STRATA Flooring

INSTALLATION GUIDE

Laminate Installation Guide.

VERSION 2 · SEPTEMBER 2026



STRATA Inspire

INTRODUCTION

Laminate Flooring Installation

Strata Inspire is a high-performance laminate flooring designed to deliver stunning timber realism with everyday durability. This guide walks you through the key steps to ensure a smooth, successful installation. Whether you are a seasoned installer or tackling a DIY project, following these instructions will help you achieve a flawless finish that is built to last.

INSTALLATION LIMITATIONS

Strata Inspire is only water-resistant **after** installation. Carefully following these instructions ensures the floor performs as intended in areas such as bathrooms, kitchens, laundries and entranceways.

Strata Inspire is not suitable for continuously wet areas such as pool rooms, saunas, or spaces with built-in drains — for example open showers. These water-resistance instructions do not replace regulations for waterproofing in wet rooms.

Strata Inspire has a pre-attached underlay, so no additional underlay is required — adding additional underlay will be too soft on the joins.

For installation on concrete subfloors, a builder's plastic is required beneath the flooring.

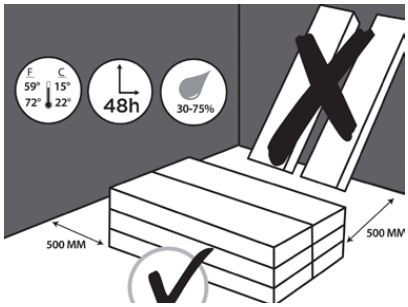
YOU WILL NEED THE FOLLOWING FOR INSTALLATION

- Laminate tapping block
- Pulling iron
- Spacers
- Saw — jigsaw, circular saw, hand saw, cross-cut saw or laminate guillotine
- If installing on a concrete subfloor, a builder's plastic of 200 micron (more on page 7)
- Straight edge
- Rubber mallet
- Tape measure
- Use appropriate PPE

Preparation

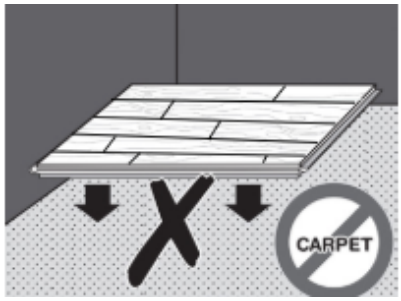
1

Let the planks acclimatise for 48 hours in their unopened packaging at normal room temperature, placed in the centre of the room where they will be installed. Ideal conditions are 15–22°C with 30–75% relative humidity. If conditions fall outside this range, acclimatise for one week with the packages opened. Before beginning your install, check you have received the right product and all boards are free from defects — installed boards are considered accepted.



2

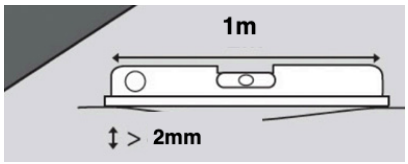
To prepare the subfloor, remove any damp-porous floor coverings such as carpet or needle-felt. Damp-sealed coverings — PVC, linoleum, VCT — can remain. For wooden floors, lift a board to check for any signs of mould or insect infestation before beginning installation. Nail or screw any loose areas of the subfloor.



3

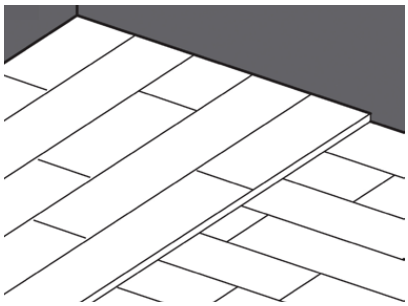
Using a straight edge, ensure the subfloor is level. Grind any high spots and fill low spots with levelling compound to meet the evenness tolerance below.

Over a 1m length	Maximum 2mm unevenness



FOR TIMBER SUBFLOORS

4 Install the new floor at ninety degrees to the existing subfloor. The crawl space under the floor must be sufficiently ventilated — a minimum of 4cm^2 total ventilation opening per m^2 of floor. The moisture content of the wood must not exceed 10%.

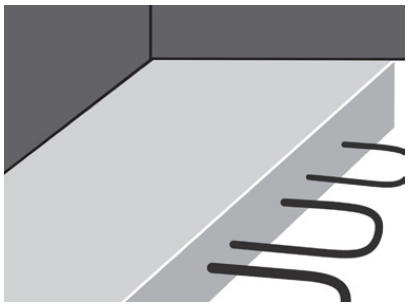


FOR CONCRETE SUBFLOORS

4 The moisture content of the subfloor must be less than 2.5%CM / 75%RH for cement screed, or less than 0.5%CM / 50%RH for anhydrite screed. Where floor heating is present, results must be 1.5%CM / 60%RH and 0.3%CM / 40%RH respectively.

A new cement screed floor must dry at least one week per 1cm of thickness up to 4cm; thicknesses over 4cm require twice as much drying time. For example, a 6cm concrete subfloor must dry for at least eight weeks.

5 Strata Inspire laminate is suitable for use over both warm-water and electric underfloor heating systems. Warm-water heating elements must be fully embedded in the subfloor, with pipes positioned at least 3cm below the surface, and the system must be tested and confirmed as functioning correctly before laying the laminate. Switch the heating off during installation and keep it off for at least 24 hours before switching it back on. The subfloor temperature must not exceed 18°C before, during and for 24 hours after installation. Once the floor is laid, increase the temperature gradually by no more than 5°C per day and avoid sudden temperature changes at all times. Surface contact temperature must not exceed 28°C, and for warm-water systems the maximum water temperature is 50°C.

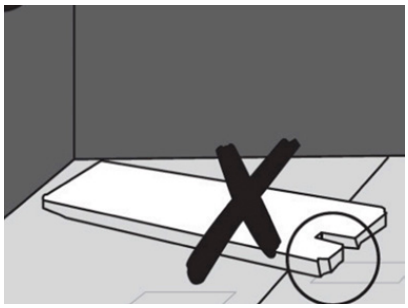


6 After checking the subfloor for unevenness, carefully vacuum the entire surface. Make sure the floor base is flat, clean, firm and dry. To avoid the risk of squeaking, secure any loose areas of the subfloor.



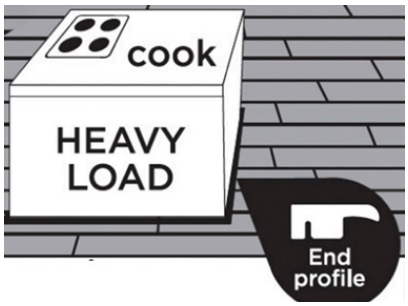
7 To install your laminate floor you will need the tools outlined on page 2.

8 Check all flooring planks before and during installation. Defective planks must never be used. An installed plank is considered accepted and cannot be claimed on.

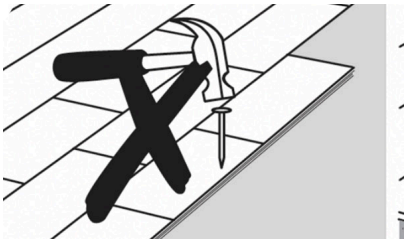


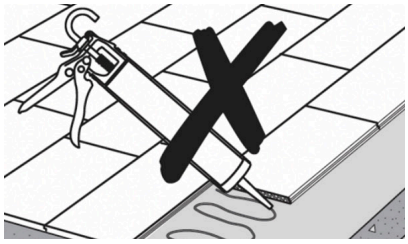
Keep your records. Always measure, record and keep your moisture content results. A written protocol supports any future warranty claim.

9 Install kitchen islands and other heavy objects before laying your flooring. The floor must be able to expand and contract to prevent gaps or separating planks. If your kitchen island is already in place, you will need to undercut the base or remove kickboards to allow for expansion. Heavy objects are defined as 230kg and over. If this is not possible, expansion gaps can be concealed with an end cap trim or a quarter round.



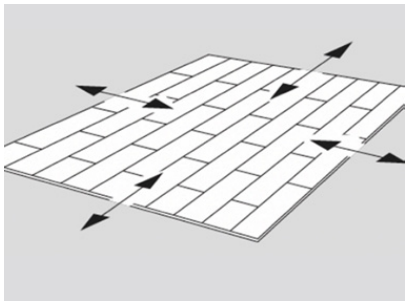
10 Strata Inspire laminate must be installed as a floating floor to allow natural expansion and contraction with changes in temperature and humidity. Never fasten the floor with nails, screws, silicone or any other adhesive. Flexible silicone is only required in accordance with the relevant building code; where it is used, ensure it is a flexible variety so the flooring can expand and contract freely. An expansion gap must be present on 100% of the floor perimeter — a single area with no expansion can compromise the integrity of the floor.





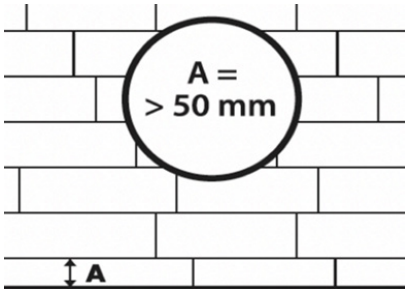
11 Check to ensure that doors can still open and close after the flooring has been installed.

12 Strata Inspire laminate is primarily made from natural wood, so it will expand and contract as relative humidity changes.

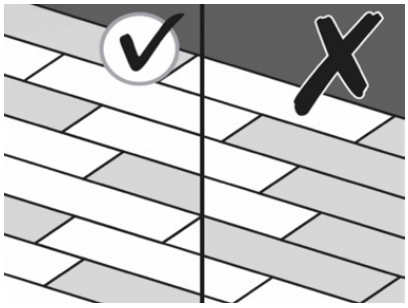


Installation

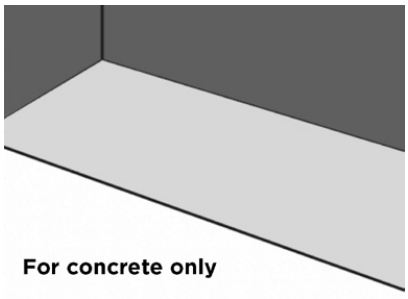
1 Before starting, carefully measure the length and width of the room to plan a precise layout and achieve a balanced appearance. This ensures you will not end up with a last row that is too narrow. To avoid the last row being less than 50mm, cut down the planks of the first row. A starting or ending row should never be less than 50mm.



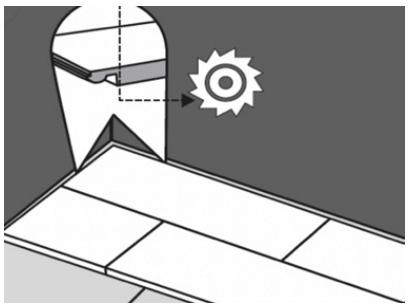
2 Make sure the planks are mixed sufficiently as you install them, so you do not end up with identical, light or dark planks next to each other. For the best visual effect, fit the floorboards in the direction of the longest wall and parallel to the incidence of light.



3 If you are installing over a concrete subfloor, clear builder's plastic of a minimum 200 micron must be installed below the flooring. Ensure all joins overlap and are fully sealed using a vapour-tight, waterproof tape. The plastic should be coved up the walls by 50mm and trimmed back after the flooring has been installed.



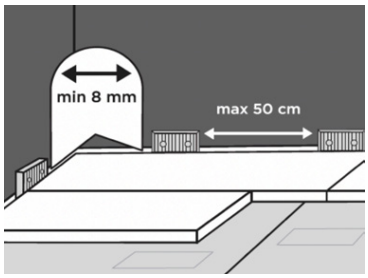
4 Begin the first row with a whole plank. Saw off the tongue and click profile on both the long and short sides. For the remaining planks in the first row, remove the click profile only on the long edge that will sit directly against the wall. Any plank edge positioned next to a wall must have its click profile removed to ensure the required expansion gap.



5

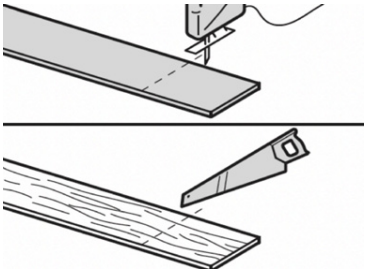
Put the plank with sawn-off sides against the walls. Place your spacers between the planks and the wall so your expansion joint meets the requirements.

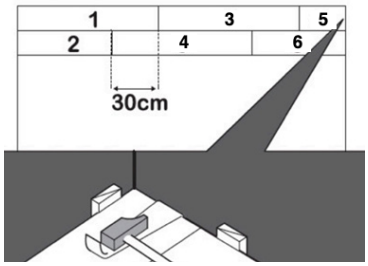
Perimeter expansion gap	8–10mm



6

Planks will need to be cut down to size. For a clean cut, the pattern side should face **down** when using a jigsaw, sabre saw or circular handsaw, and pattern side **up** when using a handsaw or cross-cut saw. Ensure the end joints of the planks in two successive rows are never in line — always stagger joints by at least 30cm.





7

To make the start of the installation easier, assemble the first two to three rows away from the wall so you can sit on the planks during assembly. Then slide those rows into position close to the wall with distance spacers in place. Take a thin rope and hold it alongside the installed planks to check and adjust the straightness of your first three rows. Make additional straightness checks as the installation continues, and remember to use distance spacers for the 8mm expansion gap along the perimeter.

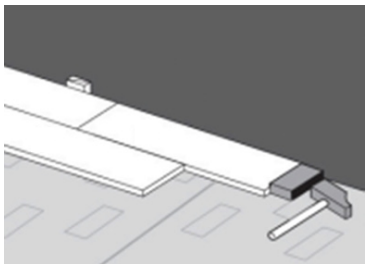




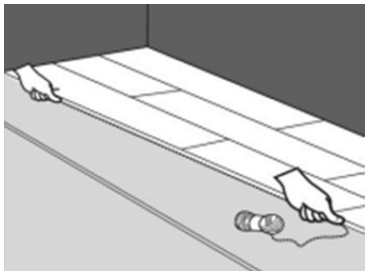
8

Insert the short side of the new plank into the short side of the installed plank using the angle method. Lift the plank to about 20–30° — this will raise the row, as the short sides are already connected. With both hands near the joint, pull the long side toward you until it clicks into place. You can insert tongue-into-groove or groove-onto-tongue, though tongue-into-groove is easiest.

9 You can also join planks without lifting, by tapping them together using the Uniclic tapping block. Do not use a single hard tap — use light, controlled taps to avoid damage.

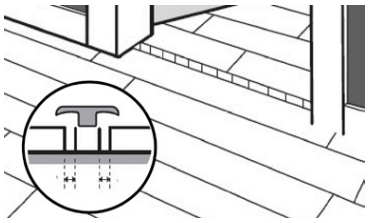


10 In places where it is too difficult to install the planks with the tapping block — for example against a wall — tap them together using the pulling iron and a mallet. Where horizontal tapping is not possible, cut the bubble of the groove lip with a wood chisel or sanding machine and add wood glue to hold the panels together.

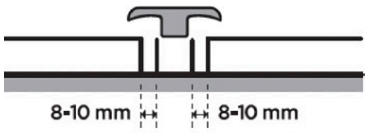


11 Continue in this way to the end of the room, keeping joints staggered and rows straight.

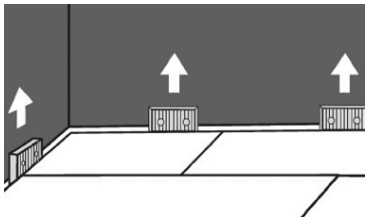
12 For any length in any direction of 12m and over, an intermediate expansion joint is required. This also applies to doorways less than 900mm.



13 Room humidity varies with the season, so it is vital that the floor can expand and contract. Leave an expansion joint of 8–10mm on all sides of the floor, around pipes, thresholds and under doors. An expansion joint between different rooms — for example under a doorway — is mandatory.

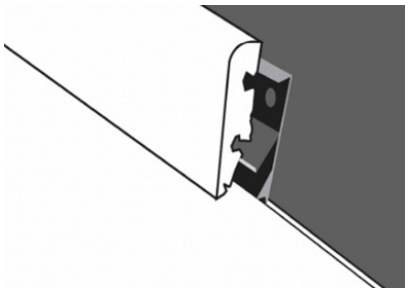


14 Remove all spacers.

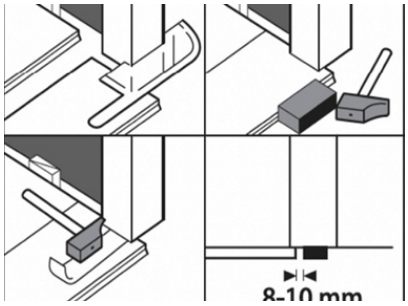


Finishing

1 Install the skirting board against the wall. Never attach the skirting board to the floor. This method allows the flooring to expand and contract under the new skirting board. Ensure skirtings are not fastened in a way that pins the floor.

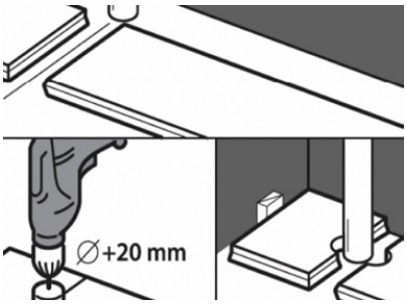


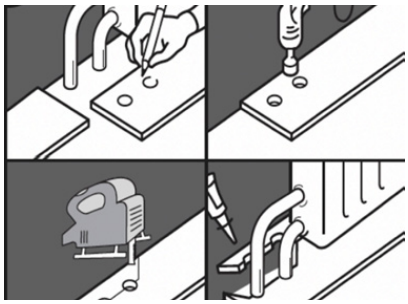
2 Door frames will often need to be undercut to allow for expansion. If angling the plank when installing around a door is not possible, tap the planks in while flat, or cut the bubble of the groove lip with a wood chisel or sanding machine and add wood glue to hold the panels together.

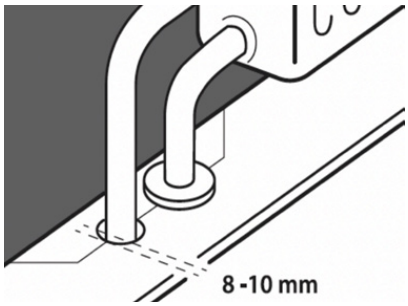


3 In rows where there is a pipe, make sure the pipe falls exactly in line with the short side of the two panels. In rows where there is a double pipe, proceed as follows.

- Measure where the pipe will come through the plank. Don't forget to allow for expansion.
- Take a drill bit measuring the diameter of the pipe plus 20mm for expansion, and drill through the panel where the pipe will come through.
- Extend the hole to the edge of the panel, then lay the panel around the pipe.
- Take another panel, saw a piece that fits exactly in the remaining hole, and glue this piece with wood glue.
- For a perfect finish around pipes, use pipe covers.

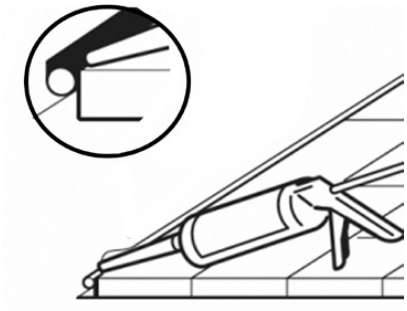




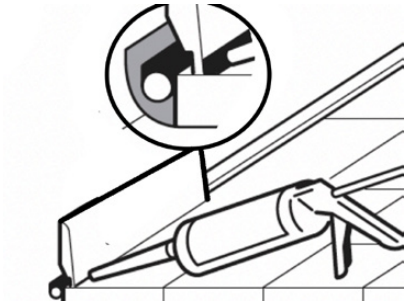


Finishing in Moisture Prone Areas

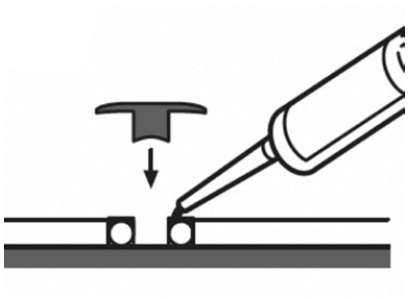
For wet-area rooms such as bathrooms, kitchens, laundries and entrances, follow the steps below. Use a waterproof, transparent, flexible silicone together with a PE foam rod. The silicone must be fully waterproof to prevent moisture ingress, and flexible to allow the flooring to expand and contract.



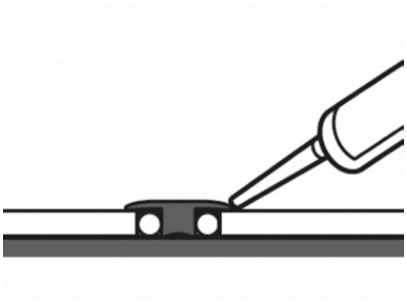
Push the 8–10mm PE foam rod into the expansion joints, then apply the waterproof flexible silicone.



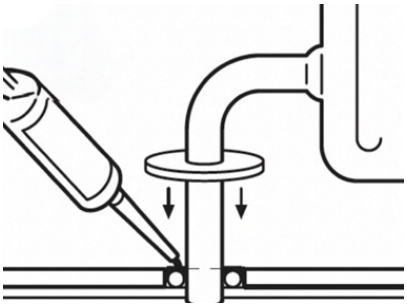
Install the skirting board, then silicone between skirting and floor to avoid water ingress.



For expansion joints, fit the base profile, place the PE foam rod and apply the silicone.



Push the transition profile into the base profile and apply silicone to the edge of the profile.



Around pipes, silicone on top of the PE foam rod, place the pipe cover, then seal around the edge.

REMEMBER

Tape the floor before applying silicone and peel it away immediately afterwards for a tidy finish.

After Installation

- You can walk on the floor during and immediately after installation.
- Use a dry microfibre mop and a vacuum without roller bars.
- Never use a steam mop on your laminate flooring.

CARE & MAINTENANCE

Learn how to properly care for and maintain your Strata Inspire flooring by reading our full Care & Maintenance Guide at strataflooring.co.nz.

Quality flooring you can trust, with styles to suit every Kiwi home.

09 308 7948

hello@strataflooring.co.nz

stratafloring.co.nz