flooring

When specifying your flooring you have two options, the boards can either be run with a microbevel to the long sides or as a full square edge board. You should note that the microbevel, as well as providing a visual line, is designed to hide the small differences in thickness of board that are inevitable in a natural product such as oak flooring. If you choose the square edge board it is worth remember that the correct finishing of these boards means the flooring should be sanded flat prior to any finish being applied. Even on v groove boards you may find the the board end joints require a little sanding prior to being finished. We can prefinish your flooring for you in the factory but you should be aware there can be slight variations in height when you choose this option. This is a normal feature of oak flooring and is not a defect.

Storing your Flooring and Avoiding Issues With Moisture Expansion

Oak, like any timber, will react to significant changes in the humidity of the environment that it is stored in, particularly prior to having a surface finish applied. Oak will expand across its width and thickness, (but not its length), as it takes on moisture. Your flooring has been manufactured from carefully kiln dried oak with a moisture content in the region of 8-10% which is ideal for use in normal environments, however please read the information below.

To avoid problems the flooring should be stored away from building works that can generate an increased humidity such as plastering or decorating work, particularly in their unfinished state. Foors should always be stored flat, on a level surface and clear of the floor on at least 3 level full width bearers.

Allowing your Flooring to Acclimatise

Once you are ready to install your flooring it is vital that you leave the flooring in the room in which it is to be installed for a few days to acclimatise. By allowing the flooring to equalise its moisture content with its final environment before installation you ensure that any change in the boards size happens at that stage.

In most cases modern homes are quite dry due to better insulation and central heating. This usually means oak flooring will shrink slightly once in this environment. Allowing this to happen before installation will significantly reduce instances of gaps opening between boards later on. Please do not skip this step.

Installation Methods

There are a number of options when it comes to installing solid oak flooring. Some of these are unique to the thicker 20mm style of flooring that Heritage manufactures. The various options are outline below, with further more detailed installation instructions following on.

Installation direct to joist.

As your flooring is 20mm thick and is therefore structural, you can install it direct to joists with no other subfloor. In this case the boards are screwed or nailed to the joists. As the boards are tongue and grooved to the ends, the joints do not need to fall over a joist, the tongue and groove will provide sufficient support to the ends of the boards as long as the joists are at normal maximum centres of 400mm. If you are dealing with an old property and joists are spaced significantly wider than this, then the flooring can be trimmed to length so that the joints fall over a joist. You will need to order additional flooring to cover this increased waste factor.

Installation to an existing timber or sheet material subfloor

You can lay the boards direct onto an existing timber or ply subfloor. Often if you have an uneven concrete floor then fitting a ply or chipboard base layer can provide you with a good level surface to work with (see later note regarding concrete floors). With this installation method you have the option to either screw/nail or glue down to the existing floor.

Installation to an existing or new concrete or tiled floor

This is the installation method where most problems occur. It is perfectly normal to install timber flooring direct to concrete however you MUST correctly assess the concrete floor for moisture levels prior to installing the flooring. If you fit a solid oak floor to a concrete/tiled base that has moisture issues it WILL fail. Where timber is exposed to moisture it WILL expand with considerable force. Expansion gaps around the edge of the room will provide a level of protection but once gone the flooring will buckle or bow upwards. No amount of bonding it down will stop this. If in doubt do not fit solid oak flooring.

To correctly assess a concrete floor for moisture content you will need to take readings using a hygrometerm easily and cheaply available these days. You should aim for a room reading of between 40-65%. The floor itself ideally needs to be 2% moisture content or less.

Remember that a rule of thumb for normal concrete floors is around 1 month per inch thickness to dry properly, however you should always check. If your concrete floor is an old one and has damp problems then it is possible to use surface applied Damp Proof Membrane products to isolate the damp. You should always use a reputable brand and follow the manufacturers instructions. If in doubt then this process should be handled by a professional installer.

Expansion Gaps

Even following the precautions above, it is important that expansion gaps are left around the room to allow your flooring space to grow. In winter, floors tend to contract with windows closed and heating on, with the reverse happening in summer. You should leave a good 15mm gap all around the room, but pay particular attention to the gaps on the sides of the boards. Remember, flooring expands across its width and depth, very little on its length. Remember to also leave gaps under architrave in doorways. The best method for hiding this gap is to refit the skirting over the flooring. You can also use a moulding applied to the bottom of the skirting although this tends to look a little less neat.

Direction of Boards

There is no correct orientation (unless you are fitting direct to the joists) but as a general rule flooring should be laid running away from the main entrance door to a room. Flooring running crossways can sometimes look slightly jarring, especially obvious in a hallway.

Nailing or Screw Down Method

Where the flooring is fixed down using nails or screws, these can be positioned either through the tongue of the board for a secret fix, or you can fix direct through the face of the board if you want to recreate the look of an old period floor.

To nail or screw through the tongue, several options are available. Specific machines such as a Porta-Nailer are especially designed to install the nail in the correct position and at the correct 45 degree angle. Alternatively an air nailer can be used although this needs careful positioning. Specific screws are available which have think shanks designed to resist splitting, an example would be the "Tongue-Tite". These again are fitted through the tongue at a 45 degree angle.

If you prefer to recreate the period look of a surface nailed floor, the old style cut brad nails are commonly available for this purpose and are designed to avoid splitting the floor. These are driven into the face of the floor and should be punched slightly below the surface.

Glue Down Method

When installing to concrete you will need to glue the flooring down. You can also use this method when fitting to a sheet material subfloor such as chipboard or plywood. Various adhesives are available such as the SikaBond range.

Two methods are used. The "Fully Bonded" method applies adhesive to the whole subsurface and is applied with a notched trowel. Alternatively the "Liquid Batten" method is a gun applied system that runs beads of adhesive approximately every 250mm. In both cases the flooring is then directly applied on top and the adhesive remains permanently elastic to allow the floor to expand and contract. There are pros and cons to either method. The fully bonded method works on even floors only but is much stronger and if you believe that the room will be exposed to significant changes in temperature and humidity this method will work best. The liquid batten method is not quite as strong but does help take out a slightly uneven floor.

Using a 15mm batten as a spacer to create your expansion gap, start working your way across the room, making sure to stagger the board end joints. The last board can be face fixed at its outer edge as this will be covered by the skirting board once the installation is complete.

Finishing Your Flooring

Prior to any finishing it is worth going over the floor and sanding back any slight surface uneveness between boards if these are not desired.

There are many systems on the market for finishing flooring and the finish chosen will be a personal preference. However we would always recommend you use a reputable brand and then follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully. We stock and sell Treatex's and Ciranova hardwax oils.

We can also prefinish your solid oak flooring for you. Please see the next page for details of finishes available. Please remember that square edge flooring should sanded after installation and prior to being finished therefore we do not recommend purchasing pre-finished square edge flooring.

Maintaining Your Flooring

The great benefit of a solid oak floor is that it is a permanent installation. Unlike an engineered floor which will require replacement in 10-20 years, your new solid oak floor will not only be going strong but will be improving as it ages.

Taking some time to maintain your floor will keep it looking great. Preventative maintenance includes soft pads under furniture legs if those are sometimes moved and mats at outside doors to trap grit. High heels can also damage oak floors as they generate a very concentrated area of pressure. Your oak floor can be mopped using a damp (but not wet) mop with a proprietary wooden floor cleaning solution. Do not use excessive water, and dry any spills on the floor immediately.

In saying all of this it is worth remembering that old oak floors that have experienced generations of use and wear often look even better as their patina develops. One of the benefits of your new floor is that you can either leave it to age and gather this character, or if you prefer it can be resanded and resealed as often as you might think it necessary.

We recommend...

Store your new oak flooring carefully. Do not allow your flooring to remain in an environment where it can pick up moisture such as around drying plasterwork

You must allow the flooring time to acclimatise by leaving it for at least 7 days in its final installation area.

Sand after installation and finish your flooring with a quality finish

Please DO NOT...

Lay solid oak flooring over new concrete or known or suspected damp issues

Ignore instructions surrounding moisture content and expansion/contraction. Almost every instance of solid oak flooring failing is moisture related. Your new oak flooring will last for generations if you install it correctly

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Finishes Available for your Solid Oak Flooring

Below are the current finishes we offer for your new solid oak flooring. We do not recommend prefinishing square edge flooring as this should be sanded after installation and prior to finishing. If you would prefer prefinished flooring then we recommend floorign with a microbevel edge. For more information download our product brochure or go online at www.theheritagecollection.co.uk

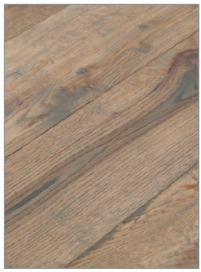
Natural Unfinished

Traditional Clear

Shades - Extra White

Shades - Old Grey

Shades - Clouds



Shades - Castle

Shades - Cherry Red

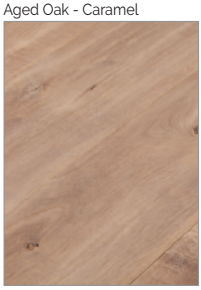
Shades - English Brown

Shades - Smoked Oak

Shades - Wenge

Shades - Chocolat

Aged Oak - Caramel



Aged Oak - English Brown

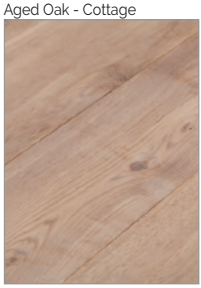
Aged Oak - English Red

Aged Oak - Weathered Oak

Aged Oak - White

Aged Oak - Baro

Aged Oak - Cottage



Aged Oak - Burned Oak

Aged Oak - Double Smoked