

Installation methods

HeartPlank® is a truly versatile floor as it can be installed in a variety of conditions and over a variety of subfloors. Available methods of installation are:

- Nail down
- Staple down
- Floating
- Glue down

There is no single best method, since there are critical factors, which may favor one method over another. The critical factors your flooring professional will examine are:

- Type and condition of the subfloor
- Your preference of installation method
- Installer's capabilities and preferences

The single most important criterion for selecting an installation method is the type and condition of the subfloor.

Determining the condition of the subfloor

Your flooring specialist should determine the moisture level and levelness of the subfloor. The moisture gradient must be less than 4% between the subfloor and an engineered wood floor such as a HeartPlank® floor. A moisture difference greater than 4% is cause for alarm as this may cause excessive movement in the floor. This can occur when wood flooring is installed over a freshly poured (less than 60 days old) concrete subfloor, or over a concrete slab in an area, where hydrostatic pressure may be forcing ground water into the slab.

Conversely, the slab may be so dry as to draw moisture out of the flooring, causing the floor boards to crack or separate. Similar situations may occur with wood or plywood subfloors that are exposed to the elements during construction.

Engineered HeartPlank® floors from Special Hardwood Products are designed to withstand these moisture gradients better than solid wood floors. Any time, however, when the moisture level in the subfloor is a concern, a vapor barrier must be placed under the installed HeartPlank® flooring.

The levelness of the subfloor must be such that the installed HeartPlank® floor feels firm when walked on, even in the case of a floating installation, common over slab construction. The so called "hollow sound" associated with some floating floor installations is a result of improper subfloor preparation. When uneven areas are left under an installed floating floor, a sound box is created, much like that of an acoustic guitar. As the floor is walked on, the sound from these uneven areas appears as "hollow". The key to a successful installation, especially when using the floating method, is a level subfloor, a result of careful and proper preparation. As the saying goes; "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure".

Your preference of installation method

Beyond the limits imposed by the subfloor, you can help your flooring installer by determining desired qualities that you are looking for in a wood floor. For example, you may want the floor to “give” a bit, especially on a concrete slab. You could ask for a variety of underlayments to accomplish this, such as high density foam or cork, which is an excellent sound barrier as well. These underlayments, especially the denser ones like cork, provide a cushion between the concrete and your wood floor. Should a very firm feel be desired, HeartPlank® floors may be glued down directly over the concrete or particle board subfloor. When the subflooring consists of plywood or other nailable substrates, HeartPlank® floors can be installed using the nail- or staple down method.

Installer’s capabilities and preferences

Most flooring installers today are versed in all different methods of wood floor installation. Due to their often long experience, many have developed preferences for certain methods. It is advisable to discuss the floor installation with your dealer or flooring contractor.