

## Understanding Seasonal Cracks in Wide Plank Wood Floors: Why Patience is Key

When it comes to luxury interiors, few materials rival the warmth, character, and timeless appeal of wide plank hardwood flooring. As designers and homeowners alike continue to favor natural materials for their authenticity and sophistication, it's important to understand the living nature of wood — and how it responds to its environment over time.

One of the most common concerns expressed by homeowners, particularly after a floor has been installed shortly before winter, is the appearance of fine cracks or separations between planks. These seasonal gaps can seem alarming at first glance, but rest assured: this behavior is not only normal, it's expected.

During colder months, indoor air tends to become significantly drier due to heating systems and reduced humidity. In response, wood contracts. Even the most meticulously milled and properly installed wide planks will experience some degree of movement. These small cracks are simply the wood's way of adapting to its environment.

As spring and summer return and humidity levels rise, the wood naturally begins to reabsorb moisture from the air. This causes it to expand, and in most cases, the gaps begin to close on their own. This seasonal expansion and contraction is part of a wood floor's natural acclimation cycle — especially in its first year of life.

Because of this, flooring professionals advise against performing any repairs, such as filling gaps with wood filler, until the floor has gone through a full year of seasonal change. Attempting to fix cracks immediately after winter may result in the filler being pushed out during the summer expansion phase, compromising both aesthetics and structural integrity.

**The key is patience.** Allowing the wood to "breathe" through all four seasons ensures it reaches equilibrium with its environment. Once that cycle is complete, any remaining concerns can be addressed with thoughtful, long-term solutions tailored to the unique needs of the space.

In the world of high-end design, we celebrate craftsmanship, and the subtle stories materials tell over time. A fine wood floor is no exception. Its quiet shifts and changes are a sign not of flaw, but of authenticity — a living, breathing canvas that evolves with the home it inhabits.

### Caring for Your Wide Plank Wood Floors – Expert Tips for Homeowners

#### 1. Maintain Consistent Humidity

Aim to keep your indoor humidity between **35% – 55% year-round** to minimize seasonal movement. A whole-home humidifier can be especially helpful in dry winter climates.

#### 2. Avoid Premature Repairs

Don't rush to fill winter cracks. Allow your floor to go through a **full year** of seasonal acclimation before evaluating any repairs.

#### 3. Embrace Natural Variations

Cracks and shifts are part of a wood floor's organic beauty. Each board tells a story — honor the character rather than chasing perfection.





handcrafted european wood floors

**GUIDELINES**

#### **4. Schedule Periodic Maintenance**

Every **2-3 years**, plan to have your floors professionally maintained and re-waxed if needed to preserve their finish and richness.

#### **5. Use Soft Rugs & Felt Pads**

Protect your investment with natural-fiber rugs in high-traffic areas and felt pads beneath furniture to reduce wear over time.

#### **6. Consult a Wood Flooring Specialist**

Before making any changes, always speak with a flooring expert who understands the behavior of wide plank installations across seasons.

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Signature Innovations LLC | 1171 Landmeier Road, Elk Grove Village, IL 60007 | 847.758.9600 | toll free 866.554.4252

[www.signatureinnovations.com](http://www.signatureinnovations.com) | [sales@signaturehardwoods.com](mailto:sales@signaturehardwoods.com)