

Wood Floors

Who can resist the natural beauty of a wooden floor? Wood is a favorite because it looks terrific, wears well and goes with any furniture style.

In busy areas, it's a good idea to use hardwoods for better resistance to wear.

Choose from oak, the flooring favorite, or maple or birch. Softer woods such as fir and pine have attractive grains but will show more wear and tear.

You'll pay about the same money, in the end, whether you buy prefinished flooring or have flooring sanded and sealed in place.

Wood flooring comes in three main styles:

Random plank flooring, which uses planks of variable lengths and widths, is perfect for American colonial or country styles. Choose square-edged boards, as they're easier to clean than those with beveled edges.

Strip flooring usually refers to narrow boards, 1 1/2 to 3 in. wide, sold bundled in random lengths. You'll find the greatest choice of wood species and grades in strip flooring.

Parquet tile floors are elegant and formal. They're factory-assembled tiles made of small wood strips or laminated blocks. The patterns in the 6- to 12-in. squares vary. Staining produces contrasting dark and light colors. Some manufacturers mix wood species to vary the pattern. For easy installation, choose tiles with pressure-sensitive adhesive backings.