

FLOORING-Wood or "Wood"

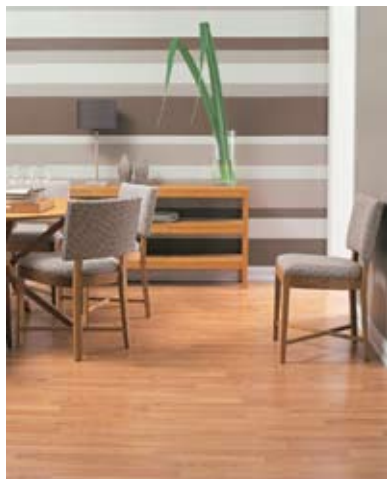


If you desire the look of wood, the basic choices in flooring are solid wood, engineered wood, and laminate.

- **Solid hardwood**, by definition, is real wood. However, a solid hardwood floor must be nailed down to a sub-floor and is difficult to install on your own--you almost always need to professional installation for this--and can be finicky when it comes to moisture and temperature variations.
- **Engineered wood** is also real wood. It's a sandwich of 1/16" to 1/8" inch of finished wood on top and specially designed plywood underneath. Engineered wood has many of the advantages of both hardwood and laminate without some of the downsides. Generally, engineered can be used in a wider range of applications. Depending on the type you buy, it can be a nail-down, glue-down, or floating floor.
- **Laminate flooring**, as much as it looks like actual wood flooring, simply is not real wood. Laminate is melamine-infused paper on top, wood chip composite on bottom that is hard, dense, and durable. Laminate and engineered can be used in basements.

A **floating floor** is actually a method of installing a floor rather than a specific type of flooring material. The individual planks or boards attach to each other—by gluing or snapping together--but do not attach to the sub-floor on which it is being installed. One advantage of the floating floor method of installation is it allows for the floor to move and expand in response to changes in a room's humidity.

Attribute	Solid Hardwood	Engineered Wood	Laminate
Real species wood	Yes-All the way through	Yes- except the bottom layers	No
DIY –Do it yourself	No- Prof. installation recommend	No- Unless you glue down or float the floor	Yes
Can be a floating floor	No	Yes	Yes
Resistance to high moisture, i.e. standing water	No	No	No
Tolerates light moisture	No	Yes	Yes
Holds up to scratches and dents*	Fair, depending on hardness of species	Better, depending on species	Good
Can be sanded and refinished	Yes, many times	Yes, 1-3 times	No
Use over radiant heat	Not recommended, usually not warranted	Yes, but not all species warranted	Yes
Requires initial finishing/sealing	No- comes prefinished or unfinished	No	No
Average cost including finishing and installation	Highest	Comparable to & often less than solid hardwood	Often the least expensive



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