



**WORLD FLOOR COVERING  
ASSOCIATION**

# Hardwood

## Before You Buy Hardwood Flooring

You've decided to go both timeless and timely with a beautiful new hardwood floor for your home. Congratulations! But before you hand over that credit card or sign that check, we suggest you review these important steps towards a smart purchase:

### **Species**

Each species of hardwood comes with its own unique characteristics. Color is determined by the species and from which part of the tree the wood is cut. Grain pattern is determined by the species and how the wood is cut. Natural variations in the color and grain are to be expected. Similar to natural stone, these variations combine to create your floor's unique natural beauty.

### **Pre-Finished**

Pre-finished hardwood floors come already sanded, screened and stained from highly efficient manufacturing plants. Multiple coats of urethane are sprayed on the hardwood boards, which are then UV dried to create a lasting finish. (UV drying isn't something that can be done at home.)

Pre-finished hardwood floors can be screened and recoated in your home to rejuvenate their finish and revitalize their natural beauty.

### **Finish in Place**

The term "finish in place" refers to having unfinished hardwood installed,

sanded, stained and then finished with 2-3 coats of urethane right there in your home. Finishing in place can take a lot more time than installing pre-finished boards — and can make quite a mess. But the result is a level of customization and uniqueness that can't be found on any store shelf.

### **Dust**

If you decide to go with a finish in place floor, it's important to consider that your floor will not be dust-free, as it's impossible to create a "dust free" environment in your home. It's inevitable, some dust will fall onto the freshly applied topcoat of urethane finish. You may also discover sanding marks, brush marks and tiny bubbles after installation is complete. If these tiny imperfections become bothersome to you, know that finish in place floors can be screened and recoated at any time to revitalize their natural beauty.

### **Effects of Weather**

Wood is a natural product that expands and contracts unevenly with changes in moisture and temperature. The result can be hairline cracks and/or minor variations in height or width. If you live in a wet climate, make sure your home is well insulated. If you live in a dry climate, consider the use of a whole house humidifier to minimize the effects of weather.

### **Subfloor**

No subfloor is perfectly level. Hollow sounds may result when you walk on your subfloor's dips or ridges. These imperfections do not affect the integrity or installation of hardwood floors.

### **UV Light**

All hardwood floors will fade or change shades over time. Exposure to sunlight greatly accelerates this process. We recommend window treatments, as well as rotating area rugs and furniture regularly, to allow floors to age evenly from UV exposure.

### **Cost**

The "cost per square foot" of your hardwood floor is just one aspect of the entire price tag of a new hardwood floor. Ask your retailer to calculate the total cost of your floor covering project. Here are some of the things he or she may include in the equation:

- Furniture removal/replacement
- Some retailers or installers may charge to remove (and then replace) furniture in the installation areas.
- Demolition/disposal of old floor covering

- Unless your home is brand new, there's probably an old floor covering that is going to need to be removed and properly disposed of.
- Sub-floor preparation
- Depending on its condition (after removal of the old floor covering), your subfloor may need to be prepped for hardwood installation.
- Product delivery
- Delivering your hardwood may not be included in the "cost per square foot" price.
- Installation
- There will most likely be a "cost per square foot" to install your new hardwood floor.
- Materials required to complete the installation
- Additional materials may be required to properly install your hardwood floor.
- Financing
- Many retailers offer financing as an option of payment. Be sure to check the interest rate, minimum payment due and any finance charges if you choose to pay your purchase off over time.
- In addition to your total project cost, annual cleanings are also recommended to maintain the beauty and life of your hardwood floor. Ask your retailer and/or consult the manufacturer's warranty and care guide for directions on cleaning and maintenance.