

Tuscan Solid Hardwood Flooring

Key Points for a successful Installation

Your choice of Tuscan solid hardwood flooring represents a long term lifestyle, and significant financial, investment therefore it would be prudent to employ the services of a competent, appropriately trained, wood flooring installer to install your chosen Tuscan solid wood flooring as the performance of any wood floor is directly linked to the quality of the installation and the installation being conducted as per the instructions supplied with the product.

We appreciate that there are those that may wish to install the flooring themselves and we offer the following basic information to help you appreciate some of the key points relating to a successful installation although the actual installation must be conducted, in all respects, as per the set of instructions provided within the Tuscan flooring boxes.

Wood flooring is a naturally hygroscopic material which means it will absorb or lose moisture to be in equilibrium with its environment. When wood absorbs moisture, it expands and when it loses moisture it contracts. Due to its characteristics, when timber flooring moves in relation to excess levels of moisture or humidity the boards can ultimately lift and cup so for these reasons we do not recommend that Tuscan solid wood flooring products are used in areas that have a risk of, or are subject to, high humidity such as basements, bathrooms, any form of wet room, and conservatories.

Rooms that have underfloor heating systems installed also tend to have a high range and fluctuation of temperatures and humidity at sub floor level so Tuscan solid wood is also not recommended for use over underfloor heating systems for this reason.

Some basic considerations before the flooring is delivered to the installation property.

- All wet trades and wet final applications, (such as painting), should be completed and the heating system operational. The installation room should have a temperature in the range of 16 – 24 Deg C and an atmospheric humidity range of 35 – 55% relative humidity.
- New heating systems or plumbing works should have been tested for leaks and be fully operational for at least four weeks before delivery of your flooring.
- All appropriate sub floor moisture checks and preparations should be thoroughly completed and any wet sub floor applications completely dry.

As Tuscan solid wood flooring is intended for use in normally heated residential properties, the aim is to ensure that the recommended suitable atmospheric environment within the area that the flooring will be laid, and that will be present during normal room occupation, exists prior to storage, acclimatisation and installation of the flooring into the room. You can achieve this by ensuring all the above preparations are complied with and by using a room Hygrometer to take readings within the intended end use room/s and compare them to the recommended temperature and humidity levels as advised of above and within the instruction leaflet supplied with your flooring. Simple room Hygrometers are commonly available at minor cost to carry out this simple check.

When the installation room/s readings are within the parameters as stated within the product instructions, the flooring can then be delivered and stored within the end use room or area.

At the time of delivery the product should be checked correctly for suitability in all respects by opening 2 – 3 boxes only and checking product. **If there are any queries at this stage report and discuss them with your flooring supplier and resolve any issues before any further boxes unpackaged.**

Ensure you, and or, your installer have read the instructions for installation so that again any queries regarding the stated installation methods or procedures can be clarified before the installation commences.

When the flooring has been checked and accepted the balance of boxes can have their poly wrapping removed and the ends and edges of the cardboard boxes can be opened, (leaving the flooring within the boxes), and left to acclimatize as per the stated acclimatization process before laying of the flooring commences.

After the flooring has been laid, the ambient room environment will fluctuate throughout the year so it is important to have a constant reading room hygrometer situated within the installed room or area so that you can easily monitor the humidity of the environment within the installed area.

The aim of this is to try and maintain the ambient relative humidity at between 35% and 55% and temperature between 16 – 24 Deg C so there is little natural movement of the wooden floor. There will be occasional days or periods where the relative humidity is outside the required levels and this is normally not a problem providing that the flooring has been correctly installed and the stated **minimum 18mm expansion gaps** left around all perimeter edges of the flooring.

Where any ongoing periods of high or low humidity outside of the stated 35 – 55% are experienced then one should consider the use a humidifier or dehumidifier as necessary to re address the humidity balance until the normal room environment levels fall within the specified levels.

As wood is a natural material and hygroscopic by nature it is therefore moisture and humidity sensitive and will naturally expand and contract in response to fluctuating humidity levels during the changing seasons of the year and this natural movement characteristic of wood must be accommodated for by protecting the floor from rises in sub floor humidity and ensuring the stated expansion gaps are built in during installation.

Sub floors

All subfloors must be firm, sound, dry, and flat and checked & prepared in accordance with the instructions provided and relevant local regulations and current British Standards. Appropriate moisture, and or, sub floor humidity meters must be used to assess the moisture condition / content of your sub floor and readings must conform to the instruction stated parameters and as per relevant British Standards and all readings should be recorded by the installer and a copy left with the consumer.

If necessary consult a professional to correctly assess your sub floor and conduct any required sub floor preparations as correct assessment and preparation of your sub floor is vital to the stability and performance of your chosen Tuscan wood flooring. Investing time, and if needs be money, in correctly checking and preparing your sub floor is always a sound investment as the quality and correct condition of the sub floor is directly linked to the short, and long term, performance of your chosen wood floor and given that solid wood floors are often installed for life it is vital that the sub floor preparations and installation are conducted correctly.

The use of appropriate damp proof membranes and moisture barrier papers should also be employed where instructed within the instructions. Use the stated liquid DPM over concrete or screed sub floors where appropriate sub floor moisture checks have not been properly conducted or there are any concerns regarding sub floor moisture or damp. Also consider installing a DPM as a precautionary measure, even where sub floor checks have been conducted, as this will give the flooring long term protection from any sub floor humidity rises that may occur over the lifetime of the flooring in situ.

Where your flooring is to be installed in a nail down manner over a wooden suspended sub floor, wood based sub surface, joists or battens a bitumen moisture barrier paper must be installed over the sub floor, joists or battens prior to installing the boards as stated within the instructions supplied. This is to give an element of protection to your floor from seasonal rises in sub floor void humidity that can occur.

Installing a DPM / moisture barrier is a worthwhile sound investment as the cost of doing so is always a small proportion of the overall cost of a new fitted floor !

A full copy of Tuscan solid wood flooring installation instructions, which include the sub floor checking and preparation procedures, can be downloaded from the www.tuscanflooring.co.uk website.

Installation.

Always ensure you / your installer follows the specific instructions for the chosen method of installing the flooring as these have been prepared to assist you in achieving a trouble free correctly fitted floor and are based on best practice wood flooring industry procedures.

Any floor failures due to incorrect installation or unsuitable sub floor or environmental moisture fluctuations are not covered by the warranty that accompanies the product.

Care & Maintenance.

Finally, and as importantly, always care for & maintain your floor with the recommended cleaning and maintenance products as in doing so your floor will look good at all times and its ongoing performance will be enhanced. A copy of the Tuscan care & maintenance details is also available as a download document from the www.tuscanflooring.co.uk website.

A wooden floor is a thing of natural beauty but like all beautiful things its needs correct installation a regular bit of tender loving care to retain its beauty long term !