

How to install Laminate Flooring

by [gruaqt](#) on February 26, 2008

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intro: How to install Laminate Flooring

Do you have some ugly carpeting or dated linoleum flooring? Now's the time to update and the effort will really pay off. You will likely need an entire weekend to do this.....the project goes a lot faster if you have some help..... The tools and supplies you will need for this are of course the flooring (try to but the middle price range flooring as it is easier to install), a box-cutter knife, hammer and block of wood, a drill with screw bits (of course some screws 2" work well) , some underlay material, and the most important item I swear I would never do another floor without is a **laminator cutter**, we rented ours for \$30 from Windsor Plywood and it saved a bunch of time and did not create dust. Also a jigsaw is helpful if you have curved cuts to be made and some wood glue. Total cost was approximately \$500...



Image Notes

1. Beautiful flooring which is easier to keep clean than the old dated carpeting that was there a mere 48 hours before...

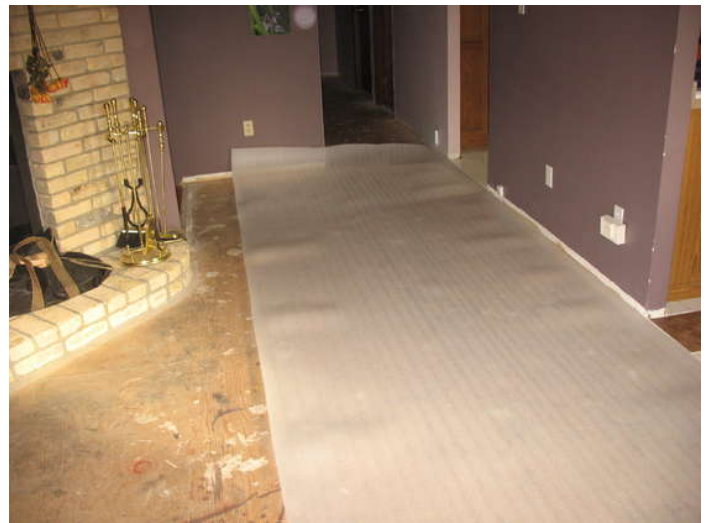
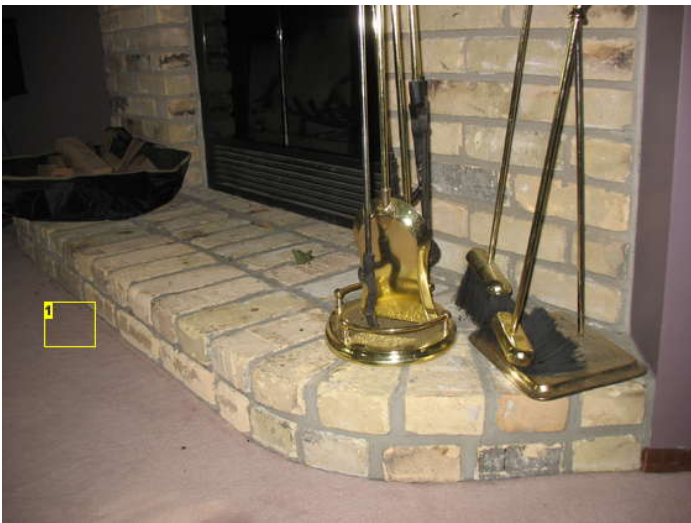


Image Notes

1. Assorted stains from the fireplace, this carpet was both an eyesore and a dust catcher, we only realized that while we were removing it...Also you can see the edge of the fireplace. I used a jigsaw to cut the pieces that ended there...



Image Notes

1. This was a very important step as any errors will follow throughout the project- make sure your row is square to the room. The edges will be hidden by the baseboards later.

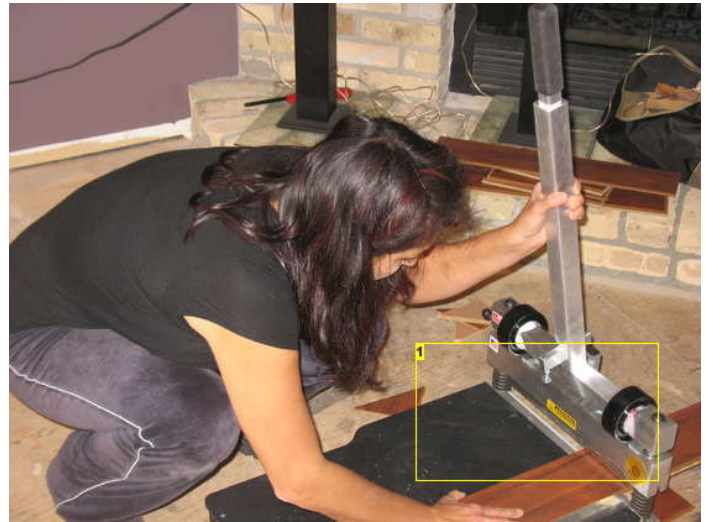


Image Notes

1. The cutter is like a giant paper cutter, it does perfect exact cuts and speeds up the install significantly.



Image Notes

1. Sometime you need a bit of leverage though as the flooring we bought was 12 mm...

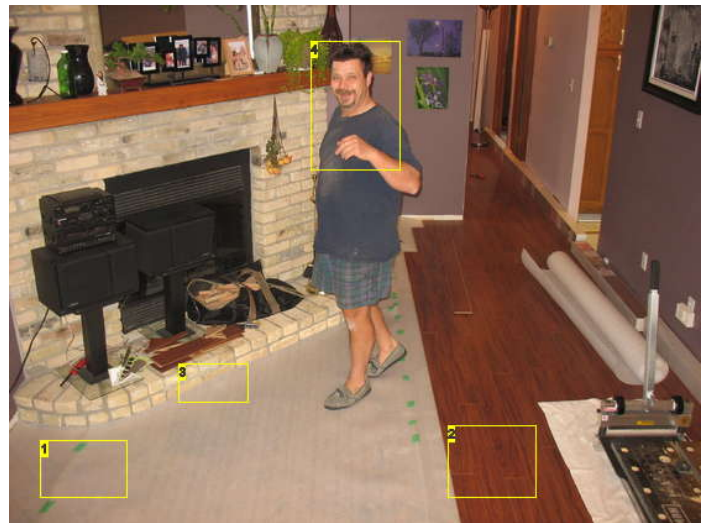


Image Notes

1. Here you can see the tape we used to join the pieces of the underlayment...
2. See how these two seams on alternate planks are at roughly the same spot?
3. We needed a jigsaw to cut these curved pieces, (hint) I used paper as a template and bought extra laminate in case I made a mistake)
4. A very happy guy, we are halfway through and its about 2pm on the first day.....



Image Notes

1. Don't forget to put little felt feeties on the furniture, you don't want to scratch your floors. We've had this floor for almost a year and we have no scratches from the dog. If only hardwood held up this well..

step 1: First Step.....remove the carpeting

I do not have a picture of the carpet being removed, but I have a few shots of the pink carpeting that was there before.....Not a pretty sight. I found it easier to cut the carpet into pieces and roll them up before disposal, the garbage-men had no trouble taking care of that for me. Another thing I might remind you of is to screw the floor in where there were some squeaks, I had the neighbour-kid walk around with a felt marker and put happy faces on the squeaky spots. Just be sure to hit the joists unlike my first attempt...Also don't forget to take off the baseboards and label them and put aside for later.

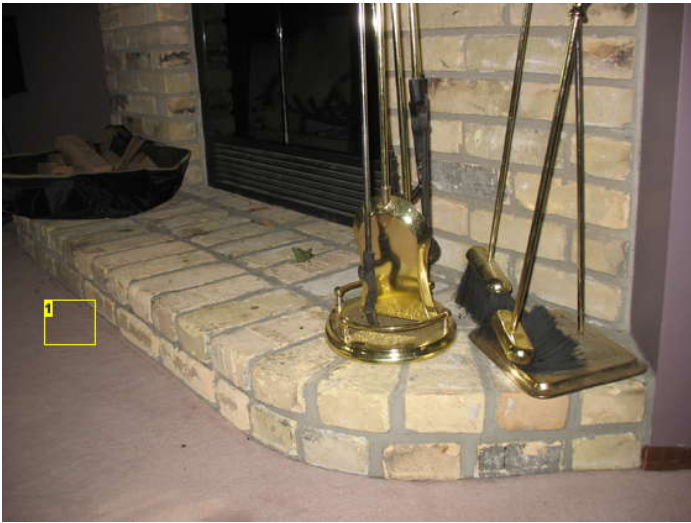


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step 2: Lay out the foam underlay

Cut and lay out foam underlay, usually found where the laminate flooring is purchased. This stuff is cheap like 10 cents a foot and really helps to smooth out the floor. An exacto-knife works well for this...



step 3: Starting at one end of the room begin laying the laminate

We glued the first row (to each other at the long edges) and placed the full boxes of laminate on them to keep them secure. Subsequent rows were staggered so that the result looked nice. To ensure a snug (but not too snug) allow a bit of room for expansion, we used a hammer and a block of wood to firm up the rows so that they were a tight fit. Again if you bought the cheap flooring you will have a bugger of a time as you have to assemble an entire row and then angle the entire row into the previous entire row. Spend a few bucks more and you can install this flooring piece by piece. I've done it both ways trust me the latter is a lot easier.



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step 4: Laminate cutter

As a told you earlier this tool is worth the rental cost. Not only can it speed up the cutting of the laminate, but it is very exact you can nip off a quarter of an inch easily to get the perfect fit. The other benefit is that the cutter does not kick up dust like a conventional saw would. Unless you have curved edges (like I did around the fireplace) this tool will do it all, otherwise you will need a jigsaw to cut curves.

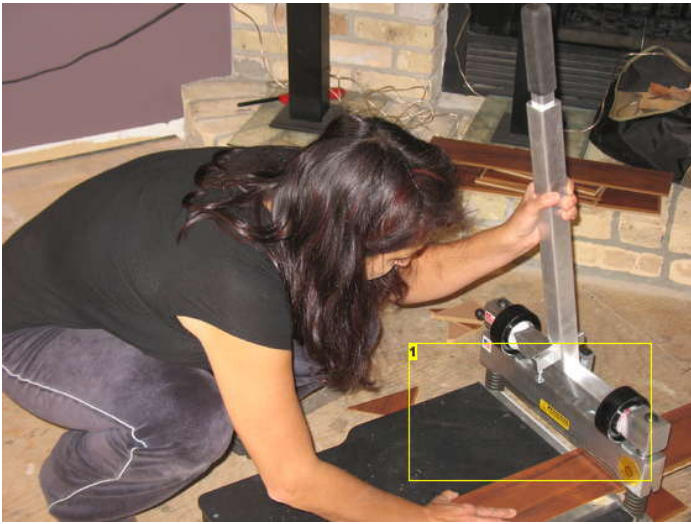


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Image Notes

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step 5: Important note-Stagger the cuts

Unless you want the planks to start and stop at the same place on each row (which is not as aesthetically pleasing) you should stagger the cuts so that each alternate row has a seam at roughly the same place.

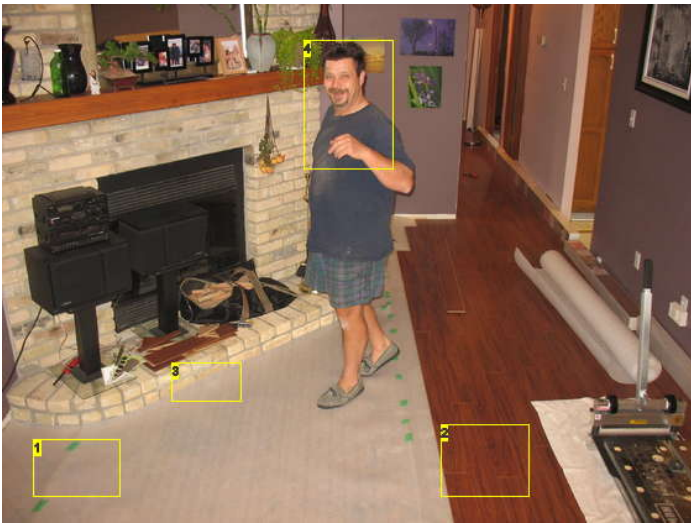


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4. A very happy guy, we are halfway through and its about 2pm on the first day.....



step 6: Once finished nail in the baseboards and enjoy your handiwork

Here my two helpers are taking a well-deserved break...



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Comments

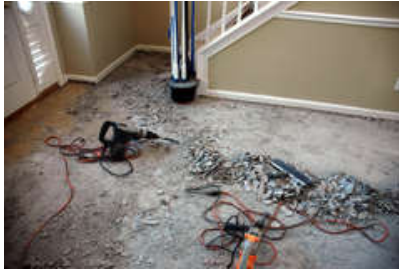
11 comments [Add Comment](#)



buttersnake says:

I messed up the images, sorry! I dont see a way to edit my post so i will post the images correctly on this one. First image bad job, second image correct job.

Mar 5, 2008. 9:33 PM [REPLY](#)



buttersnake says:

Mar 5, 2008. 9:29 PM [REPLY](#)

No problem gruaqt, just tryn to help out if i can. Sorry to hear about your mess you have snOOper. Make him check the floor with a 10ft straight edge. If there are any dips or humps, especially the dips make him fill them in with either skimming compound or a self leveling compound. The self levelers get slightly pricey and your contractor better know what he is doing to use it or it will crack and pop off the floor. If he does use the SLC make sure he primes that floor with the primer that is said to use on the SLC bag, if not you are going to have it popping and cracking and such. Heres 2 images for you to look at, the first one is what happens if the leveling isn't done properly. I had to hammer drill for 6 hours straight to get the entire area up from where the person before me had poured leveler improperly. They didn't prime the floor and they also had mixed it too thick. The mixture is very important with self levelers. If you get it from Home Depot the brand they carry is custom building. To make it easier take a 5 gallon bucket and measure 4 1/2in from the bottom and make a mark on the side. Fill it with COOL water to that line and then use a mixer to mix the entire bag very well. If your contractor does anything different you need to question him to make sure he knows what he is doing. Sadly the flooring field is full of backwoods rednecks that have no clue whats going on and don't even have license or insurance. Ok, first image of bad leveling being fixed and i charged them a little over 300.00 to just get all the old up (which i was cutting them a break because home depot had rammed them up theyre @\$!) I charge about 55 dollars per bucket i pour and i purchase the SLC.

URL=http://i16.photobucket.com/albums/b40/jerkmonster/DSC_0065.jpgIMG/IMG/URLhttp://i16.photobucket.com/albums/b40/jerkmonster/th_DSC_0065.jpg

Now here is the image of a correctly poured SLC.

URL=<http://i16.photobucket.com/albums/b40/jerkmonster/DSCN0355.jpg>IMG/IMG/URLhttp://i16.photobucket.com/albums/b40/jerkmonster/th_DSCN0355.jpg

Sorry for the long winded posts, i just don't want someone to get ripped off and since this is how i make my living i thought i could help people out. I have never had to go back to a job to fix anything. This is how you get more work, you don't get more work by messing up peoples homes! I do every job like its my grandmothers house. I take pride and i try my best. Hope some of this helps someone out, any questions feel free to message me.



sn00per says:

Mar 1, 2008. 12:10 PM [REPLY](#)

Great show! We had a contractor do ours, and it turned out all wobbly and "bouncy." So he's coming back to redo the lot, and this time we won't let him leave until we're satisfied...



gruaqt says:

Feb 29, 2008. 7:23 PM [REPLY](#)

Buttersnake:

Excellent comments, things I would not have thought of, I really liked your points about undercutting around the fireplace, (I might have to take this apart & redo it).



buttersnake says:

Feb 28, 2008. 7:11 PM [REPLY](#)

I like the color and style of that allot. Heres a couple of things that maybe you don't know or maybe you did but didnt think were that big a deal. First off i do flooring for a living, i own my own company and do all of home depots wood/laminate/tile. I have had to go to Duponts "school" for laminate because of home depot, i learned zero from it because i had been doing it for years, but it looked better on my part. One thing that you didnt mention to anyone is about the moisture barrier. If you are putting the foam down on top of a plywood subfloor then you dont have to use a moisture barrier under the foam. If you are putting the foam on top of a slab then you MUST use a moisture barrier under the foam. Even if you buy the 2 in 1 or the 3 in 1 that home depot or lowes carries you must read what the product requires. Its dumb that these places sell this foam that states its moisture barrier and a foam all in one but i havent seen one of these that is thick enough to be within the products specs. So what i always did was get 6mil black poly and put it down first. Also on the foam and barrier if you have it you must tape it with clear packing tape. This is what the companies have all told me. You cannot use duct tape! Duct tape will eat through the foam eventually and then the barrier is useless. Also there is no need to remove your base, just get the spacers to use, much easier. As long as you have 1/4 in expansion your good. You didnt mention anything about transition strips, if these get used make sure not to glue them down to the flooring and the subfloor, laminate is a floating floor and locking it down will cause it to buckle up. And on the fireplace if you would like it to look just sweet take a jamb saw and put a mason blade on it so you can undercut the fireplace to slide the laminate under it just like the jambs. Like someone else had said also about the dips and humps. The humps arent as bad as the dips on laminate. If there is a dip more than 1/8in you are required to fill this so the laminate doesnt come apart when walked on in this area.

Also i have the big version of the cutter you have in the pics. Its made by bullet tools and the suck costed me 800 bucks a year ago, but man was it well worth it! I use it to cut actual hardwood also. Not 3/4 hardwood, cheap thin glue down. But you can cut the 3/4in with a special blade thats about 110 bucks. Also on a side note, if you install product like this yourself and you have a problem with the product, your out of luck because if your not a licensed flooring installer it will void the warranty on the product even if its a defect that is for certain the companies less than great product quality.

Heres what the fireplace looks like when its undercut.....



rimar2000 says:

Feb 27, 2008. 4:05 AM [REPLY](#)

Good work, thanks. I must change the floor of the dining room, but me do not I encourage. This is a good help (pardon my "automatic translator" english)



garrettmikesmith says:

Feb 27, 2008. 11:07 PM [REPLY](#)

no need to be sorry. it's better than "nO WaY Dudez tHaT's CRAAAZZYYYYY!! lol!!". those kids are annoying.



garrettmikesmith says:

Feb 27, 2008. 11:06 PM [REPLY](#)

i didn't know about the cutter! when i did this it was hell. i used a circular saw and there was green dust EVERYWHERE. and i had a cold, and the dust was all up in my nose and throat. good intractable.



virgil22 says:

Feb 27, 2008. 6:52 AM [REPLY](#)

Nice job! A couple of comments from our recent experience installing 600sq.ft. of laminate in an attic...

- 1) Make sure there are no gaps or dips in the existing underfloor. It is worthwhile to fill with caulk or self-leveling compound for any gaps / holes / dips taller than 5mm. A good way to search for these is to run a metal straight edge across the floor surface.
- 2) Don't overlap the foam underlay sheets. Tape down the edges with thick masking tape (we use 2" blue painter's tape).
- 3) Buy some spacers - these are little plastic spacers in which can give you 2, 3, & 5mm space around the edges. A whole box costs about \$5 from one of the big-box hardware stores. Well worth it.
- 4) Prime/paint your shoe-moulding before installation. It is a lot easier to install painted moulding around the edge, than it is to install it and then mask the entire edge of the room and paint it in-place.
- 5) Disagree on the cheap vs. medium price. We got our for 79c / sq.ft. at lumber liquidators and it looks fantastic and was very easy to install. The whole job was done in a day.
- 6) We randomized the cuts, and it looks great. To do this, we just went right to the end of a row of boards, cut it to size, and used the off-cut as the starting piece for the next row. No waste at all.
- 7) Keep a bottle of rubbing alcohol handy. We used a sharpie marker to mark for the cuts (it remains more visible during saw-cuts than a pencil line). Then you can rub off any excess ink with the alcohol. It also is useful in case of any scrapes or marks from the rubber feet on your saw table/cutter.



Karel Jansens says:

Feb 27, 2008. 6:20 AM [REPLY](#)

Actually, if the carpet is in good shape, "short-haired" (meaning it's not of the shaggy variety) and synthetic, you don't even need to remove it; it's a good underlay in its own right. Note that it definitely has to be synthetic and preferably foam-backed. I "laminated" several rooms on top of such carpet and found no difference to the ones where I used the foam underlay, other than perhaps better sound insulation in the carpet rooms.

I do like the laminate cutter. Never seen one before and it certainly seems to beat the circular saw.



GorillazMiko says:

Feb 26, 2008. 8:51 PM [REPLY](#)

Cool! My dad and his friends did this to our house (3 bedrooms), and it came out great.

Nice Instructable, I like your dog! :-)