

## Drop & Lock Floating Floor Installation Instructions

### ATTENTION! READ BEFORE INSTALLING!

#### COLOR VARIATION

This flooring is a natural product and color variations are to be expected. For best visual effect, shuffle planks from several cartons and do not install boards varying greatly in color next to one another.

#### ACCLIMATISATION

As relative humidity varies in different parts of the country, acclimatisation of the flooring prior to installation is the most important precaution to take in order to insure a successful installation. Proper acclimatisation is necessary to adapt the moisture content of the flooring to the conditions of your environment. Improper acclimatisation can cause the floor to buckle and/or the boards to shrink or cup after installation.

#### SUBFLOOR PREPARATION

Subfloor must be level, dry and free of imperfections. An uneven subfloor will make the floor feel unstable and cause premature damage, **do not install if subfloor does not meet flatness, 3 mm over 3m radius.**

**READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS THOROUGHLY BEFORE BEGINNING INSTALLATION.**

**FLOORING PLANKS SHOULD BE INSPECTED PRIOR TO INSTALLATION 'if in doubt leave it out'**

Responsibility for the suitability of the flooring for the installation remains the responsibility of the Installer. Should an individual plank be doubtful as to grade appearance or dimension the installer should not use this piece. Please contact the Reseller or Preference Floors to assess the quality and if faulty they will send replacement planks in a timely fashion. The warranty will be voided if damaged or defective planks are installed.

#### **PRE-INSTALLATION JOBSITE REQUIREMENTS**

Site suitability remains the responsibility of the Installer.

Carefully examine the planks prior to installation for grade, color, finish and quality. Ensure adequate lighting for proper inspection.

**If flooring is not acceptable, contact your supplier immediately to arrange inspection for possible replacement.** Preference Floors will not accept responsibility for flooring installed with visible defects and damage. Prior to installation the installer must ensure that the jobsite and subfloor meet the requirements of these instructions. Preference Floors will not be responsible for sub-standard flooring performance issues resulting from unsatisfactory workmanship and/or subfloor conditions.

Flooring should be one of the last items installed in any new construction or remodel project. All work involving water or moisture should be completed before flooring installation. Water and wood do not mix. Installing flooring onto a wet subfloor will most likely cause cupping, tip & edge raising, telegraphing of core and subsequent gapping. Room temperature and humidity of installation area should be consistent with normal, year-round living conditions **for at least one week** before installation of flooring. Maintaining an optimum room temperature of 70<sup>o</sup>F and a humidity range of 30-50% is recommended. Humidity levels **below 30%** will most likely create movement in the flooring, including gapping between pieces and possible cupping and checking in the face. **Store the flooring in the installation area for 72 hours before installation to allow flooring to adjust to room temperature.** Do not store the boxes of flooring directly on concrete. These floors need adequate acclimation for moisture equalization prior to installation and should not be installed from just-opened boxes. **Shuffle the boards for best visual mix of lengths and color.**

#### **PRE-INSTALLATION SUBFLOOR REQUIREMENTS**

All Subfloors must be:

- Dry and will remain dry <2.5%: Subfloor must remain dry year-round. Wood based sub-floors must not exceed 11%. Concrete must be tested for moisture content using the Anhydrous Calcium Chloride test method, a non-invasive moisture meter, or a pin/probe moisture meter.
- Structurally sound, no cracks or seepage opportunities in concrete.
- Clean: Thoroughly swept and free of all debris.

Wood subfloors must be dry and well secured. Nail or screw every 150 mm along joists to avoid squeaking. If not level, sand down high spots and fill or level low spots. Concrete subfloors must be fully cured, at least 60 days old, and should have minimum 6-mil polyfilm between concrete and ground. **Subfloor should be flat and level within 3 mm per 3m radius.** If necessary grind high spots down and level low spots with a levelling compound. All concrete should be tested for moisture prior to installation using the Anhydrous Calcium Chloride test method, a non-invasive moisture meter, or a pin/probe meter. When using a Calcium Chloride Test, the result must not exceed 2.5% m.c. in a 24 hour period. Ceramic Tile, resilient tile and sheet vinyl must be well-bonded to subfloor, in good condition, clean and level. Do not sand existing vinyl floors, as they may contain asbestos.

A moisture test must be performed to ensure that the concrete slab is dry. Remember, a concrete slab on/below grade that measures dry today may become moist in the future due to rising groundwater. Installing a moisture barrier now may be viewed as an insurance policy against concrete becoming wet in the future. Preference Floors highly recommends that all installations over Concrete Slabs should only be completed after the application of a reputable Moisture Barrier to the slab. Preference Floors is not responsible for site related moisture issues. Suitable Moisture Barrier systems are available from quality suppliers such as, Mapei and Sika.

## **INSTALLATION TOOLS**

For all installation methods:

- Tape measure
- Tapping block (trimmed piece of flooring)
- Pencil
- Pry bar or pull bar
- Chalk line
- Wood or plastic spacers (12 -15 mm)
- Crosscut power saw
- 3M Blue Tape

Acceptable subfloor types:

- Structural Grade Plywood (at least 12 mm thick)
- Underlayment grade particleboard 19 mm
- OSB (at least 19 mm thick)
- Concrete slab
- Existing wood floor
- Ceramic tile, grout sound and intact.
- Resilient tile & sheet vinyl

## **STARTING YOUR INSTALLATION**

**Make sure subfloor is tested for moisture first and is properly prepared.**

Since natural flooring expands with any increase in moisture content, always leave at least a (12-15 mm) expansion space between flooring and all walls and any other permanent vertical obstructions, (such as pipes, island benches and cabinets). This space will be covered up once you reapply base moldings around the room. Use wood or plastic spacers during installation to maintain the nominated expansion space. **No area of connected flooring can be greater than 6-8 m in width or 11-12 m in length.** For larger room sizes install T-moldings or other transition trims that allow the flooring to expand and contract. T-moldings are suggested at interior doorways. Work from several open boxes of flooring and “dry lay” the floor before permanently installing the floor. This will allow you to select the varying grains & colors and to arrange them in a harmonious pattern. It also allows you the opportunity to select out very dark/light pieces for use in hidden areas in order to create a more uniform installation. Remember, it is the installers’ responsibility to determine the expectations of what the finished floor will look like with the end user first and then to cull out pieces that do not meet those expectations. Begin installation next to an outside wall. This is usually the straightest and best reference for establishing a straight working line. Establish this line by measuring an equal distance from the wall at both ends and snapping a chalk line. The distance you measure from the wall should be the width of a plank plus approx. 12-15 mm for expansion space. You may need to scribe cut the first row of planks to match the wall in order to make a straight working line if the wall is out of alignment. You may want to position a few rows before starting installation to confirm your layout decision and working line. When laying flooring, stagger end joints from row to row by at least 20cm. When cutting the last plank in a row to fit, you can use the cut-off end to begin the next row. If cut-off end is 20cm in length or less, discard it and instead cut a new plank at a random length and use it to start the next row. Always begin each row from the same side of the room. When near a wall, you can use a pry bar to pry close the side and end joints.

## **INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS**

**Inspection:** Prior to installation, inspect planks in daylight for visible faults/damage. Check if subfloor/site conditions comply with the specifications described in these instructions. If you are not satisfied do not install, and contact your supplier.

**Moisture Protection:** Lay the PE film, allowing for at least 20 cm overlapping and tape. Turn the film upward 5 cm along the walls. Trim after the base boards or quarter round are fixed.

**Before Laying:** Measure the room at right angle to the direction of the planks. For best visual effect, planks in the final row should be at least 50 mm wide or approx. half the width of the plank. For this purpose, planks in the first row can be cut to a smaller size. Shuffle planks in order to obtain a consistent visual blend. Lay planks preferably following the direction of the main source of light. We recommend laying on wooden floors crossways to the existing floorboard. Planks must not be nailed or screwed to the subfloor. Base boards and molding must not be fixed in a way which restricts the movement of the floor. **Expansion gaps: 12-15 mm** expansion gaps to the walls and other fixed objects. Areas greater than 100m<sup>2</sup> or 10m in either direction require **transition trims between rooms and asymmetrical areas require extra expansion capacity.**

## INSTALLING THE FIRST ROW:

1. Starting from the LEFT with the tongue facing the wall, carefully place the first board in place. Use spacers along the wall allowing required expansion gap (12-15 mm). (Figure 1)
2. Align the next piece by overlapping the end of the first board so that the joint is tight when the board lays flat. Some slight adjustment of the board may be necessary to assure a tight fit. Place spacers against wall to restrain movement and maintain expansion gap.
3. Continue in this manner until reaching the final plank in the first row.
4. Cut the final board piece to length allowing for the required expansion gap.
5. Place spacers against wall to restrain movement and maintain expansion gap.



Figure 1

## CONTINUING THE INSTALLATION:

1. Begin the second row with the cut piece from the first row. (Figure 2) **If the cut piece is shorter than 20 cm, do not use it.** Instead, begin with a new board that is at least 20cm in length and allows 20cm between the end joints on the adjacent planks.
2. Position the first board in place by angling it up slightly, pushing forward and interlocking the side Tongue. (Figure 3) Slide the board to the left as necessary to align the edges of the end joint.
3. Carefully push boards down until the tongue and groove lock together on the side and ends. (Figure 4)
4. A slight tap with a tapping block is necessary to complete the interlock.
5. Restrain the movement of the board by inserting a spacer in the expansion gap at the end of the board.
6. Install the remaining boards and rows in the same manner. (Figures 3 & 4)
7. Cut the last board to size allowing for the required expansion gap. Place spacers against wall to restrain movement and maintain expansion gap. If necessary, complete the tight fit by tapping the board into place with a pull bar.
8. Whenever practical, use cut pieces from previous rows as the starter board to reduce waste.
9. Maintain 20 cm spacing between end joints after the first four rows for best appearance.

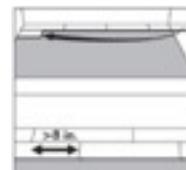


Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

## INSTALLING FINAL ROW:

1. The last row may need to be cut lengthwise (ripped).
2. Place the last row of planks to be fit no top of the last row of installed planks. Use a piece of plank as a scribe to trace the contour of the wall.
3. Mark where the board will be cut. If the fit of the wall is simple and straight, simply measure for the correct fit and cut.
4. After boards are cut, position planks and tighten the fit using the pull bar.

## INSTALLING UNDER A DOOR JAMB:

1. Installation under moldings (such as door jambs) may require that the top lip of the groove on the end be reduced in size.
2. Using a small plane or knife plane, carefully shave off the ledge of the groove. (Figure 5)
3. After the groove ledge has been trimmed, place the board in place and tighten with a pull bar to test for fit. The installer must be sure that the required expansion gap has been maintained and the flooring is not pinched.
4. If fit is not correct, re-trim as necessary.
5. Place a bead of wood glue on the bottom lip of the groove.
6. Insert the tongue into the groom and tighten the fit with a pull bar. Hold the board in place

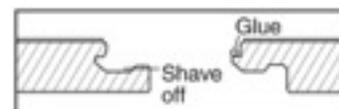


Figure 5

with painters tape (3M Scotch-Blue™ 2080 Tape) until the glue is dry. **Do not use masking tape or duct tape as they may damage the floors finish coating.**

## **AFTER INSTALLATION**

- Flooring should be one of the last items installed in a project. In order to protect the floors while other trades are finishing their work prior to final cleanup and turnover to the owner, use rosin paper and only use 3M Scotch-Blue™ 2080 Tape to hold the rosin paper to the floor (other blue tapes may damage the finish coating). Clean the floor thoroughly before laying the rosin paper to ensure that no debris is trapped underneath. **DO NOT USE** plastic film or other non-breathing coverings as this can cause the floor to become damaged from humidity buildups.
- Remove expansion spacers and reinstall base and/or quarter round moldings to cover moldings to cover the expansion space.
- Dust mop or vacuum your floor to remove any dirt or debris.
- It is suggested that you buff the floor with lamb's wool pads in order to remove any loose splinters, residues, foot prints, etc.
- Install any transition pieces that may be needed (reducers, T-moldings, nosing. etc.).

## **PROTECTION AND MAINTENANCE OF YOUR FLOOR**

Lasting beauty can be achieved through purchasing a quality floor covering and providing proper on-going maintenance.

**Fading:** Natural floors contain organic pigments and are subject to fading when exposed to direct sunlight. Where possible, use drapes or other systems to protect your floor from excessive light. **Avoid placing rugs or mats for at least 6-8 weeks after installation.**

**Joints:** Natural flooring reacts to the conditions in the environment. Natural flooring plank systems expand and contract in response to fluctuations in temperature and humidity. Controlling the environment, maintaining an adequate temperature and relative humidity will minimize the visible effects of normal contraction and expansion. Optimum recommended temperature is 70°F and relative humidity is 30% - 50%. In very dry climates the use of a humidifier may be required.

**Photosensitivity:** hardwood floors are photosensitive and will change color as they age or are exposed to U.V. light. In some species the natural pigmentation will be lost and can develop a "bleached" appearance. As this is a natural occurring phenomenon, accelerated with exposure to U.V. light, and is not considered a material defect and is excluded from coverage under the provisions of Preference Floors' Limited Warranty.

### **Tips to Minimize Fading/Discoloration**

- **Avoid rubber-backed and coco fiber mats and rugs, as the backing may discolor your floor.**  
Natural animal rugs must have a PH neutral backing to avoid tannin stain and or bleaching of your natural timber floor.
- **Avoid placing rugs or mats for at least 6 – 8 weeks after installation.** Change the location of your rugs periodically. Rearrange more frequently if they are placed in front of doors and windows.
- Use light filtering window treatments (i.e. blinds, drapes, window film) that will help prevent sunlight exposure.
- Rearrange furniture seasonally to allow the flooring to darken and age uniformly.
- **Do not Steam Mop or Wet Mop your natural timber floor.**

If completing a flooring extension or board replacement after the original installation has been installed for a period of time, the new flooring will have a lighter appearance. As the material is exposed to natural light, it should eventually blend in with the surrounding areas. However, due to the age of your flooring, surface wear (and/or) exposure to U.V. Light, Preference Floors cannot guarantee replacement flooring will be a 100% match to your existing product. Remember that color variation is to be expected with natural products. However, should an individual plank be doubtful as to appearance or dimension the installer should not use this piece.

Homemirus Pty Ltd trading as  
[Preference Floors \(SA\)](#)  
ABN 63 600 454 215  
27 Pambula Street,  
Regency Park SA 5010  
t +61 8 8268 8010  
f +61 8 8268 8919  
e [sa@preferencefloors.com.au](mailto:sa@preferencefloors.com.au)

Homemirus Pty Ltd trading as  
[Preference Floors \(QLD\)](#)  
ABN 81 169 158 990  
6/268 Evans Road,  
Salisbury QLD 4107  
t +61 7 3875 1688  
f +61 7 3875 1788  
e [qld@preferencefloors.com.au](mailto:qld@preferencefloors.com.au)

Homemirus Pty Ltd trading as  
[Preference Floors \(VIC\)](#)  
ABN 34 151 422 927  
19 Lanyon Street,  
Dandenong South VIC 3175  
t +61 3 9794 5111  
f +61 3 9794 5133  
e [vic@preferencefloors.com.au](mailto:vic@preferencefloors.com.au)

Homemirus Pty Ltd trading as  
[Preference Floors \(NSW\)](#)  
ABN 40 117 801 037  
Unit A/31 Sturt Street,  
Smithfield NSW 2164  
t +61 2 9738 1188  
f +61 2 9738 1199  
e [sales@preferencefloors.com.au](mailto:sales@preferencefloors.com.au)

[www.preferencefloors.com.au](http://www.preferencefloors.com.au)