
What to Expect After Your New Hardwood Floor Is Installed

Your new hardwood floor is a natural product that will continue to adjust to its new environment. Understanding normal behavior, proper care, and seasonal movement will help ensure long-term beauty and performance.

1. Acclimation Period – First 12 Months Are Critical

Hardwood flooring requires up to 12 months to fully acclimate to its new environment.

This period allows the floor to experience all four seasons and stabilize naturally.

- During this time, the wood adjusts to your home's temperature and humidity.
- Minor movement, gaps, or changes in appearance are normal and expected.
- No corrective work or repairs should be performed during this first year, unless there is a verified installation or material defect.

2. Natural Seasonal Movement

Wood is hygroscopic — it absorbs and releases moisture depending on humidity levels.

- Winter (dry air): Boards may shrink slightly, creating small gaps.
- Summer (higher humidity): Boards may expand and gaps often close.
- These changes are not defects and are part of normal hardwood behavior.

Attempting to fill gaps or restrain movement too early can cause damage when conditions change.

3. Gaps Between Boards

Small gaps may appear, especially during dry seasons.

- Minor gaps are normal and usually temporary.
- Gaps that open in winter often close naturally in warmer, more humid months.
- Filling gaps before the acclimation period ends can lead to cracking, buckling, or compression later.

4. Humidity Control Is Essential

Maintaining proper indoor conditions is the most important factor in floor performance.

Recommended indoor conditions:

- Humidity: 35% – 55% year-round
- Temperature: 60°F – 80°F

Tips:

- Use a humidifier in winter.
- Use air conditioning or a dehumidifier in summer.
- Avoid extreme swings in temperature or humidity.

Failure to maintain stable conditions may lead to excessive movement that is not covered under warranty.

5. Appearance Changes Over Time

- Color variation is natural; wood planks are never identical.
- Sunlight may cause gradual color changes or patina.
- Area rugs should be rotated periodically to ensure even exposure.



6. Cleaning & Maintenance Basics

- Sweep or vacuum regularly using a hardwood-safe attachment.
- Clean only with manufacturer-approved hardwood floor cleaners.
- Never use steam mops, wet mops, or excessive water.
- Wipe spills immediately.

7. Furniture & Protection

- Use felt pads under furniture legs.
- Avoid dragging furniture across the floor.
- Use mats at exterior doors to reduce dirt and moisture.
- Avoid rubber-backed rugs unless approved for hardwood floors.

8. When Corrections or Repairs May Be Considered

After the 12-month acclimation period, once the floor has experienced all seasonal conditions:

- Persistent issues that do not resolve naturally can be evaluated.
- Any corrections should only be performed after environmental stability is confirmed.

Final Note

Hardwood flooring is a living material. Seasonal movement, minor gaps, and gradual changes are signs of a healthy wood floor adjusting to its environment — not flaws. Patience during the first year, combined with proper humidity control and maintenance, will ensure long-lasting performance and beauty.

You can always find product instructions in **Guidelines** on our [Downloads Page](#)

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