



Proper Hardwood Flooring Installation

After selecting a solid or engineered hardwood product from Mullican Flooring, consumers often believe the most difficult decision regarding their new floor is behind them. However, choosing the right professional flooring contractor to install that new hardwood floor is just as important as the flooring itself, and may actually prove even more challenging than determining the most suitable color, species or surface texture.

Q. Can I install hardwood floors myself?

A. While homeowners can successfully install solid or engineered flooring on their own, Mullican Flooring recommends using a professional installer, preferably an individual who is certified by the National Wood Flooring Association (NWFA).

Q. Why does Mullican recommend a professional installer?

A. Installation of hardwood flooring is a labor-intensive process, and employing the correct installation methods is crucial for successfully attaining long-lasting results.

For example, a glue-down installation involves troweling glue on the floor and placing the engineered planks onto the glue. A nail- or staple-down installation requires the installer to drive a nail or staple through the tongue of the hardwood floor, at the appropriate angle, into the subfloor.

NWFA-certified installers have completed two NWFA-approved installation workshops or manufacturer training sessions, and they possess a minimum of two years' experience in wood flooring installation. In addition, they have successfully passed a written and hands-on exam. To maintain certification, installers are required to attend NWFA-approved training and the Wood Flooring Expo.

Q. What are the most important aspects of installation?

A. In the end, the goal is to have a functional, enduring, aesthetically appealing hardwood floor. To help make this happen, several key factors must be considered prior to and during installation, including the condition of the subfloor, moisture levels, and the layout and racking of the hardwood.

Hardwood flooring naturally expands and contracts as the seasons change, but excessive moisture can cause damage to the floor, such as cupping, buckling or cracking. To the contrary, a lack of moisture can lead to gaps between boards and cracks in the grain of the flooring. Before installation, check the moisture content of the floor and subfloor. Subfloors should be clean and dry, and all depressions should be filled. Damaged or unsecured subfloors may negatively impact the functionality and appearance of the installed flooring.

Avoid layout and racking issues by thinking about the project in its entirety, planning ahead before the first plank is installed. This requires the installer to measure all rooms, determine focal points and allow for variances due to the wood's natural expansion. Experienced installers will know where to begin, how to camouflage the natural variations in the wood planks, and properly distribute boards of varying lengths.