



Can I install a solid timber floor myself?

Yes you can. Here's how.

Mountain Timber Products solid timber overlays are designed for people who want the warmth and style of a solid timber floor, but don't have the traditional bearers-and-joists subfloor to work with. Our overlay timbers are designed to be laid directly over concrete, particle board and plywood. Your existing floor must be clean, dry and as flat as possible.

Acclimatisation

Because timber is a natural product (or hygroscopic material), it is recommended that the timber be allowed to acclimatise to its new environment prior to installation. There are such factors in the home such as heating, air conditioning, heat, cold and sunlight which can affect the moisture content of the timber, causing it to either expand or contract. For this reason we recommend that the timber be acclimatised for 2 weeks if possible prior to laying. Extreme weather conditions should be avoided where possible whilst this acclimatisation process is being done.

Do not try to store the timber outside by using for example a protective covering or tarpaulin as this will have the effect of trapping condensation underneath damaging your timber. For this reason the timber must be acclimatised inside the house, not outside.

Application

Concrete

The concrete should be structurally sound, level, dry and clean before commencing. Remove as much dust, wax, coatings, existing adhesives, curing compounds, oil or grease as possible.

In all cases we recommend that Bostik Moisture Seal be used as per manufacturer's instructions prior to laying the timber floor. Click on the Bostik logo located within this site for more information.

Particleboard

This is still a popular subfloor in many homes and can be used as the base for a beautiful timber floor as with concrete. We suggest that the subfloor be level sanded prior to installation of the timber to remove any other surface irregularities and imperfections. Plywood can be installed over the particle board if required. For further information contact us.

Existing timber floor

Your existing floor must be rough-sanded prior to application. Sand to eliminate any unevenness or to remove any other surface finishes. The new overlay boards should be laid at the opposite angle to the existing boards or alternatively use a plywood underlay over the existing floor, prior to installation of the new floor. This way you can still run your new boards the same way as the existing floor.

Before you start the installation you will need:

- 5mm V-notched trowel
- Saw
- Timber wedges
- Chalk line
- Square rule
- Rebated tapping block
- Pull tool
- Hammer
- Bostik Ultraset adhesive
- Bostik Moisture Seal (for concrete applications)
- Concrete nails (if required)

Installation

We recommend that the boards be laid parallel to the longest wall in the room.

You will need to organize both a work area and a main floor area. Organization is vitally important at this point. Flick a chalk line that is 10 board widths + 12mm from the starting wall to establish a straight line. The area between the chalk line and the starting wall is your work area. See figure 1.

Glue down your first row of boards on this line as a holding block, with tongues facing the starting wall. Concrete nails (or Mickey pins) may be used if necessary and removed once the glue has dried.

Leave a board thickness expansion gap (approx 12mm) along the end walls. Place 12mm blocks/wedges along one end to maintain the gap while the boards are being placed and glued down. (use the off cuts of the timber as wedges/spacers to obtain this result).

The timber must be adhered with Bostik Ultraset adhesive applied with your 5mm v-notched trowel. Spread only enough for approximately 3 boards at a time – no more.

Once laid the boards should be in constant firm contact with the adhesive until cured. If in doubt apply weights to the surface till the glue is completely dry.

Start the first row of boards with the tongue facing the starting wall and the left hand end of the board against the block/wedge on the side wall. Slot the tongue firmly into the groove on the fixed temporary board and then press the board down firmly into the adhesive. See figure 2.

Working from left to right, lay the next board and continue working towards the right until you need to measure and cut a strip to finish the first row, remembering to allow for your 12mm expansion gap.

To minimise waste try to use the off cut from this board as the starting board for the next row if possible.

As you add the next row, tap the boards gently together using a tapping block to ensure a firm, tight fit. See figure 3.

You may need a pull tool to fit the last board, closest to the wall.

Start all new rows with a board at least 450mm shorter or longer than the strip used in the previous row thus preventing the end joints from aligning throughout the floor. You are creating a random laying design and need to avoid alignment if at all possible. See figure 4.

Scribe the last board to fit allowing for the 12mm expansion joint along its whole length.

Once your main floor area has been laid, remove your temporary block and continue to lay your overlay flooring in your work area following the above procedure.

Clean up's should be done with a cloth and methylated spirits.

Sanding & Finishing

There are many different types of finishes ranging from oils through to water-based urethanes. You should choose the best finish to suit your functional and aesthetic requirements. At all times the manufacturer's instructions should be followed carefully. Mountain Timber Products recommend a polyurethane finish be used in either a satin or gloss rather than a water based product. This seals the surface and the joints of the timber giving an even, hard wearing waterproof finish. Further information should be obtained from either your supplier or Mountain Timber Products.

We would recommend that you engage to services of a professional Sander and Polisher to complete the final stage of your job. We would recommend that you allow a minimum of 72 hours if possible after completing the installation of the timber floor before sanding and polishing enabling the adhesive to completely set.

The Final Touch

Of course you will want to cover your expansion gaps around the edge of your floor. If you have existing skirting boards that were not able to be removed the gap should be covered with a beading or fillet mould fixed to the skirting (not the flooring). Alternatively if you are able to install the skirtings after the floor it should be done at this stage, nailing to the wall and not to the floor.

Important Points

- Read all instructions before commencing the project.
- Take time and plan the job properly and concisely.
- When installing over an existing concrete slab you must use a moisture seal to ensure that there is no risk of moisture absorption from the concrete slab to the timber.
- The subfloor must be as flat as possible, dry and clean prior to commencement.
- If possible lay the boards prior to fixing the skirting boards.
- Timber floors are not recommended to be laid over heated subfloors.
- Should you have any concerns prior to or during the installation please stop and contact us immediately for further advice.

Tips For Working Safely

- When working with timber machinery we recommend that you use respiratory protection, gloves, clothing, hearing and eye protection.
- Wood dust may cause irritation and repeated inhalation can damage health. Machinery or powertools may generate sufficient noise to damage hearing. Please use safe work practices at all times.
- Your work area should be clean. Sawing, sanding and routing equipment should be fitted with dust extractors. Dust levels should be below standards set by WorkSafety Australia for wood dust.
- After handling timber always wash skin thoroughly with mild soap and water.
- Regular laundering of work clothing is recommended.