

A Guide to Timber Flooring





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TYPES OF TIMBER FLOORING





Timber flooring is known for its warmth and distinct character but it also offers durability, longevity and easy maintenance. The key is knowing which type of timber flooring to choose.

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1 . 1

ENGINEERED TIMBER FLOORING

Engineered timber flooring delivers authentic style, strong stability and easy installation, with a re-sandable surface and more sustainable material use.

Made with a real timber veneer laid on reinforced plywood, engineered hardwood is a cost-effective alternative to solid wood. The timber veneer provides the same authentic style and durability and stability as solid timber but with increased strength and longevity due to the multiple layers.

Engineered timber flooring can be installed on any flat surface to ensure stability. It can also be delivered as prefinished boards to reduce installation time and costs. Over its lifetime, the veneer can be re-sanded and refinished up to five times depending on veneer thickness.

Since engineered timber flooring uses less natural slow-growing hardwood than solid wood and the backing is made from faster-growing, readily available materials, it is more sustainable than solid timber flooring, resulting in a smaller environmental impact.

| PROS | CONS |
|---|--|
| Suitable for residential and commercial spaces | Susceptible to water damage (as with the other options listed in this guide) |
| Adds value to the property | |
| Cost-effective | |
| Prefinished for quick installation | |
| Can be installed on flat surfaces without nails or glue | |
| Compatible with existing tiles | |
| Available in a range of thicknesses | |
| Durable and stable | |
| Available in wider planks than solid timber due to its stability | |
| Withstands water damage better than solid timber due to its multilayer construction | |

1 . 2

SOLID TIMBER FLOORING

Solid hardwood flooring offers timeless character and long-term durability, with multiple re-sands possible, provided it’s laid on a flat base and properly acclimatised.

Consisting of 100% solid timber, hardwood flooring has been a popular choice for centuries. Its durability, colour and grain variations give it a timeless look and it can be re-sanded several times during its lifetime.

For best results, it should be laid on a flat subfloor or on bearers or joists. It also requires a two to three-week acclimatisation period before installation to ensure the timber adapts to its new environment and doesn't warp.

Since each plank consists of more timber than the other options listed in this guide, solid hardwood planks are also much more expensive.

| PROS | CONS |
|--|---|
| Unique character that adds value to the property | Requires professional installation |
| Lasts for decades | Long acclimatisation period |
| Can be refinished multiple times | Expensive |
| | Needs regular maintenance |
| | Requires a flat subfloor or bearers or joists |
| | Susceptible to water damage (as with the other options listed in this guide) |
| | Not sustainable (uses 3 times the amount of precious hardwood than engineered timber) |
| | Prone to movement that causes shrinkage and cupping (particularly in wider planks or in extreme climates) |

1 . 3

LAMINATE FLOORING

Laminate flooring offers a timber-look finish at a lower cost, using a layered synthetic construction with a photographic surface and durable protective coating.

While it isn’t real timber, laminate flooring is an alternative for those who want to achieve the timber appearance at a lower price point. Laminate is a synthetic material made of multiple layers fused together. The fibreboard base is topped with a photographic applique layer designed to mimic real timber and sealed with clear resin.

| PROS | CONS |
|---|---|
| Affordable | Repetitive and cheap appearance |
| Very hardwearing to scratches and general wear and tear | Poor sound and feel when walked on |
| | Short lifespan |
| | Made from synthetic materials |
| | Cannot be resanded and refinished over time like engineered timber |
| | Very sensitive to water and moisture damage if the core is exposed, causing permanent damage (as with the other options listed in this guide) |
| | Does not add value to a property |



1 . 4

PARQUET FLOORING

Parquet flooring uses small timber pieces arranged in striking geometric patterns, offering unique character and customisation, though installation and long-term maintenance can be demanding

Parquet floors consist of multiple small pieces of timber laid in a geometric pattern on top of a solid base. This gives distinctive character and interest to a space, but can be expensive and time-consuming to install.

Parquet flooring is available in various timbers and layouts, making it easy to tailor them to match your interior style. However, the pattern may wear out over time and become distorted.

| PROS | CONS |
|--|--|
| Unique aesthetic | Intricate installation |
| Made of hardwood or engineered timber | Expensive |
| Glued down to timber or level concrete slabs | High maintenance |
| | Susceptible to water damage (as with the other options listed in this guide) |

UNFINISHED V PREFINISHED





Another core consideration when choosing timber flooring is whether to opt for unfinished or prefinished planks.

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2 . 1

UNFINISHED

Unfinished timber flooring requires extensive onsite sanding, staining, and sealing, which is time-consuming, messy, costly, and can result in uneven colour or reduced floor lifespan.

Traditionally, timber flooring was raw and unfinished, and then sanded and stained on-site. The planks are supplied as raw, uncoated hardwood, secured to the subfloor, and then sanded, stained and sealed.

The amount of site work required for unfinished flooring can cause costly problems. For example, sanding dust could settle on the coating before it's fully dry or the sander could leave unwanted marks. Or, because the stain is applied and dried on-site, the colour may look different than you expected.

To resolve these problems, you will need to re-sand and recoat the planks. This increases the installation cost and also reduces the lifespan of the floor.

- Sanded and sealed after installation
- Requires days of site work- an unfinished solid timber floor takes 3 times longer to install than a prefinished engineered timber floor
- Filled seams
- Difficult to source
- Messy installation
- Colour can differ when finished on site due to uncontrolled conditions such as humidity or uneven thicknesses of coats applied

2 . 2

PREFINISHED

Prefinished timber flooring comes factory-sanded, stained and sealed, ensuring consistent colour, minimal onsite work, and superior durability compared to site-applied finishes.

Prefinished floors have since become popular because they reduce installation time. The planks are sanded, stained, and sealed in the factory, meaning the only site work required is securing them to the subfloor. Factory operations also mean that the finish is consistent every time.

- Sanded and sealed in the factory
- Requires less site work
- No seal between planks unless glued down
- Easy to source from any supplier
- Factory finishes perform better than site applied finishes due to technique, finishing technology and UV lights



2 . 3

BENEFITS OF PREFINISHED TIMBER FLOORING

Prefinished timber flooring offers reliable, factory-applied finishes with durable UV-cured coatings, minimal site work, fast installation, low maintenance and no lingering fumes, ensuring a cost-effective, safe and long-lasting floor with consistent colour every time.

Consistent

Unlike unfinished flooring, the finish and quality of prefinished flooring are dependable because it is manufactured in controlled factory conditions. There are strict quality control processes in place so you can be confident that each board is built to last.

At Forté, what you see is what you get. Simply choose your favourite style from our wide range of colours and we'll work closely with the factory to ensure the final colour is exactly what you ordered. If you can't find your dream style on our website, we can also order custom colours to suit your space.

Durable and Low Maintenance

In the factory, a protective UV-cured coating is put on after the stain is applied. This is much more durable than sealants that are applied on-site and it extends the floor's lifespan significantly.

Forté floor sealers are also resistant to stains, moisture and discolourations, so the timber does not need to be re-sanded as often. This makes it easier to maintain and means you can enjoy the floor for longer.

Efficient Installation

Prefinished floors are quick and easy to install, and don't require an acclimatisation period. Since all the sanding, colouring, and coatings are done in advance, the only site work required is to secure the planks to the subfloor. This also means there's far less mess so, once the floor is laid, it can be walked on almost immediately.

Cost-Effective

Prefinished timber flooring typically costs less than unfinished flooring once you factor in site work. Even if the upfront cost of the factory-finished planks is higher, the time saved during installation results in significant savings.

No Fumes

Unlike site-finished boards, the coatings on prefinished timber floors are cured in the factory. This means all the fumes and chemicals are gone well before they're delivered, making the room safe to occupy on the same day the floor gets installed.

TYPES OF TIMBER FLOORING FINISHES





When it comes to timber flooring, colour is often the first thing people notice. But just as important - and sometimes even more transformative - is texture. The finish of a plank doesn't just affect how it looks underfoot, but also how a room feels, the way it plays with light, and the atmosphere it creates. From subtly brushed surfaces to deeply aged character, every finish brings its own personality. Here we explore a few of the more popular finishes you'll find in timber flooring.

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3 . 1

BRUSHED FINISHES

FOR SUBTLE MOVEMENT & NATURAL DEPTH

A brushed finish enhances timber’s natural grain by lifting softer fibres, creating subtle texture and depth. Ranging from light to rustic, it adds warmth, movement and an organic, grounded feel to any space.

A brushed finish highlights the grain of the timber, gently lifting the softer fibres of the timber to create texture you can both see and feel. This technique brings out the natural rhythm of the plank, making it a versatile choice for homes that want a sense of movement without being overwhelming. Brushed finishes can range from extra light, which has a smoother finish, to a the more heavily brushed texture of rustic grade planks - each creating a very different aesthetic.

Atmosphere: Relaxed, organic, grounded.

Light effect: Grain catches light at different angles, adding gentle shadow and depth.

Best suited for: Spaces where you want warmth and a strong connection to the natural qualities of timber.

Examples: [Moda](#), [Haven](#), [Atelier](#) (add in hyperlinks to collections)

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| ATMOSPHERE | Relaxed, organic, grounded |
| LIGHT EFFECT | Grain catches light at different angles, adding gentle shadow and depth |
| BEST SUITED FOR | Spaces where you want warmth and a strong connection to the natural qualities of timber. |

EXAMPLES





3 . 2

MATTE FINISHES

FOR QUIET SOPHISTICATION

Matte timber flooring absorbs light for a natural, understated look, creating a calm, sophisticated backdrop that highlights furnishings, art and architectural details.

Where laminate and vinyl timber-look flooring has a more glossy finish, matte timber flooring absorbs light rather than reflecting it, giving an authentic timber look and understated elegance. It creates a calm, contemporary backdrop that feels soft and refined – a quietly sophisticated canvas that allows furnishings, art or architecture to stand out.

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| ATMOSPHERE | Minimal, modern, serene. |
| LIGHT EFFECT | Diffuses light evenly, reducing glare and creating a velvety appearance. |
| BEST SUITED FOR | Open-plan living areas or workplaces where restraint and calm are key. |

EXAMPLES





3 . 3

AGED FINISHES

FOR CHARACTER & STORYTELLING

An aged finish gives timber a lived-in authenticity, as though the floor has quietly gathered history over time. Knots, colour variations, undulated surfaces and subtle distressing create richness and character that can't be faked. This makes aged finishes particularly appealing in spaces that want warmth and personality.

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| | |
|-----------------|---|
| ATMOSPHERE | Inviting, storied, rustic yet sophisticated. |
| LIGHT EFFECT | Varied surface interacts playfully with light, highlighting depth and irregularity. |
| BEST SUITED FOR | Family homes, Heritage (or Heritage-inspired) spaces, or contemporary spaces looking to layer in a sense of comfort and timelessness. |

EXAMPLES



Artiste Grande

Villa



3 . 3

SMOOTH FINISHES

FOR SIMPLICITY & REFINEMENT

Smooth sanded timber planks offer a sleek, polished surface with minimal texture, providing a low-maintenance, refined foundation ideal for high-traffic areas.

Smooth sanded planks showcase timber in its most even and polished form, with a surface free of heavy texture or distressing. This not only creates a clean, sleek foundation, but also means no dirt build up gets caught in the grain – making it well suited to high-traffic spaces where low maintenance is key. Smooth sanding delivers a timeless sense of refinement, making it a versatile option for both contemporary and classic interiors, as well as commercial spaces.

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| ATMOSPHERE | Crisp, composed, timeless |
| LIGHT EFFECT | Reflects light evenly across the surface, creating a balanced and open feel. |
| BEST SUITED FOR | Homes or commercial spaces where precision and polish are part of the design story. |

EXAMPLES



Loft

SUITABLE ENVIRONMENTS FOR TIMBER FLOORING





Engineered timber flooring combines beauty and practicality throughout the home — ideal for corridors, living and dining rooms, kitchens, and bedrooms — offering easy maintenance, durability, warmth and a hygienic, stylish surface.

4 . 1

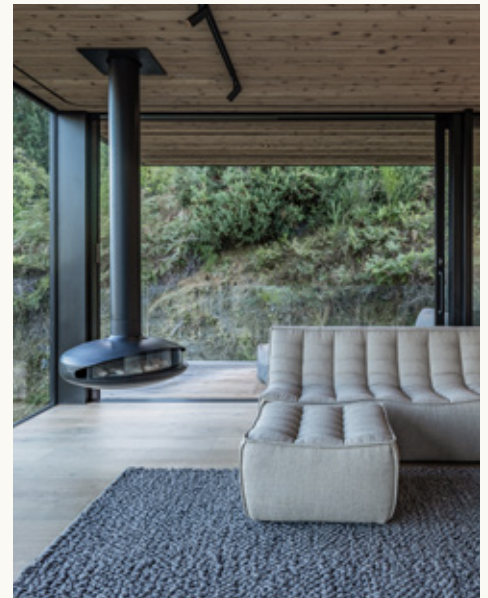
WHERE TIMBER WORKS BEST

Engineered timber flooring is ideal for most rooms but not suitable for high-moisture areas like bathrooms.

While you may be tempted to install Engineered Timber Flooring in every room of the house, they aren't suited to rooms with excess moisture. For example, a bathroom with a shower or bath. However, provided it is looked after, hardwood flooring will last for years to come in the following environments:

**CORRIDORS AND ENTRANCEWAYS**

Engineered Timber Flooring make a great first impression and provide a practical, easy-to-clean surface for busy thoroughfares. For best results, place a doormat at the door and limit shoes inside.

**LIVING ROOM**

Engineered Timber Flooring creates a cosy look and feel. When paired with soft upholstery, rugs, and drapes, the smooth timber adds a beautiful textural contrast.



DINING ROOM

Timber flooring provides a practical base for a dining room as it's easy to clean and move chairs in and out from the table. You can also find a style to suit your design preferences, whether you prefer a formal space or a casual family atmosphere.



KITCHEN

Timber flooring is a great foundation for a kitchen, providing warmth and character. It's easy to clean and, as long as you wipe up spills quickly, it will last for decades.



BEDROOMS

Timber flooring provides a more hygienic flooring surface when used in bedrooms, especially for those who have allergies to dust or animal fur.

SELECTING THE RIGHT TIMBER FLOORING





Choosing timber flooring requires balancing quality, durability and style. Consider warranties, climate suitability, veneer thickness, plank size, grade, protective coatings, installation method and sustainability to ensure a floor that lasts and looks exceptional.

5 . 1

HOW TO CHOOSE TIMBER FLOORING

Evaluate timber flooring carefully—grade, coatings and installation affect longevity, appearance and environmental impact, ensuring a reliable, stylish choice for your home.

Comparing different flooring products is a daunting task, especially when they all come in different specifications and with different qualities. To be confident that your timber flooring is suited to your needs, budget, and tastes, consider the following factors:

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| WARRANTY AND SUPPORT | New flooring is a significant investment and, if issues arise during installation, reliable support is crucial. When buying from cheap or overseas suppliers, make sure to ask if they stand by their product and are prepared to fix any problems that may crop up. Here at Forté, we conduct thorough testing and quality control to ensure superior planks are delivered every time. We provide comprehensive support, including a 25-year structural warranty and repairs for faulty coatings. |
| CLIMATE CONDITIONS | From the humid subtropics to the snowy alpine regions, New Zealand is home to a variety of climate conditions. This can have a significant impact on the longevity of your timber flooring, so you need to choose a supplier that considers the moisture level, veneer thickness and most effective protective coatings. All Forté flooring has been designed specifically for New Zealand, with special consideration for our changeable weather. We have tested every element, including the colour of the knot filler and the percentage of short lengths. |
| SUSTAINABILITY | When choosing your timber flooring, think about the environmental impact it can have. Firstly, choose a supplier that sources timber legally and from a managed forest. Secondly, choose engineered timber because it uses less slow-growing hardwood compared to solid timber of the same size. |
| VENEER THICKNESS | Most engineered timber flooring has between a 2mm and 6mm veneer of real timber, backed with a multilayer core to keep it stable. If the veneer is too thin, it cannot be re-sanded. The most common veneer thickness is 4mm, which is thick enough for up to 3 re-sands in its lifespan. |
| WIDTH AND LENGTH OF THE PLANK | For engineered timber flooring planks, the standard width is 190mm and the standard length is approximately 2.2m. These dimensions are easy to ship and allow an affordable price. Since engineered flooring comes with a tongue and groove or locking joining profile, longer and wider wooden planks will cost more. That's because the tree must be older, larger, and have fewer imperfections. |

| | |
|--|---|
| GRADE | <p>Timber flooring comes in various grades such as prime, light feature, feature and rustic. This refers to the number of knots and character present in the planks and can significantly change the look of a home.</p> <p>For a cleaner more modern look, opt for a prime grade timber floor, if you'd like the floor to have a rustic charm with various knots, cracks and character, a feature or rustic grade would be more suitable.</p> |
| STAIN COLOUR | <p>It's common to have seven or more layers of coating consisting of primers, pore fillers, base coats, and top coats. It can also take multiple layers of coloured stain to achieve your desired look. Generally, the more complex the colour, the more layers of stain are required.</p> |
| PROTECTIVE COATINGS | <p>The protective coating is the first line of defence against damage and moisture. Generally, the more coats, the better protected your floor is from scratching and staining. The main coatings used in New Zealand are polyurethane, lacquer, and hard wax oil. Most Forté flooring is coated with a low VOC water-based polyurethane that looks like natural oil but provides extra durability and better water resistance.</p> |
| INSTALLATION METHODS | <p>Floating Floors</p> <p>With floating floors, the individual planks interlock edge-to-edge to form a unified surface resting on the subfloor. This means it cannot be resanded or have cabinetry installed on top, and is prone to making noise underfoot.</p> <p>Glue-Down Installation</p> <p>On the other hand, glue-down installation is when the planks are secured directly to the subfloor with an adhesive. This gives a firm hold, keeps noise to a minimum, creates a solid feeling underfoot, and is able to hold the weight of kitchen cabinetry. It can also be re-sanded multiple times, giving it a lifespan of 30 – 50 years.</p> |
| THE COST OF ENGINEERED TIMBER FLOORING | <p>The average supply cost for a premium engineered timber floor in New Zealand is around \$210 per m2. For installation, the cost ranges from \$75 to \$350 per m2. For example, when supplied and installed by an experienced contractor, 100m2 of premium timber flooring will cost an average of \$28,500 - \$35,000, including GST.</p> <p>Key factors that influence the price are warranties, timber grade, sustainability, veneer thickness, stain colour, durability, installation technique, and the integrity of the base layers. Plus, you should always make sure it is designed for New Zealand climates. If the cost is low, it is likely a reflection of quality.</p> |

FORTÉ ENGINEERED TIMBER FLOORING





Forté Timber Flooring delivers premium, durable and sustainably sourced timber solutions, combining expert craftsmanship, innovative finishes and tailored designs to create long-lasting, stylish floors suited to any home or commercial space.



6 . 1

WHY CHOOSE FORTÉ

Forté Timber Flooring offers expertly crafted, high-quality planks with superior finishes, designed for longevity, aesthetic appeal and performance in diverse environments.

At Forté, we care about providing exceptional timber flooring to help you create memorable, enduring spaces. We're committed to environmental responsibility, quality craftsmanship, and the highest level of service.

- SUSTAINABLY SOURCED
- LOW IN FORMALDEHYDE
- DESIGNED FOR NEW ZEALAND CLIMATES AND LIFESTYLES
- SUBJECT TO STRICT QUALITY CONTROLS
- PREFINISHED WITH A DURABLE FINISH
- SUITED TO GLUE-DOWN INSTALLATION

A COHESIVE RANGE





Forté's versatile surfaces unify indoor and outdoor spaces with timber flooring, panelling, cabinetry, cladding and decking, providing seamless colour, texture and tone for flexible, visually striking residential and commercial designs.



7 . 1

SURFACES THAT WORK
TOGETHER

Create seamless, cohesive environments with Forté's timber solutions, offering unmatched design adaptability across floors, walls, cabinetry, and outdoor spaces.

Designed for both residential and commercial applications, our surfaces create a seamless flow between indoor and outdoor spaces by offering timber flooring, interior panelling, cabinetry, exterior cladding and decking.

With a refined balance of colour, texture and tone, they offer unmatched design flexibility, allowing you to craft cohesive, visually stunning environments from the inside out.

Explore our [Curated Collections](#)

Order free [Timber Samples](#)



Forté