

Laminate buying guide

Timeless laminate

Laminate is incredibly popular in UK homes because it is relatively easy to install, and is available in many designs, colours and qualities. A wood-effect floor is timeless and laminate can be a smart choice to achieve this look in a cost-effective, yet durable way.

Some people are concerned that laminate could look 'cheap', but in fact high quality laminates are now widely available, which feature realistic designs, and even register embossing where the wood grain is mirrored by imprinting on the surface of the plank.

In addition, Lifestyle Floors' laminates come with up to a 25-year domestic wear warranty, making them a popular choice for those looking for the extra-special finishing touch. We also have more budget-friendly options in our collection.



[Harrow - Grey Oak](#)

Which room?

Laminate is a great choice for almost any room in your home.

Traditional laminate can be used in any room apart from bathrooms and wet areas. Its ease of cleaning makes it ideal in kitchens, home offices, playrooms, dining rooms, hallways and conservatories.

If you are looking for a water-resistant laminate that's suitable for bathrooms check out our Love Aqua range.

What type of laminate do I need?

Although laminate is suitable for almost any area in the home, it is important to make sure that you are choosing the correct laminate for your needs.

There are a few things to consider, including AC rating, thickness and design.

AC Rating

An AC rating is simply a way of defining how durable a laminate floor is, and AC ratings range from 1 to 5. The higher the rating, the tougher you can expect your floor to be. To determine a floor's rating, it will have been put through rigorous, independent testing to determine its resistance to a number of factors, including abrasion, impact, heat and moisture.

This makes a laminate's AC rating an important part of your decision-making criteria.

- AC1 - An AC1 rated laminate is suitable for moderate to low traffic in domestic applications only. This is best suited to bedrooms or guest rooms with low footfall.
- AC2 - AC2 laminates are suitable for domestic areas where only a moderate amount of use is expected, such as living rooms and dining rooms.
- AC3 - A laminate with an AC3 rating is suitable for heavier traffic areas, so we would say these are generally suitable for all domestic areas apart from wet areas such as bathrooms.

All Lifestyle Floors laminates are rated AC3 or higher.

- AC4 - AC4 is the first laminate that can be rated for commercial spaces. An AC4 laminate could be used in smaller offices, cafés or shops. AC4 is the most common rating for a laminate floor.
- AC5 - AC5 is the highest rating for laminate. Because it can withstand lots of pressure and foot traffic it is suitable for heavy footfall in commercial spaces, such as larger shops, offices and other public buildings.

Thickness

Thickness is another factor to consider when choosing a laminate. A thicker laminate is more likely to have greater detail in the surface design in the form of register embossing, where the etching perfectly matches the grain of the wood printed on the plank.

A thicker laminate can also provide additional acoustic insulation, which may be a consideration for rooms upstairs, as well as providing greater stability for the finished floating floor.

However, thicker laminates are more expensive, and so those on a tight budget for their renovation may prefer a thinner laminate, which is still a great option, particularly if your subfloor is smooth and in good condition.

Design

Laminate is mostly sold in the form of wood-effect designs, which are beautifully rendered and realistic.

From natural-looking register embossed woods, through stained-effect woods all the way to the ever-popular grey woods, anything is possible with laminate!



[Hammersmith - Kelmscott House](#)

Construction

The manufacturing process of laminate results in an extremely durable floor that you can rely on.

Unlike solid wood floors, a laminate floor is made from sandwiching different materials together under high pressure and heat to form the end product.

From the bottom to the top:

- Base layer - Provides stability and prevents warping.
- Core layer - Gives the plank its strength and thickness.
- Décor layer - Printed in high definition on special paper, this provides the design element of the laminate floor.
- Protective layer - A clear resin, often made from melamine. This provides a tough, durable surface layer.

Laminate fitting and click systems

For the best result, and to avoid any fitting issues which could void your warranty, we always recommend laminate is professionally installed to BS 8203:2017 standards. Your local flooring retailer will be able to provide or recommend a flooring installer.

All Lifestyle Floors laminates are clicked together, rather than glued. This makes our laminate easier to install and also allows you to take up and re-lay the boards during future house moves or renovations.

Laminate can be fitted over most floors (apart from carpet) as long as they are flat, dry and smooth.

It's personal preference in which direction you choose to lay your laminate, although generally it is laid parallel to the longest wall of the room, unless it needs to match up with flooring in an adjacent room. In a square room, a good tip is to lay the boards in the direction of incoming light.

We use two click systems, depending on the range:

- Uniclic – Uniclic is a patented click profile, which is loved by fitters thanks to the security of the click, and its ability to lock the long and short sides of the flooring planks together.
- CLIC *it!* – An angle snap system, CLIC *it!* allows for the flooring to be installed plank by plank, with a very tight lock on the short ends, meaning it is very resistant to water ingress.

It's important to always buy laminate from a reputable flooring retailer. If the laminate flooring hasn't been correctly stored or acclimatised then the boards may be damaged, causing the layers to come apart (delaminate) or the click system to not fit together as designed.

Choosing a good underlay can make a real difference to the end result of your laminate floor, protecting against damp and noise and enhancing warmth. Your retailer and fitter will be able to advise on which one to choose, because it does depend on your subfloor and what you want to achieve.

Maintenance

Although the protective layer is designed to help guard your floor from the perils of daily life, you will need to take action to ensure your laminate floors stays looking great for years to come.

Always use pads on furniture legs to avoid damaging your floor and leave high heels at the front door! Also use entrance mats to ensure dirt and grit isn't tracked from outside onto your floor.

Don't drag furniture or use furniture with castor wheels as any resulting gouges in the floor will be permanent.

In terms of routine care, dry mopping or wiping the floor often, alongside regular vacuuming with a suction only vacuum will help to keep dirt and dust at bay – just make sure that you use the brush head attachment to avoid scratches. Never use a steam cleaner. The highly pressurised, hot steam will permanently damage the surface of your floor.

Occasionally use a slightly damp mop, or a towel soaked in warm water and squeezed out, to get rid of any stray footprints or other small marks. You can use a special laminate floor cleaning product for this.

Wet mopping, washing with water or using soaps, detergents, bleaches and other cleaning agents should be avoided, as this can cause the planks to swell, warp and wear prematurely.

If you choose a floor with a bevel, be careful with the bevelled edge as it may chip more easily than the main plank, and this isn't covered by the wear warranty.



[Chelsea - Thames Oak](#)

Cleaning spills

No matter how well you clean and protect your laminate flooring, accidents can be unavoidable, especially if you have pets or children in the house.

A quick reaction can save your flooring and avoid permanent staining. The main thing to avoid is liquid seeping into the joints between planks, which will weaken or damage them – and this means immediate action is required. Act quickly and blot any liquid with paper towels.

Once you have removed the liquid, soak a towel in warm water, wring excess water out and gently wipe the affected area to remove any residue. You may also use laminate floor cleaner to remove any stains.

Small gouge marks or scratches can be repaired using touch up kits, but more serious damage may require planks to be replaced.

If spills are a fact of life in your household, consider choosing our water-resistant laminate range Love AQUA™.



[Kensington - Horizon Oak](#)

Wear warranty

The Lifestyle Floors laminate ranges are covered for material and production defects for the duration of the warranty.

Please note that the following warranty conditions cover most of our laminate ranges, with the exception of Love AQUA™, our water resistant laminate range. The warranty conditions for Love AQUA™ can be found [here](#).

Wear warranty

Lifestyle Floors guarantees that with normal use the laminate surface will stay resistant to wear, including delamination or reduced resistance of the wearing surface. However, in the event of products with a V-groove, the reduced resistance of the V-groove is not included in the warranty. In addition, a change to the gloss level does not apply as wear of the laminate surface. Laminate is fade resistant, not 100% fade proof. It is generally accepted that all gloss finishes (i.e. paint, glass, furniture or car surfaces) are susceptible to superficial fading and/or gloss variation. This is not considered a product fault.

Warranty conditions

- The laminate must be professionally fitted to BS 8203:2017 standards.
- The warranties cover domestic use in your single-family home in the UK or Channel Islands and you are unable to transfer this warranty without prior written authority from Lifestyle Floors.
- You need to closely follow our cleaning and maintenance instructions.
- Before installation, all planks must be thoroughly checked for visible defects under good lighting conditions. Planks with visible defects should not be installed. Any defects must be reported within eight days of purchase. A claim made after this time for visible defects will not be valid.
- Laminate floors must be laid indoors in rooms suitable for laminate flooring.
- Laminate floors, with the exception of specialist water-resistant laminates covered under separate warranties, are not suitable for: damp and/or humid spaces, including but not restricted to bathrooms and sauna rooms.
- Barrier mats should be used at entrances to reduce the chance of grit, sand or other abrasive materials damaging the floor.
- For the warranty to be invoked, the damage to the product must be obvious and the damaged surface area must be at least 1cm² per product unit i.e. plank.
- Damage must not be the result of misuse or accidents, including but not restricted to mechanical damage such as heavy impact damage, scratches or grooves (for example by dragging furniture) or notches.
- Abnormal wear is not covered as may be caused by spiked/high heeled shoes, inadequate protection from furniture, grit, sand and other hard materials or damage caused by corrosive or abrasive substances such as pet urine.
- Incorrect removal or replacement of planks is not covered.
- Minimal variations in colour, shape or texture between samples or brochure illustrations and the actual floorcovering are not covered.
- The warranty excludes water damage caused by ice makers, refrigerators, washbasins, dishwashers, piping or ducts, natural disasters, excessive moisture in concrete slabs or any other form of water damage. If water and/or moisture are present on the floor and/or near the skirting, this must be removed immediately.
- The warranty also excludes damage caused by vacuum and steam cleaners or by the hard or metal wheels of office chairs or other furniture. With laminate floors, furniture legs should always be fitted with suitable protective material. Chairs/easy chairs/settees or furniture on wheels must be fitted with soft wheels or must be placed on specially adapted protective carpet or plates.

Making a claim

In the unlikely event you need to make a claim on your warranty, please contact the Lifestyle Floors retailer you originally purchased your floor from.

All claims must be reported within 10 days of identifying the complaint (pre-installation defects within eight days of purchase) and an original receipt must be presented.

If a claim is approved, you will receive an equivalent replacement from the

current Lifestyle Floors collection. The value of the replacement offered will be pro-rata proportional to the time elapsed on the warranty.
Any costs additional to the flooring e.g. labour or ancillary costs are excluded from the right to claim under this warranty.
This warranty does not affect your statutory rights.



[Hammersmith - Kelmscott House](#)

For more buying and warranty guides visit www.lifestyle-floors.co.uk/help-centre

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