

# Laminate Flooring Installation Checklist

Everything to plan and check off before, during, and after your laminate flooring install — from acclimation to expansion gaps to final trim.

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## 1. Before You Buy

- ☐ Measure room length and width (or use two rectangles for L-shaped rooms).  
*Use the calculator above to convert this into exact boxes needed.*
- ☐ Check the coverage per box printed on the carton.  
*Coverage varies significantly between products — never assume a standard size.*
- ☐ Decide your installation pattern (straight, diagonal, or herringbone).  
*This determines your waste allowance: 10% straight, 12–15% diagonal, 18–20% herringbone.*
- ☐ Order 100% of your calculated boxes at once from the same lot/batch number.  
*Dye lots can vary slightly between production runs — mismatched batches show as color variation.*
- ☐ Confirm your retailer's return policy for unopened boxes.

## 2. Acclimation (Before Installation Day)

- ☐ Store unopened boxes flat in the installation room for 48–72 hours.  
*Check manufacturer instructions — some engineered products need less time, some need more.*
- ☐ Keep room temperature and humidity at normal living conditions during acclimation.  
*Typically 60–80°F and 35–65% relative humidity.*
- ☐ Avoid acclimating in a garage, basement, or unconditioned space.

## 3. Subfloor Preparation

- ☐ Confirm subfloor is clean, dry, and free of debris.
- ☐ Check subfloor flatness — no more than 3/16" variation over 10 feet.  
*Use a long straightedge or laser level to spot high and low points.*
- ☐ Grind down high spots; fill low spots with leveling compound.
- ☐ On concrete slabs, test moisture level before installing.  
*A calcium chloride test or moisture meter reading should meet the manufacturer's threshold.*
- ☐ Remove baseboards or shoe molding (or plan to install laminate underneath).
- ☐ Undercut door casings and jambs so flooring can slide beneath them.

## 4. Underlayment & Moisture Barrier

- ☐ Confirm whether your laminate has an attached underlayment pad.  
*If it does, you typically don't need a separate underlayment layer.*

- ☐ On concrete slabs, add a separate vapor/moisture barrier.  
*Recommended even if your laminate has an attached pad — concrete releases moisture over time.*
- ☐ Calculate underlayment rolls needed based on roll coverage.  
*Use the calculator above to convert your floor area into rolls.*
- ☐ Overlap moisture barrier seams per manufacturer spec and tape them.

## 5. Layout Planning

- ☐ Choose plank run direction.  
*Typically parallel to the longest wall or the main light source for a seamless look.*
- ☐ Check your first-row and last-row width.  
*If the last row is under 2 inches wide, rip the first row narrower to balance both ends.*
- ☐ Plan stagger between rows.  
*Minimum 8 inches between end joints on adjacent rows is standard — avoids a repetitive "H" pattern.*
- ☐ Mark obstruction cutouts (islands, hearths, closets, vents) on your layout sketch.
- ☐ Plan expansion gaps around the full perimeter.  
*Typically 3/8" — required at all walls, cabinets, and vertical obstructions.*

## 6. Tools & Materials Checklist

- ☐ Laminate flooring boxes (+ 1–2 extra planks for future repairs)
- ☐ Underlayment / moisture barrier rolls
- ☐ Spacers for expansion gap
- ☐ Tapping block and pull bar
- ☐ Rubber mallet
- ☐ Circular saw or table saw (straight cuts) and jigsaw (cutouts)
- ☐ Utility knife, tape measure, pencil, straightedge
- ☐ Transition strips for doorways and adjoining flooring
- ☐ Moisture meter (concrete slab installs)

## 7. Installation Day

- ☐ Dry-lay the first row to confirm layout and last-row width before locking planks.
- ☐ Stagger end joints per your layout plan (min. 8" recommended).
- ☐ Maintain expansion gap at all walls and vertical obstructions using spacers.
- ☐ Install transition strips at doorways and flooring changes.
- ☐ Remove spacers only after the full floor is installed.
- ☐ Reinstall baseboards / shoe molding to cover the expansion gap.

- ☐ Wait the manufacturer-recommended time before moving furniture back in.

### Notes

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*This checklist is for general planning purposes only. Always follow your specific product's manufacturer installation instructions, which take precedence over general guidance.*

Generated by the free Laminate Flooring Calculator at [homeprojectcalculator.com/laminate-flooring-calculator/](https://homeprojectcalculator.com/laminate-flooring-calculator/)