

Skill Level: INTERMEDIATE Give these projects a try if you're a confident DIYer with a good working knowledge of a variety of tools. They can take a day or more to complete. If you can build a birdhouse or install a ceiling fan, your skill level is probably appropriate.

✓ MATERIALS

- Locking Hardwood Floor Planks
- Transitions and Mouldings
- Moisture/Vapor Barrier or 2-in-1 Underlayment
- Moisture Test Kit
- Circular Saw or Miter Saw
- Table Saw—optional; for cutting lengthwise
- Spacers
- Pencil
- Tape Measure
- Utility Knife
- Wood Glue
- Dead Blow Hammer
- Nylon Tapping Block
- Safety Glasses
- Dust Mask
- Knee Pads
- Weights or Sandbags
- Towel

Hardwood flooring adds warmth and beauty to any room, and is also a great way to increase the value of your home. At Lowe's, you'll find a variety of hardwood flooring styles and colors, from domestic species like Oak and Maple to exotics like Brazilian Cherry and Bamboo. Locking hardwood floors are easy to install and can be installed on any level of your home. These instructions will show you how to install a locking hardwood floor.

Remember that a good flooring installation starts with a correctly prepared subfloor. So be sure to watch the subfloor prep videos and download the instructions at [Lowe's.com/Videos](https://www.lowes.com/Videos). We show you how to level your floor, check for excess moisture and mark a starting guideline.

GETTING STARTED

- 01 Bring the flooring into the room so the wood planks can acclimate to the room's temperature and humidity for at least 72 hours before installation. This reduces problems associated with moisture, such as warping and fit. Stack the flooring in a flat position in the room or rooms where it is to be installed and allow it to acclimate.**
- 02 Check the moisture level of the subfloor to make sure the floor is within the manufacturer's recommendations. If your moisture level is not within manufacturer's recommendations, stop the installation and call a Lowe's associate for help.**
- 03 Once you have prepped the subfloor, carefully sweep and vacuum the surface on which the flooring will be installed.**
- 04 Check the planks for warping and defects, which typically affect around 5% of the product. These boards are unusable and should be discarded. If you experience more than 5% defects, stop the installation and call a Lowe's associate for help.**

IMPORTANT

Before you begin this project, read the manufacturer's instructions. Make sure you follow all local building codes. If you're not comfortable installing a hardwood floor, call a Lowe's associate for help, as we install many types of flooring.

INSTALLING THE FIRST ROW

01 Put on your safety glasses.

02 Once your subfloor has met the moisture requirements, install a moisture barrier and/or underlayment.

- Install the moisture barrier and/or underlayment based on the manufacturer's guidelines, typically by rolling out the underlayment in the same direction that the wood is being installed. Extend the underlayment a few inches up the wall (will be trimmed later).
- A Lowe's associate can tell you what type of moisture barrier will work best for your materials, at least a 2-in-1 underlayment is required.

03 Using the straightest planks, lay the first row of flooring along the guideline, with the groove side facing the room.

- This will serve as a guide for the rest of the room or house.

04 Place spacers between the flooring and the wall for the expansion gap.

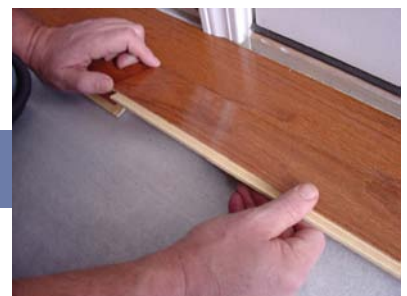
- Be sure to check the manufacturer's recommendations for the appropriate expansion gap.

05 Begin by locking the ends of the first row together.

- Check the manufacturer's instructions for how to lock the boards together, typically you insert the tongue into the groove and fold the board to the floor to lock the planks together.
- **TIP:** Occasionally you may need a dead blow hammer and tapping block to ensure a tight fit.

06 For the second row, lock the sides into the first row and overtop of the end of the adjoining board in the second row.

- Until the weight of the floor can hold itself in place, use weights to keep the boards from moving and aligned with your guideline.
- A folded towel or pad can protect the flooring.



INSTALLING THE FIRST ROW (cont.)

07 Place the second row so that the ends are at least 6" apart in each row.

- This will help strengthen the floor.
- This will also give the floor a staggered look, so you may need to cut the first plank.
- To cut the flooring, lay the plank on its face and cut with a circular saw.
 - Make sure you're using the correct blade to cut flooring.
 - Make sure you allow for the appropriate expansion gap.



INSTALLING THE REST OF THE FLOOR

01 When installing the rest of the floor, mix planks of different colors and grain to give the floor a more random pattern.

- You will need to work out of multiple cartons at a time.
- **TIP:** Dry fit a few rows together before you install them to see how they look and speed up the installation.

02 Continue laying the floor across the room, staggering the ends at least 6" apart.

- Maintain the expansion gap around the perimeter of the floor.

03 If you have entry areas or columns, cut the planks to fit.

04 For the last row, you might have to cut the pieces to fit.

- Measure the distance to the wall from the last laid row. Do not measure from the tongue.
- Subtract the manufacturer's expansion gap and cut the last row.
- If the width of the last row is less than 1", glue it to the previous row by placing glue on the tongue.



FINISHING UP

01 Once the last row is attached, install the transition pieces according to the manufacturer's instructions.

02 When your transitions are in place, remove the spacers and trim any excess underlayment.

03 Install the baseboards and shoe moulding.

- Attach the trim and shoe moulding to the walls, not the floor.

04 Keep 1-2 cartons of your hardwood flooring so you can fix any potential problems in the future, like a damaged board.

INSTALL A LOCKING HARDWOOD FLOOR

You can now enjoy your new hardwood floor, its warmth, beauty and ease of cleaning, for decades to come.



For other flooring installations, and other home improvement projects, visit [Lowes.com/Videos](https://www.lowes.com/Videos).

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