

INSTALL PREFINISHED BAMBOO FLOORING

Prefinished bamboo flooring is an environmentally-friendly way to add beauty and value to your home. These installation instructions go over the essential things you'll need to know during your prefinished bamboo installation. For more detailed information on what to do before, during and after your bamboo flooring installation, see the full **Installing Prefinished Bamboo Flooring** guide on FindAnyFloor.com.



BAMBOO INSTALLATION METHODS

You can install prefinished bamboo flooring with one of these methods:

- **Glue Down** – For solid T&G bamboo above a concrete or wood subfloor.
- **Nail/Staple** – For solid and engineered T&G bamboo above a wood subfloor or above a concrete subfloor overlaid with a plywood underlayment.
- **Click Lock Floating** – For engineered click lock bamboo flooring above a concrete or wood subfloor.
- **Engineered Floating** – For engineered T&G bamboo above a concrete or wood subfloor.



TOOLS AND MATERIALS

You will need most of the general tools and materials plus anything specific for your installation method.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4' or 6' level | <input type="checkbox"/> Safety goggles and mask |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Broom | <input type="checkbox"/> Soft rubber mallet and/or white tipped mallet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carpenter's square | <input type="checkbox"/> Spacers for expansion gaps |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chalk line | <input type="checkbox"/> Tape measure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crow, pull bar and/or power bar | <input type="checkbox"/> Tapping block or clean piece of scrap wood |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electric and/or hand saw with carbide tipped blade | <input type="checkbox"/> Utility knife |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hammer | <input type="checkbox"/> Utility towels |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jig saw | |

Glue Down Installation

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ¼" square notch trowel (for planks 5" or wider) | <input type="checkbox"/> Flooring adhesive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3/16" notched trowel (for planks 5" or less) | <input type="checkbox"/> Flooring adhesive remover |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blue painters tape and/or ratchet straps | <input type="checkbox"/> Weighted items (buckets of glue or books) to weigh down areas of the floor |

Nail/Staple Installation

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electric drill (to predrill nail holes) | <input type="checkbox"/> Nails/cleats or staples |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nail or staple gun | <input type="checkbox"/> Pliers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nail punch | <input type="checkbox"/> Wire Cutters |

Floating Engineered Installation

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adhesive remover | <input type="checkbox"/> Tongue and groove adhesive |
|---|---|

*You may need additional tools/materials for your installation method.



BAMBOO INSTALLATION AREAS

Prefinished bamboo flooring can be installed in rooms that are On Grade or Above Grade over the following types of subfloors:

- Wood subfloors (plywood or OSB board). Wood subfloors must be structurally sound and free from movement. Do not install above particle board subfloors.
- Concrete subfloors that are at least 30 days old. Concrete subfloors must pass all moisture tests.
- Various radiant heating systems, if approved by the flooring manufacturer.
- Existing porous stone, tile, bamboo, hardwood and vinyl.

Do not install prefinished bamboo flooring in Below Grade areas (such as basements) unless specifically approved by the manufacturer. Excess moisture in these areas can damage the flooring.



INSTALLATION BASICS

- Install your bamboo parallel to the longest wall and the main incoming light source in the room. Install bamboo perpendicular to floor joists for additional stability.
- Do not store your bamboo in the garage or in direct sunlight. Keep your bamboo flooring away from doors, outside walls, windows and air vents.
- Always leave at least a ½" expansion/contraction perimeter around the room. More expansion/contraction area may be required for large rooms or if you live in a humid area. Consult your flooring manufacturer or retailer for guidelines for your specific bamboo flooring.
- Always use a suitable underlayment. Cork, standard foam, combination foam/film and upgraded foam are all good choices under bamboo flooring. For more specific information about these underlayments, see the full **Installing Prefinished Bamboo Flooring** guide on FindAnyFloor.com.
- Install a moisture barrier (6mm polyethylene/plastic sheeting) between your subfloor and bamboo. This moisture barrier is essential when installing above a concrete slab or if you live in a humid area.
- Calculate the number of rows of bamboo you'll need to complete your floor. If your first and last row are very different widths (for example, your first row is 3" and your last row is less than 1") re-calculate so that these rows are more equal.
- You may need to scribe fit your first and last row to match the wall contours. This ensures your bamboo floor goes down straight even if your walls are not.
- Stagger all joints 2-3 times the width of the plank for an even looking floor. Avoid H-joints whenever possible.

- Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for board length (usually between 8"-10") when starting new rows. This helps ensure the joints are staggered evenly. You may be able to use the remainder of the plank you cut from the previous row.
- Inspect all boards before you install them. Do not install damaged or discolored boards. Cut away damaged areas and use the remainder to start rows. Place slightly discolored boards in pantries or closets where the color variation may not be as noticeable.



PREPARE FOR INSTALLATION

- Remove all existing flooring, if necessary. Do not remove any existing flooring if you find asbestos. Follow all local, state and federal guidelines when handling and/or disposing of asbestos.
- Use a moisture meter to test wood subfloors for moisture. Acceptable ranges include:
 - **3" wide or less** – Less than a 4% variance between the subfloor and the bamboo flooring.
 - **3" wide or more** – Less than a 2% variance between the subfloor and the bamboo flooring.
- Perform a Calcium Chloride and pH Alkalinity test on concrete subfloors. Acceptable ranges include:
 - **Calcium Chloride** – Not to exceed 3 lbs per 24 hrs per 1000 sq ft.
 - **pH Alkalinity** – Between 6-9 on the pH scale.

NOTE: If you have a concrete slab, you can perform a Polyethylene Moisture Test. Tape several 12"x12" pieces of plastic sheeting to the subfloor. If after 24 hours any condensation forms, you must perform a Calcium Chloride and pH Alkalinity test. It's a good idea to perform these tests anyway as excessive moisture in your subfloor can cause major problems in the long run.

- Ensure the subfloor is level and free from all dips, bumps and imperfections (such as paint overspray or drywall mud). Scrape your subfloor clean. Sand down any high areas. Use self-leveling compound to level low areas. Perform all moisture tests again if using a self-leveling compound.
- Have your bamboo flooring delivered 2 -7 days before your installation.
- Place your bamboo flooring in the installation area to acclimatize. The room should be between 60° - 80° F with a relative humidity of between 35%-65%. Follow all the manufacturer's acclimatization recommendations.
- Use a moisture meter to test your bamboo flooring for moisture as recommended by your manufacturer.
- Undercut the door casings in the installation area, if desired.
- Remove all molding and doors. Set aside.
- Sweep and vacuum your floor before installing your bamboo flooring.
- Always install safely using the proper safety equipment. Follow all manufacturer safety recommendations.



TIPS AND TRICKS

- When cutting, always use a carbide-tipped blade. Saw into the prefinished side first to avoid chipping the finish. Use blue painters tape along the area to be cut to help prevent chipping the prefinished surface.
- Never hit the bamboo flooring directly. Use a tapping block to move the bamboo into position.
- Do all your cutting in another area to keep the installation area as clean as possible.
- To avoid scratching your new flooring, place tools on a piece of cardboard on top of your bamboo.
- Many professional installers work from left to right, although you should do what is most comfortable for you.
- Always work from your subfloor NOT your newly installed bamboo floor.



INSTALL THE UNDERLAYMENT

Install your cork, foam, plastic sheeting or other underlayment according to the manufacturer's recommendations. If using the glue down method, ensure the underlayment you use is specifically designed for a glue down installation.

GLUE DOWN METHOD

Use this method for solid T&G bamboo above concrete or wood subfloors. Keep these things in mind before you begin:

- Always choose a urethane based adhesive designed to be troweled onto the subfloor. Do not use adhesives that have water as an ingredient.
- Use buckets of glue, books or other heavy objects to weigh down areas where the flooring is not securely in contact with the subfloor.

NOTE: Not all manufacturers approve glue down installations for solid bamboo floors above concrete subfloors. Always check with your manufacturer to ensure this type of installation will not void your warranty.

INSTALL THE FIRST ROW

Take extra time when installing the first row of bamboo flooring. It is critical that this row be straight even if the walls are not.

1. Measure out your expansion spacing in two or more places along the longest wall. Snap a chalk line between these points.
2. Dry fit the first row by laying out the bamboo with the groove toward the wall. Add spacers between the flooring and the wall. Make sure this first row is completely straight. Scribe fit the bamboo (if necessary) so that the flooring matches the contours in the wall.
3. Once satisfied with the fit, remove and stack boards in the order they will be installed. Take care not to scratch the finish while stacking.

4. Use a trowel to apply the flooring adhesive to the subfloor as directed by the manufacturer.
5. Re-install the first row of flooring. Fit boards tightly together and place spacers between the wall and each board. Ensure planks are in full contact with the adhesive. Wipe away any excess adhesive immediately. If desired, use small finishing nails to hold the first row in place.
6. At the end of the wall, measure and cut a plank to fit. Use a pinch bar (if necessary) to fit the last plank in place then place a spacer at the end of the first row.
7. Evaluate the newly installed row to ensure it is straight and level. Adjust where needed.
8. Let the first row set completely before continuing your installation.

INSTALL THE MAIN PART OF THE FLOOR

1. Use a short board (it should be at least 8"-10" in length) to start the second row.
2. Spread adhesive and fit the bamboo together as you did on your first row.
3. Work your way across the floor until you reach the last row. Weigh down areas of concern.

INSTALL THE LAST ROW

1. Measure out your expansion spacing in at least two places along the wall. Snap a chalk line between these points.
2. Dry fit the last row as you did with your first row. The tongue or cut part of the board should face toward the wall. Scribe fit (if necessary) so that the flooring matches the contours in the wall. Make sure this last row is completely straight.
3. Once satisfied with the fit, remove and stack planks in the order they will be installed. Take care not to scratch the finish while stacking.
4. Apply the flooring adhesive to the subfloor then re-install the last row of flooring. Place spacers between the wall and each plank. Ensure each board in the last row is in full contact with the adhesive.
5. At the end of the wall, measure and cut a plank to fit. Use a pinch bar (if necessary) to fit the last plank in place. Place a spacer at the end of the first row.
6. Evaluate the last row to ensure it is straight and level. Adjust where needed.

ROLL THE FLOOR

Use a 100lb-150lb roller to roll the floor as recommended by your flooring manufacturer. Rolling ensures all the bamboo flooring is securely in contact with the subfloor. Rollers can be rented from most equipment rental shops. Or use heavy objects to weigh down the floor during your installation to simulate rolling.



LET THE FLOOR SET

Allow the adhesive to set for between 8-24 hours. During this time, do not walk upon or place anything on the newly installed floor. Do not remove the spacers until the floor is completely dry.

NAIL/STAPLE METHOD

Use this method for solid and engineered (if approved by your manufacturer) T&G bamboo above wood subfloors or concrete subfloors overlaid with a plywood underlayment. Always follow your flooring manufacturer's recommendations when choosing between staples and cleats. Most professional use cleats when installing bamboo floors.

Fasten each tongue at the proper intervals:

- 4"-6" for cleats
- 3"-4" for staples
- Within 1"-2" of each end joint

Keep these tips in mind before you begin:

- Set all cleats correctly in the nail pocket.
- Use the correct type of top and angled nailer/stapler with the proper plate. Ensure the plate is covered with plastic or felt so it does not scratch the bamboo.
- Use the correct pressure setting (usually between 70-80 PSI) when using pneumatic fastening devices. Practice fastening a scrap piece of flooring before you begin your installation.
- Use pliers to remove cleats that did not go in completely.
- Use wire cutters to cut cleats that are partially exposed and cannot be removed.
- Use a nail punch to drive cleats in completely.

INSTALL THE FIRST ROW

Take extra time when installing the first row of bamboo flooring. It is critical that this row be straight even if the walls are not.

1. Measure out your expansion spacing in at least two places along the longest wall. Snap a chalk line between the points.
2. Lay out the bamboo with the groove toward the wall but do not secure yet. Add spacers between the flooring and the wall. Scribe fit this row (if necessary) so that the flooring matches the contours in the wall. Make sure this first row is completely straight.
3. Once satisfied with the fit, top nail the first row to the subfloor at the appropriate intervals.
4. At the end of the wall, measure and cut a plank to fit. Use a pinch bar (if necessary) to fit the last plank in place. Place a spacer at the end of the first row.
5. Evaluate the first row to ensure it is straight and level. Adjust where needed.



INSTALL THE MAIN PART OF THE FLOOR

1. Use a short plank (it should be at least 8"-10" in length) to start the second row.
2. Gently tap the bamboo together with the first row. Use an angled nailer/stapler to secure in place.
3. Work your way across the floor until you reach the last few rows.



INSTALL THE LAST FEW ROWS

You will install the last few rows differently as your nailer/stapler may not fit between the wall and your rows of bamboo flooring.

1. Begin using a white tipped mallet (which will not mar the wall) to tap boards in place 5-6 rows out from the wall.
2. When your nailer/stapler no longer fits between the wall and your flooring (about 3 rows out), continuing installing your bamboo, but do not nail/staple. Use the mallet to fit each board tightly to the next.
3. When you are on your last row, measure out your expansion spacing in at least two spots. Snap a chalk line.
4. Lay out the bamboo flooring with the tongue or cut part of the board toward the wall. Scribe fit (if necessary) so that the flooring matches the contours of the wall. Make sure the last row is straight. Tap each board with the mallet so the flooring fits tightly together. (This is especially important since you did not nail the last few rows of bamboo.)
5. Once satisfied with the fit, top nail the last row in place. Add a few extra cleats in this row as it is holding 3-4 rows together.

Your bamboo floor does not need any time to set. Once you place your last cleat, you can remove all spacers and begin using your new bamboo floor.

FLOATING CLICK LOCK METHOD

Use this method for engineered click lock flooring. Only use these instructions a reference as there are a variety of click lock bamboo styles. Always follow the instructions provided by your specific flooring manufacturer.



INSTALL THE FIRST ROW

Take extra time when installing the first row of click lock bamboo. It is essential that this row be straight, even if the walls are not.

1. Along the longest wall, measure out your expansion spacing in at least two places. Snap a chalk line between the various points.
2. Lay out the click lock bamboo with the groove toward the wall but do not click together yet. Add spacers between the flooring and the wall. Make sure this first row is completely straight. Scribe fit (if necessary) so that the bamboo matches the contours in the wall.
3. Once satisfied with the fit, click and lock the first row of bamboo together.

4. At the end of the wall, measure and cut a plank to fit. Use a pinch bar (if necessary) to fit the last board in place. Place a spacer at the end of the first row.
5. Evaluate the first row to ensure it is straight and level. Adjust where needed.



INSTALL THE MAIN PART OF THE FLOOR

1. Use a partial board (it should be at least 8"-10" in length) to start the second row.
2. Click and lock boards together as you did with the first row.
3. Work your way across the floor until you reach the last row.



INSTALL THE LAST ROW

1. Measure out your expansion spacing in at least two places along the wall. Snap a chalk line between these positions.
2. Dry fit the last row by laying out the click lock bamboo with the tongue or cut part of the board toward the wall. Scribe fit (if necessary) so that the click lock bamboo flooring matches the contours in the wall. Make sure this last row is completely straight.
3. Once satisfied with the fit, click and lock each plank in the last row together.
4. At the end of the wall, measure and cut a click lock bamboo plank to fit. Use a pinch bar (if necessary) to fit the last board in place. Place a spacer at the end of the first row.
5. Evaluate the last row to ensure it is straight and level. Adjust where needed.

Your click lock bamboo floor does not need any time to set. Once you lock the last board into place, you can remove all spacers and begin using your new bamboo floor.

ENGINEERED FLOATING METHOD

Use this method for engineered T&G bamboo above a wood or concrete subfloor. Keep these things in mind before you begin:

- Only use this installation method if approved by your flooring manufacturer.
- An engineered floating floor is NOT secured to the subfloor. Only the tongues and grooves are secured to each other.
- Always choose a urethane-based adhesive designed for flooring tongues and grooves. Do not use adhesives that are trowled onto the subfloor or that list water as an ingredient.
- This method is not recommended for 3/8" engineered bamboo floors unless specifically approved by your manufacturer.



INSTALL THE FIRST ROW

Take extra time when installing the first row of bamboo. It is critical that this row be straight even if the walls are not.

1. Along the longest wall, measure out your expansion spacing in at least two spots. Snap a chalk line between these places.
2. Dry fit the first row by laying out the bamboo flooring with the groove toward the wall but do not glue yet. Scribe fit (if necessary) so that the flooring matches the shape of the wall. Add spacers between the wall and the flooring. Make sure this first row is completely straight.
3. Once satisfied with the fit, remove and stack planks in the order they will be installed. Take care not to scratch the finish while stacking.
4. Apply adhesive along the entire top of the tongue of the first board. Apply glue on the bottom of the groove of the second plank. Fit tightly together on the floor. Wipe away any excess glue. Place a spacer between each plank and the wall.
5. Work your way down the wall installing the floating bamboo planks.
6. At the end of the wall, measure and cut a board to fit. Use a pinch bar (if necessary) to fit the last plank in place. Place a spacer at the end of the first row.
7. Evaluate the first row to ensure it is straight and level. Adjust where needed.



INSTALL THE MAIN PART OF THE FLOOR

1. Use a short plank (it should be at least 8"-10" in length) to start the second row.
2. Apply adhesive to the entire top of the tongue on the installed plank and the entire bottom of the groove on the board to be installed. Fit tightly together and wipe away any excess adhesive.
3. Work your way across the floor until you reach the last row. Install spacers where needed along the walls.



INSTALL THE LAST ROW

1. Measure out your expansion spacing in at least two spots along the wall. Snap a chalk line between these points.
2. Dry fit the last row by laying out the bamboo with the tongue or cut part toward the wall. Scribe fit (if necessary). Make sure this last row is completely straight.
3. Once satisfied with the fit, remove and stack boards in the order they will be installed. Take care not to scratch the finish while stacking.
4. Apply the adhesive as before and install the entire last row. Fit all boards tightly together and place spacers along the wall where necessary.
5. At the end of the wall, measure and cut a board to fit. Use a pinch bar (if necessary) to fit the last plank in place. Place a spacer at the end of the last row.
6. Evaluate the last row to ensure it is straight and level. Adjust where needed.



LET THE FLOOR SET

Allow the adhesive to set for between 8-24 hours. During this time, do not walk upon or place anything on the newly installed bamboo floor. Leave all spacers in place until the floor is completely dry.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCE AREAS

Bamboo flooring can be installed in a variety of special circumstance areas such as on stairs or around brickwork. For more detailed information about installing in these areas, see the full **Installing Prefinished Bamboo Flooring** guide on FindAnyFloor.com.



INSTALL ON STAIRS

You have two options when installing bamboo flooring on stairs:

- Use prefabricated stair treads and risers.
- Use stair nose and bamboo flooring boards.

Safety is a major concern when installing bamboo on stairs. All stairs should be glued as well as nailed/screwed down every 8".

For complete installation instructions and safety information, see the full **Installing Prefinished Bamboo Flooring** guide on FindAnyFloor.com.



INSTALL AROUND BRICKWORK

When installing bamboo around brickwork (such as fireplaces) you can:

- Undercut the brickwork and install the bamboo underneath. The brickwork will cover all expansion spacing.
- Install the bamboo flush with brickwork and use end molding to hide the expansion/contraction spacing.

TRANSITIONS AND TRIM

Install transitions and trim to hide all expansion spacing and put the finishing touches on your room.



INSTALL TRANSITIONS

Once your floor is completed, you can install transition pieces to hide the expansion/contraction spacing as well as transition to other flooring types. The following transition pieces can be used:

- **T-Molding** – For transitions between bamboo floors and interior/exterior doorways and transitions between similar height flooring.
- **Overlap Reducer** – For transitions between floating bamboo floors and lower height floors (such as tile, vinyl or carpeting).

- **Overlap Stair Nose** – Used for floating bamboo installations on steps (such as into a sunken living room) to provide the proper overhang.
- **Flush Reducer** - For transitions between glued and nailed/stapled bamboo floors and lower height floors (such as tile, vinyl or carpeting).
- **Flush Stair Nose** - Used for bamboo installations on steps (such as into a sunken living room) or on staircases to provide the proper overhang.
- **End Molding/Square Nose/Universal Edge** – For carpet, similar height floors or outside threshold transitions; also used around brickwork.

Bamboo transitions are either glued to the subfloor with a quality adhesive or secured using trim tracks. Floating bamboo floors may need shims installed below certain transition pieces for additional support.



INSTALL TRIM

Install all wall base, shoe base and quarter round to hide the expansion spacing around the perimeter of the room. Do NOT glue to the subfloor. Always glue the trim to the wall.

Additionally, nail trim to the wall at an angle every 16". Caulk significant gaps between the trim and the wall.



CORRECT DEFECTS

Use wood filler, putty sticks or stain to correct any defects and fill all nail holes. Only use fillers designed specifically for bamboo floors.



SEAL MOISTURE PRONE AREAS

Use silicone sealant and/or weather stripping to seal all expansion spaces near moisture prone areas (such as kitchen appliances, outside doors, etc.), as directed by your manufacturer.