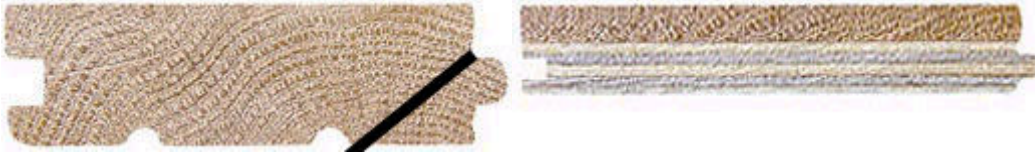


Solid or Engineered Flooring

Very frequently, we come across clients asking us “why should I use engineered wood flooring rather than solid wood flooring?” and “what is the difference between solid wood flooring and engineered wood flooring?”

Because of this, I decide to add this section to our site and explain to you the difference between these 2 wood floors and I hope at the end of it, you will be able to decide which wood floor you will be getting.

Below is a cross section of a piece of solid and engineered wood flooring. While engineered wood floors can vary in overall thickness, the basic concept is the same. Look at the pictures and then read on.



Solid (Left), Engineered (Right)

Looking at these pictures, what's your first reaction? Like a lot of people, you probably said to yourself, "the solid wood must be better because it's twice as thick". Well, guess what, you're not correct. Before I go into the explanation, let me explain the black line drawn on an angle on the picture of the solid wood. This represents where a nail would be driven into the floor during installation. Now allow me to explain.

When comparing solid wood to engineered wood, we usually think about resurfacing or "refinishing" the floor years down the road. This of course is directly related to the longevity of the flooring. Thinking about resurfacing the floor sometimes is the reason we may be misled into believing that the solid floor is better or will absolutely last longer. This is **ABSOLUTELY** not so. Let's refer back to the pictures above. While there is no question that the solid wood floor is much thicker, take a look at where the nail is. When doing your resurfacing, maybe on the second or third resurfacing about 60 to 80 years from now, you are going to run into (literally) one of two things. It will be the nails with the solid wood floor, or the plywood core on the engineered floor. So, with that statement, now do you believe that the solid wood will really last longer?

This explanation, however, will not be valid for a pre-finished engineered wood floor whose top layer is only 0.6mm to 1mm thick. But is there really a need to refinish the floor again when you can easily replace the areas that is damaged with new planks? Since pre-finished engineered wood flooring comes in

standard sizes and being structurally very stable, there is no need for you to worry about replacing a damaged piece.

There are also other important factors to consider when choosing your wood floor as well. A solid wood floor is usually less stable than an engineered wood floor. When I say less stable, I am referring to moisture and expansion related to that moisture. When you get climate changes in your home, which you absolutely will, wood flooring expands and contracts. With solid wood flooring, it generally expands and contracts a lot more than the engineered wood. Engineered wood flooring is constructed to be dimensionally stable, while most solid wood floors are simply cut pieces of wood from a tree. Considering solid wood floors are cut pieces of wood and their fibers run in only one direction, there is a lot more room for expansion and contraction to occur. With engineered wood flooring, this problem is actually significantly reduced since you will be getting a wood floor that is engineered in a cross-grained manner to minimize any expansion and contraction that a piece of solid wood will have.

As we mentioned, solid wood floors expand a lot more than their engineered counterparts, and they expand vertically as well as horizontally. While you get little to no vertical expansion with most engineered wood floors, you may get a lot of this vertical expansion with the solid floors. Vertical expansion is when the boards will actually grow up and shrink down in addition to the side to side or horizontal expansion and contraction. The end result of this can be raised boards that sometimes catch your shoes and become a trip hazard.

Summary

We are not saying that solid wood floors are bad or of lesser quality, but here are some facts you should know when considering which type of wood floor to use. No matter how much you spend on a solid wood floor, you are most likely to get one that will have characteristics as we described above. In some cases, with certain species, you may have no choice because solid wood is all that particular species is available in. But, if you are looking at Oak, Maple, Cherry, Walnut, Brazilian Cherry, Teak or one of the other more popular species, you can most likely find it in an engineered floor, and it will probably be a better value. Engineered wood floors are also very versatile in terms of installation methods. They can be installed using staple down, glue down, or free float methods. Refer to [Installation Methods for Different Wood Floors](#) (on our website) to decide which installation method you should be using for your floor.