

Engineered Timber Installation Guide.

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Engineered Timber Flooring Installation

STRATA Serene

INTRODUCTION

Strata Serene can be installed as either a floating or glue-down floor, with the choice largely based on installer or project preference rather than performance differences. Both methods deliver the same finished look and durability when installed in accordance with the installation guidelines.

INSTALLATION LIMITATIONS

Strata Serene Engineered Timber Flooring is for interior use only. It is not suitable for exterior areas, enclosed patios or sunrooms. Strata Serene is only intended for use as a flooring.

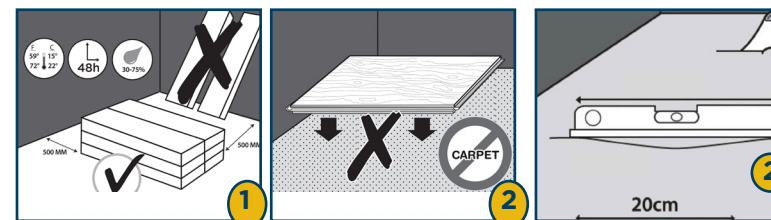
IMPORTANT INFORMATION

It is important to follow safe working practices throughout the installation process. Always wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), including safety glasses, hearing protection and protective footwear, to help reduce the risk of injury. When cutting flooring or trims with any type of saw, use suitable dust extraction and wear appropriate respiratory protection to minimise exposure to airborne dust.

TOOLS NEEDED

- Pull iron
- Tapping block
- Saw (jigsaw, handsaw etc)
- Underlay/moisture barrier (if installing using the floating method)
- Flooring adhesive and tools (if installing using the glue down method)

PREPARATION



1. Inspection and acclimatisation

Before and during installation, inspect all planks to ensure you have received the right product and carefully examine in natural light. Timber is a natural product, so variations in colour, grain, texture, knots, sapwood and other natural features are expected and are not considered defects. If you have any concerns, contact your supplier before proceeding, as installed planks are considered accepted and claims relating to visible defects or natural variation cannot be accepted afterwards.

For the best natural appearance, mix planks from multiple boxes throughout the installation. Some Strata Flooring timber products may include shorter nested boards to achieve the stated pack size these can be used throughout the floor or at the start and end of rows to create a balanced look.

Let the planks acclimatize 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, acclimatize for 1 week with the packages opened. Before beginning your install check you have received the right product and all boards are free from any defects. Installed boards will be considered as accepted.

2. Subfloor preparation

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. Strata Serene engineered timber flooring must not be installed over carpet or carpet underlay. It may be installed over existing, well-bonded vinyl, cork or ceramic tiles, provided the surface is structurally sound, dry and meets the required flatness tolerances.

When installing over concrete, the relative humidity (RH) of the slab must not exceed 80%. Where the concrete subfloor has not been moisture tested, or where additional moisture protection is required, install a continuous damp-proof membrane beneath the underlay.

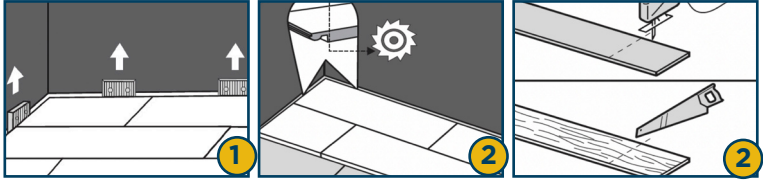
Timber subfloors must have a moisture content of no more than 14%. Any moisture-related issues must be identified and resolved before installation. Installing builders' plastic directly over a timber subfloor is not recommended.

A continuous damp-proof membrane can be created using 200 µm builders' plastic, with all joints overlapped by at least 300 mm and sealed using vapour-tight tape. Alternatively, use an approved underlay with an integrated moisture barrier, ensuring all joints and cut ends are sealed in accordance with the underlay manufacturer's installation instructions.

Using a 1 metre straight edge, the subfloor must not vary by more than ±3 mm over 1 linear metre in any direction. An uneven subfloor can result in movement, excessive deflection and unwanted noise, so any irregularities should be corrected before installation.

For installations over heated subfloors or subfloors that are known or likely to have elevated moisture levels, use 200 µm builders' plastic in conjunction with a suitable approved underlay with an SD rating greater than 75 m. Overlap all membrane joints by at least 300 mm, seal with vapour-tight tape, and turn the membrane up at walls and vertical fixtures to create a continuous moisture barrier.

INSTALLATION - FLOATING



1. Prepare the room

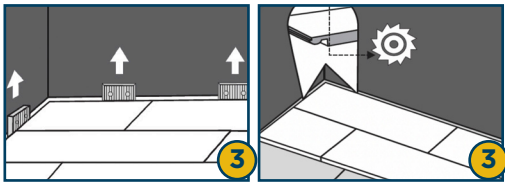
Before installation, ensure you have allowed 10mm minimum expansion. For larger spaces (5x5m +) we recommend 15mm expansion around the perimeter of the room. The expansion gap can be covered with skirting boards/scotia. If the boards are unable to be removed undercutting them is an option.

2. Install the first row

Select a long, straight, visible wall as your starting point. Install the required moisture barrier and/or underlay, then lay the first row with the tongue facing the wall.

Check the wall for straightness and, if necessary, scribe the first row to maintain a consistent 10-15 mm expansion gap. Assemble the first two rows in a staggered pattern and position them against the wall using 10-15 mm spacers.

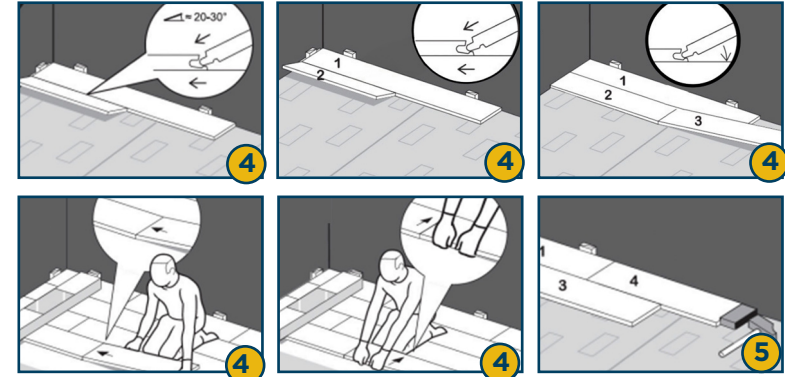
Begin the first row with a whole plank. Saw off the tongue/click profile on both the long and short sides. For the remaining planks in the first row, remove the click profile only on the long edge that will sit directly against the wall. Any plank edge positioned next to a wall must have its click profile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



3. Continue with the next rows

If your offcut is the off-cut from the previous row to start the next row where possible, ensuring it is at least 300 mm long. Continue installing the floor from left to right, maintaining a minimum 300 mm stagger between end joints and a 10-14 mm expansion gap around the entire perimeter and all fixed objects.

In order to make the start of the installation easier, assemble the first 2-3 rows away from the wall, so you can sit on the planks during the assembly. Then slide the first 2-3 rows at the wanted 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 installed first 3 rows. It is recommended to make additional checks of the straightness, in order to confirm the straightness during the installation. Remember to use the distance spacers for the expansion gap of 10-15mm along the perimeter.



4. 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.

5. 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. In places where it is too difficult to install the planks with the tapping block (e.g. against the wall) you can tap them together using the pulling iron and a hammer. Where horizontal tapping is not possible, you should cut the bubble of the groove lip with a wood chisel or sanding machine, and add wood glue to hold panels together. For room lengths of 20m and widths of 8m, there should be an intermediate expansion joint to allow for the required expansion.

6. Room humidity can vary according to the season, so it is vital that the floor is able to expand and contract. For this reason, make sure you leave an expansion joint 10-15mm on all sides of the floor, around pipes, thresholds and under doors. It is mandatory to provide an expansion joint between different rooms (e.g. under the door way).

7. Once the flooring is down remove all spacers. Install skirting boards and other finishing trims and ensure they are not pinning down the flooring. Your flooring must be free to expand and contract freely.

INSTALLATION - GLUE DOWN

1. Establish your starting line

Choose the longest, straightest wall as your starting point. Snap a chalk line parallel to the wall and secure a straight edge along the line to ensure the first row is perfectly straight. Lay the first plank with the tongue facing the wall and the groove facing into the room. Spread only enough adhesive for one row at a time, ensuring it remains within the adhesive manufacturer's recommended open time. Ensure adhesive manufacturer guidelines are followed.

2. Install the first row

Place the first board into the adhesive. Install each subsequent board by inserting the end joint at approximately 30°, then lower it into place to create a tight connection. Continue until the first row is complete. Ensure a minimum 5mm install gap is maintained for all room sizes and around fixed objects.

3. Continue installing

Continue each new row using the off-cut from the previous row where possible. Maintain a minimum end-joint stagger of 300 mm, although 400 mm or greater is recommended for the best appearance and structural stability. When engaging the short ends, insert the board, fold it down and gently tap into place using tapping block while applying light downward pressure. Continue installing the floor one row at a time until the final row is reached.

4. Fit the final row

Measure and trim the final row to suit, ensuring the required expansion gap is maintained. Install the final boards using appropriate pull bars or installation tools where necessary.

5. Around pipes and fixed objects

Cut openings around pipes and other fixed penetrations slightly larger than the object to allow the floor to expand and contract naturally. Finish these areas using suitable pipe collars or trim covers.

Preventing adhesive contamination

Take care to keep the surface of your Strata Serene flooring free from adhesive throughout installation.

- Keep hands, tools and tapping blocks clean when joining boards.
- Prevent adhesive from transferring onto the finished surface.
- Inspect the floor regularly using angled or raking light, as adhesive residue can be difficult to see when viewed directly from above.

If adhesive comes into contact with the flooring surface:

- Remove it immediately while it is still wet.
- Follow the adhesive manufacturer's cleaning recommendations.
- Use a clean microfibre cloth to wipe away residue.
- Use solvents sparingly and avoid allowing liquid to enter board joints.
- Do not abrade, polish or use abrasive cleaning pads on the floor surface.
- Reinspect the area under angled lighting to ensure all residue has been removed.

Once adhesive has cured, it becomes significantly more difficult—and in some cases impossible—to remove without damaging the floor.

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