

Silkflor and Vintage Range Fitting Instructions

Unlike traditional wooden flooring, installing Silkflor and Vintage can be quick and easy – only a limited amount of skill in woodwork and basic sets of tools are required.

Certain laying recommendations should be followed in order to avoid problems with the future performance of the floor.

It is strongly recommended that the flooring to be laid is left to acclimatise in the packaging (at room temperature) for at least 48 hours, lie horizontal and flat – at the ideal relative humidity level of 45%.

The room in which the new floor is to be laid should be dry, if the building is a new building with a concrete floor, wait until the floor is completely dry. The flooring should be laid at a minimum room temperature of 15°C and a maximum of 22°C.

Wood is a natural product, no two pieces are the same. Colours may differ, your floor may be given a natural look by mixing boards from various packs.

The greatest possible care is taken to produce your floor. However, we advise you to check the boards for visible defects such as damage, deviations in shape or dimensions. No complaints regarding these visible defects will be considered after the boards have been laid. Make sure you have good lighting while laying the floor.

Preparation

Silkflor and Vintage can be laid over a variety of surfaces (concrete, PVC, fibreboard, cork, terrazzo, limed sand) and even over an existing level wood floor. Sub floor must be permanently dry with good load-bearing properties. Moisture content of the subfloor should be 9% (with a tolerance of 2%). You should first check that there are no loose pieces, should any be found, these need to be screwed down.

If the base is concrete, its humidity should be less than 3% and the mortar should be evenly set.

If the floor is to be laid in a new building, the rooms should be enclosed with the windows closed. All “wet” trades should be finished and the relative humidity in the premises should be between 40% and 64% - the humidity of the plasterworks and paintwork should be less than 5%.

An expansion gap of 14mm should be left all round the perimeter of the floor.

From a technical point of view, 3mm foam underlay is sufficient over the concrete, and a moisture barrier should be used under the underlay. (Fibreboard can also be used which will give a better surface for the flooring in conjunction with the moisture barrier).

Any necessary domestic water and central heating work should be carried out prior to laying the floor.

Silkflor and Vintage are pre-packed – and should be kept in their wrapping until actual installation.

Silkflor and Vintage are generally compatible with the most common under floor heating systems check with your supplier for further details).

In order that the central heating system works to its full capacity, it is necessary for the flooring to be in direct contact with the heated floor and the floor temperature should be no more than 25°C / 26°C, which means that the surface temperature of the boards should be 24°C.

Before commencing the installation, the central heating should be tested to 2/3rd of its power to help the setting and drying out of the floor – be careful of the distribution joints of the pipe work which may produce concentrated “hot spots” which could affect the flooring.

Tools and Materials required

- Spirit level
- Fine toothed saw (or electric jig-saw / circular saw)
- Small hammer or wooden mallet
- Straight edge
- Tape measure
- Right angle
- String line
- Spacers
- Tapping block
- Pull iron
- Adhesive
- Acoustic foam
- Underlay

Step by step installation

1. Start with a clean, level floor which has the appropriate humidity for installation.
2. To improve sound insulation and enhance walking comfort, a foam underlay should be laid at right angles to the direction of the floor being laid.
3. If laying Silkflor or Vintage over a concrete base, it is recommended that a polythene membrane (0.15mm) is laid first and the moisture content of the concrete must measure no more than 8-10%.
4. For best effect, boards should be laid lengthwise pointing towards the incoming light (e.g. from a window).
5. Plan to lay the first two rows of boards from left to right, grooved edge to the wall, with spacers between the first row of boards and the wall as well as both ends of each row.
6. This initial process must be conducted without adhesive. If the wall is not straight or is uneven, scribe and cut the boards to the contour of the wall.
7. To complete the first row, measure the length of the last board (including the spacer) and saw to size (if you are using a fine toothed saw, the face of the board should be upwards...if you are using a power saw place the face of the board downwards).
8. If the off cut from this board is 40cm or more it should be used to begin the next row – if you do not have an off cut begin the row by cutting a new board into two uneven lengths and use one to start the second row (this will enable you to stagger the joints).
9. Using a plumb line ensures that both rows are laid completely straight and even – when satisfied proceed to glue.
10. Apply ample adhesive to the tongue and end butts – to ensure a good seal, it is important to use adequate adhesive. Clean off any excessive adhesive at time of fitting.
11. Using the tapping block and/or a pull iron, press the joints together – always work with extreme care and allow the first two rows to settle and the adhesive to dry (approximately two hours) before proceeding further.
12. The rest of the floor can now be glued and laid.
13. Ensure that the boards are all laid straight and even, leaving spacers at all edges (these will later be removed and the space created covered by skirting and/or beading).
14. It is usual for there not to be space to fit a full width board at the last row so it will be necessary to make a longitudinal cut – the cutting of this last board may be helped by simply using another board as a scribe and cutting guide.
15. Press the last board into place with the pull iron remembering to put a spacer between the board and the wall.
16. Allow 12 hours for the glue to set.
17. Remove all spacers to leave the expansion free.
18. The skirting board which covers the expansion space and gives the finishing touch to the installation, can now be fixed in place (to the wall only and not to the floor).

Additional Installation hints

Corners and Pillars – when cutting boards to fit around projecting features always remember to allow for the expansion spacer.

Door openings – cut the door frame to allow the board to fit underneath the frame remembering to put an expansion spacer between the board and the wall – a minimum space of 5mm is recommended between the door leaf and the flooring.

Pipes – measure and mark the position of the pipes on the board from the expansion spacer...drill...and saw...glue and replace the sawn piece between the pipes and the spacer.

Maintenance

- Wood flooring does not require continuous cleaning as such but it should not be allowed to stay dirty.
- As 80% of dirt comes from the outside (mainly water and grit) the first precaution should be to put down (and of course use) doormats at the entrances of the building.
- Normal everyday cleaning should be carried out with a dry cloth, dry mop or even better, a vacuum cleaner.
- If necessary a damp cloth can be used to clean stains and ring marks – a damp clean may be made once or twice a week according to use but the floor should be dried immediately after wiping with a damp cloth. Too much moisture will affect the wood floor so do not use a wet mop.
- Stains of normal domestic liquids should be cleaned immediately.
- Some of the substances most harmful to varnish are oxygenated water, caustic soda (present in bleaches) and some types of colouring.
- A neutral detergent or polish which contains neither wax nor silicone can be added to the cleaning water – if necessary a damp cloth with hot water can be used to eliminate the more resistant stains.
- Stains from fruit, fruit juices, milk, beer, wine, coffee and tea can be cleaned using a mild detergent.
- Stains from oil, wax, shoe polish, asphalt and footprints can be cleaned with a cloth soaked in acetone.
- Stains from ink, felt-tip pens, ball pens and lipstick can be cleaned using alcohol.
- Cleaning products containing granulated or abrasive agents should never be used.
- If necessary, after prolonged and intense use, Silkflor and Vintage can be sanded and re-varnished.
- The “restoration” can be performed several times without affecting the performance of the flooring.
- Always allow a few days before re-using the re-varnished surface – although most varnishes will set within a few hours they acquire their maximum qualities of hardness and resistance if given a longer time to set.
- After restoration, varnish could enter between the board which may darken and highlight the joints.