

**big book of Questions and Answers**

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# g e n e r a l   f l o o r i n g   q u e s t i o n s

## **Are hardwood floors expensive?**

**Hardwood floors are much like other floor covering materials. Price points are determined by quality and construction. BR-111™ is no exception.** Different product lines offer different price points. But, when you compare the cost of hardwood floors versus other floor covering materials, you realize hardwood floors are really a bargain. For example, the average lifespan of carpet is approximately 10 years. With proper care and maintenance, hardwood floors can last several lifetimes.

## **How does hardwood compare to other flooring materials?**

**Other floor covering materials simply cannot compare to the natural beauty of hardwood flooring. Hardwood floors outlast and outperform almost any other flooring material.** Hardwood floors are just as easy to clean as other flooring materials and offer an easy to maintain, low maintenance wear surface.

## **Where and how do I install BR-111™ products?**

**As a general rule, install solid hardwood flooring on or above grade. Engineered products may be installed on, above, or below grade.**

<b>Solid 3/4"</b>	Nail/Staple-down – 15 lbs. felt paper recommended.
<b>Solid 5/16" &amp; 7/16"</b>	Nail/ Staple-down – 6 mil poly underlayment required.
<b>Solid 5/16" &amp; 7/16"</b>	Glue-down - Moisture cured urethane only.
<b>Engineered 3/8"</b>	Dolomites & Triangulo® Nail/Staple-down - 6 mil poly required.
<b>Engineered 3/8"</b>	Dolomites & Triangulo® Glue-down - Moisture cured urethane only.
<b>Engineered 5/16"</b>	Glue-down - Moisture cured urethane only. DO NOT NAIL/STAPLE

**All engineered products can be floated.** Installation requirements include using the leading brand 2 in 1 (moisture barrier) floating floor pad with leading brand PVA-2 floating floor glue.

**NO solid wood flooring can be floated.**

**Glue-down direct to concrete.** All concrete must be tested for moisture before installation. BR-111™ highly recommends the use of a moisture protection system, especially when gluing down thin solids to concrete slabs. Due to greater dimensional stability, and if moisture tests reveal a dry slab, engineered flooring products may not require a moisture protection system.

A variety of adhesive manufacturers provide a comprehensive moisture protection warranty with their moisture protection systems. See the BR-111™ installation instructions for recommended adhesive manufacturers.

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## a p p e a r a n c e   a n d   c o l o r   q u e s t i o n s

### **Is every piece of flooring absolutely perfect?**

**Hardwood flooring is a natural product; therefore defects in flooring can occur in the manufacturing process or naturally as a characteristic of the wood.** All BR-111™ floors are carefully manufactured to industry standards and tolerances. Hardwood flooring standards allow for up to 5% defective product (this may be natural or manufacturing related) based on the original flooring purchase.

### **Will my floor be all the same color throughout?**

**NO.** With the exception of a few products, most BR-111™ exotic hardwood floors are finished natural without stains unless otherwise noted. Exotic floors feature the full range of natural shades, color tones, and graining of each wood species.

Wood is a natural material. No two trees are the same; no two pieces are the same. The same species can vary based on the geographic area from which it is harvested. Each flooring species has a general range of color or tone, and within that range, you will find many different shades, including some extreme light and dark colors. An experienced installer will open numerous boxes at the same time and lay the boards in a random pattern that presents a mixed appearance with a full range of color. If the consumers wish their floor to be all one tone and color, then they may want to choose a stained hardwood floor.

### **Will my floor match exactly the sample in the store?**

**Not always.** Wood is a natural material. The store sample is a small swatch, containing a few shades and grain patterns of a hardwood flooring species. It can never be an exact replica of a fully installed floor, since each board will vary in shade and grain patterns.

BR-111's sales literature and website includes detailed product photography, showing the full range of natural color and grain in each exotic floor. This information should be used to assist the consumer in the choice of a floor. A natural wood floor should not be chosen from one or two small hand samples. BR-111™ cannot guarantee that the installed flooring will be an exact match of the samples.

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## a p p e a r a n c e   a n d   c o l o r   q u e s t i o n s

### **Will my floor change color over time?**

**Some wood flooring species are photosensitive, becoming richer and darker over time with exposure to natural light.** This natural occurrence takes place over a period of approximately 12 months with about 50% of the change taking place in the first three months. The balance of the darkening process will continue for approximately nine months.

Photosensitive species are identified with a small sun icon on samples and in BR-111™ sales literature. The following are photosensitive species offered by BR-111™:

Amendoim	American Cherry	Angico	Bavarian Cherry
Beaujolais Cherry	Brazilian Cherry	Brazilian Eucalyptus	Chianti Cherry
Roman Magnolia	Sicilian Teak	Tiete Rosewood	Tigerwood
Tuscan Striped Pecan	Victorian Padouk		

### **Should I do anything about this natural color change?**

**Just be aware.** Area rugs or large furniture that stops natural light from getting to the floor will inhibit this change in photosensitive species. During the first three months, it may be best to move smaller rugs when cleaning so as not to block the floor from light completely. If an area is completely covered, the homeowner will have an area lighter than the rest of the floor because surrounding areas will have darkened. If this occurs, simply remove the object to allow natural light on the area. Eventually, the entire floor will reach the same shade and any outlines or shapes will be eliminated.

During construction, if the installer covers the floor to protect it from other contractors, make sure the entire floor is covered.

**What is the finish on BR-111™ floors?**

All BR-111™ exotic hardwood flooring products have an aluminum oxide finish. With the exception of the BR-111™ 5/16” Engineered, all BR-111™ floors may be re-sanded down to the raw hardwood, where a new finish can then be applied.

**Does a 14 year and 24 year limited warranty mean that my floor will look exactly the same way for these periods of time?**

**NO.** BR-111™ warranties guarantee the finish will not wear through or separate from the flooring within that time period. Engineered products also include a structural integrity limited warranty protecting against separation or delaminating of the product between plies in applications that fall within normal humidity ranges. All hardwood floors will eventually show signs of wear.

**How many times can I sand my BR-111™ floor?**

The number of times a floor can be resanded is controlled by the skill of the sanding machine operator and the amount of wood or wear layer above the tongue.

General expectations for how many times the BR-111™ products can be re-sanded:

- 3/4” Solid – 4 times
- 7/16” Solid – 3 times
- 5/16” Solid – 2 times
- 3/8” Dolomites Engineered – 2 times
- 3/8” Triangulo® Engineered – 2 times
- BR-111™ 5/16” Engineered – 0 times, this product has a veneer wear layer and cannot be sanded.

Another option to refresh the finish is to “screen” the floor.

**What does it mean to “screen” a floor and how many times can it be done to BR-111™ products?**

When a floor is “screened,” a steel wool-like pad is used with a sanding machine. The finish is lightly abraded, and a new finish is applied. The screening process does not re-sand the actual wood so it will not remove any deep gouges or scratches. The process can be repeated infinitely, because screening does not affect the actual wood.

### **Will my floor scratch and dent?**

**All wood floors scratch and dent.** Exotic hardwood species are known for their overall hardness; aluminum oxide finishes are also extremely durable. Even so, all wood floors will scratch and dent. It is usually the finish that scratches, resulting in fine white lines on the wear surface. Darker species show scratches to a greater extent than lighter species. Scratches and dents are not covered in any manufacturer warranty.

### **How do I repair scratches on my floor?**

**With the darker species in the BR-111™ product lines, the “Guardsman Furniture Touch Up Pen Kit” can help to hide scratches.** This kit contains a light, medium, and dark pen. Use one, or a combination of these pens, to cover and blend scratches into the rest of the floor. These kits are available at most major home improvement stores and on the web. As with any repairs or touch up, it is best to practice on leftover or sample flooring boards.

### **Will my pets damage and mark my wood floor?**

**Pet’s nails can scratch the finish on the floor.** Smaller pets will scratch the floor’s finish less than larger or heavier pets. Try to keep pet’s nails trimmed to minimize scratches.

### **How should I clean my hardwood floor?**

**Vacuum and dust mop your floor regularly or as often as necessary.** The floor should then be cleaned with a urethane hardwood floor cleaner made specifically for prefinished hardwood floors. A full range of PolyCare cleaning products, recommended by BR-111™, are available for purchase at [br111.com](http://br111.com).

DO NOT use products containing oil, wax, or polish. Residue build-up over time will dull the hardwood finish.

Keep hardwood floors free of dirt and grit. Place floor mats at all exterior doors and use floor protectors on all furniture. Use a vacuum with an attachment for hard surfaces.

### **How should I inspect my new hardwood floor?**

All wood flooring inspections should be carried out from a standing position in natural light. If you have to get on your hands and knees in a certain light to see a defect, it is not considered a defect.

**How long should the floor be allowed to acclimate before installing?**

**Solid hardwood flooring must acclimate for as long as necessary to meet minimum installation requirements for moisture content.** To correctly monitor wood flooring during the acclimation process, the installation professional will need to review the Equilibrium Moisture Chart and acclimation information supplied in the BR-111™ installation instructions and have a basic understanding of local environmental conditions.

Your BR-111™ flooring material will need to be monitored on-site using a wood moisture meter and hygrometer until the specified minimal moisture content for installation is achieved. This also depends on whether the dwelling will be kept at controlled conditions (A/C units running during months with high relative humidity) in the future.

Thin solids, such as the 5/16” and 7/16” products, will perform better in controlled environments of 35% to 55% relative humidity. This is better explained in the installation instructions for these products.

**What should the site temperature and relative humidity be at time of installation?**

**Room temperature must be consistent between 60-75 degrees, and even more importantly, relative humidity must be controlled between 35-55%.** Prior to installing hardwood flooring, the building must be structurally complete, including the final installation of all doors and windows. Moisture producing work, such as concrete, masonry, drywall, and paint must be completed, allowing adequate drying time to avoid raising moisture content within the building.

HVAC systems must be fully operational at least 14 days prior to flooring installation. Maintaining a controlled environment is paramount to the initial and continued long-term performance of the hardwood flooring. This becomes even more vital when using the 5/16” and 7/16” solids that require a controlled environment for best performance.

**Can I glue the 5/16" and 7/16" solids directly to a concrete slab?**

**Yes, but only with the use of a concrete sealer to seal the concrete and protect from moisture intrusion.** You must also use a moisture cured urethane adhesive. Do not use water-based adhesives with any BR-111™ glue-down products.

**Why use a concrete sealer along with moisture cured urethane adhesive?**

**The use of a concrete sealer will protect and provide a warranty against sub-floor moisture intrusion.** The sealer manufacturer supplies this warranty. Moisture emission from concrete slabs can vary between regions and from season to season. Concrete slabs may offer different seasonal moisture readings due to the amount of rainfall and underground water tables. In the case of BR-111™ thin solids (5/16" & 7/16"), we always recommend the use of a leading sealer and adhesive system when gluing directly to on or above grade concrete slabs.

**What are some of the leading brands of concrete sealers that offer a warranty from sub-floor moisture intrusion?**

**There are many leading brand concrete sealers that, when used in conjunction with the same manufacturers moisture cured urethane adhesive, will provide a warranty against sub-floor moisture intrusion.** Sub-floor moisture intrusion causes cupping, buckling and discoloration of the wood floor. All of the following systems have different installation and job site requirements and offer different warranties. The installer should check with the sealer system manufacturer to choose the best system for the installation.

BR-111™ strongly recommends the use of concrete sealers, especially when gluing thin solids directly to concrete slabs. The following are a few leading brands of moisture protection systems:

**Franklin Titebond 531 Epoxy Moisture Control System** [www.franklinflooring.com](http://www.franklinflooring.com) 1-800-669-4583

**Bostik MVP (Moisture Vapor Protection)** [www.bostik-us.com](http://www.bostik-us.com) 1-800-523-6530

**Sika Primer** [www.sikausa.com](http://www.sikausa.com) 1.800-933-SIKA

**DriTac-MCS 7000 Concrete Moisture Control** [www.DriTac.com](http://www.DriTac.com) 1-800-394-9310

**Does BR-111™ recommend the use of concrete sealers when gluing the engineered directly to a concrete slab?**

Since engineered products have a plywood base construction, offering a more naturally stable product than solid wood flooring, site conditions will ultimately dictate the use of concrete sealers. All slabs should be checked for moisture with a moisture meter or calcium chloride test. High moisture readings from any test indicate the use of a concrete sealer. Concrete sealers, while adding extra cost to the project, will not harm the product. In addition, concrete sealers offer a moisture protection warranty, making them a worthwhile investment.

**What type of glue should I use with the BR-111™ hardwood flooring products?**

BR-111™ only recommends the use of moisture cured urethane adhesives. A list of leading brand urethane adhesives is available on all BR-111™ installation instructions. Do not use water based adhesives or acrylic hybrids. Moisture cured urethanes are the only acceptable adhesives.

**How do I test for moisture in the sub-floor and wood flooring?**

Wood flooring can be tested for moisture using a quality moisture meter that has been calibrated for the species being checked. Plywood, OSB or similar, and existing wood floors can be checked with the same meter. Concrete slabs can be checked for moisture using a concrete moisture meter. The Tramex Moisture Encounter meter is a good indicative meter and is readily available. Another form of testing concrete slabs for moisture is a calcium chloride test. This is a controlled test used to measure the amount of moisture vapor transmission through a concrete slab in a period of 60 – 72 hours.

**Do BR-111™ warranties cover cupping, buckling, discoloration or any other problem caused by moisture intrusion?**

**No.** BR-111™ offers no warranty from any of the above moisture related conditions. These conditions are caused by sub-floor moisture intrusion or environmental moisture intrusion. The correct use of moisture barriers and control of the site environment are very important for the avoidance of any of these problems.

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## s t a p l e - d o w n s o l i d s

### **What underlayment/moisture barriers are required when nail/stapling solids?**

**For the 3/4" solid hardwood flooring 15 lb. felt paper is recommended. For the 5/16" and 7/16" solids a 6 mil polyethylene film loosely laid, overlapped 18", and secured with a waterproof tape is required.** The staple will penetrate the moisture barrier but this still offers greater protection than felt or rosin papers. Felt and rosin papers are not considered moisture barriers. They are at best moisture retardants.

### **Can we install directly to old hardwood floors?**

**The National Wood Flooring Association recommends installing over an existing hardwood floor only if the face size of the existing floor is no wider than 3 1/2".** It is best to lay the new floor in the opposite direction to the existing floor. Be sure to use all moisture barriers required with the installation of the new floor. Make sure the existing floor is flat and level. If gluing direct to an existing finished floor, the finish must be removed or abraded to allow the glue for the new flooring to adhere.

### **How should I address a crawl space?**

**It is essential that all crawl spaces are dry.** Crawl spaces must be a minimum of 24" from the ground to the underside of the joists. A moisture barrier must be established in crawl spaces using 6 mil polyethylene film overlapping and taping joints. The 6 mil poly should be taped up the walls using gravel or rocks to weigh the poly film down. Crawl spaces can harbor moisture and must be addressed.

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## e n g i n e e r e d

### **What are some of the advantages of an engineered floor versus a solid wood floor?**

**Engineered floors can be installed on all levels of the home, including below grade basements.**

Constructed with a plywood base, engineered floors are more dimensionally stable and may incorporate floating installation techniques. In addition, engineered flooring can be installed over some styles of radiant heat.

### **What are the wear layers on the BR-111™ engineered lines?**

**An engineered wear layer is the thickness of the “real” wood product glued to the top of the plywood.** The BR-111™ 5/16” Engineered has a sliced veneer wear layer approximately 1/20” thick. The Dolomites Engineered and the Triangulo® Engineered have a thick-sawn wear layer approximately 1/8” thick.

### **How long should I allow for on-site acclimation of my engineered wood floor before installing?**

**Engineered hardwood flooring generally does not require the detailed and strict acclimation required for solid wood floors.** The thinner the wear layer, the less acclimation required.

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## f l o a t i n g   a p p l i c a t i o n

### **What is a floating style installation?**

**A floating floor is where each plank is attached to the next plank by gluing the tongue and groove together.** The entire floor floats on a pad or underlayment and is not attached to the sub-floor in any way. The weight of the flooring boards holds the floor in place.

### **Can I use the floating floor style of installation with solid hardwood flooring?**

**No.** BR-111™ solid floors cannot be used in a floating installation.

### **What are the pros and cons of using a floating style installation?**

**This technique allows you to install over difficult sub floors like gypcrete (acoustical concrete) that contain extreme PH levels which can attack glue lines.** Since the required underlayment includes a moisture barrier, it is also the easiest style of installation to protect against moisture intrusion. The floating style installation is easier to install than the full spread glue-down application and best for the “do-it-yourselfer.” With product lines like the BR-111™ 5/16” Engineered floor, where you may want to replace or upgrade in 15 to 20 years, it is much easier to remove a floating floor than a floor that has been glued down.

There are a range of potential negatives that have been attached to floating floors. For example, floating floors have been referred to as sounding “hollow” when walked on. Because moldings and transition pieces must be used, doors and hallways cannot be floated. As a result, each individual room is essentially an “island.” Kitchen cabinets must be installed before the floating style installation, otherwise they will anchor the floor and restrict the natural movement of the floating application.

Of all the BR-111™ products, the 5/16” Engineered is the most common product line that is floated.

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## f l o a t i n g   a p p l i c a t i o n

### **What special tools will I need to float the BR-111™ engineered flooring products?**

**Glue made specifically for floating floor installations, a 2 in 1 pad underlayment, and 3M blue tape are the three special tools needed to float engineered flooring products.**

**2 in 1 Pad Underlayment** - a quality leading brand floating floor pad is always required. Cork is not considered a correct underlay on its own. The 2 in 1 pad is approximately 1/8" foam on the top with a poly moisture barrier attached to the bottom. There are now 3 in 1 pads available on the market that offer foam, a moisture barrier, and a sound deadening component. The minimum pad required is the 2 in 1. Follow the underlayment manufacturer's installation instructions.

**Glue** - The floating floor glue comes in a squeeze bottle with a long nozzle. This is so the installer can apply glue into the groove at the sides and ends. A leading brand PVA-2 (poly vinyl acetate) glue specifically for floating floors, such as Franklin Titebond II, is required. BR-111™ requires a full bead of glue in all the grooves of the board.

**3M Blue Tape** - This is a vital component to hold the flooring boards tight while drying and reduce minor shifting of floors during installation. All 3M blue tape should be removed within 24 hours.

### **Can I staple down all the BR-111 engineered products?**

**No. The BR-111™ 5/16" Engineered products cannot be stapled-down.** The hardwood veneer layer will crimp and dent from the staple gun resulting in dimple marks every time the installer inserts a staple. The Dolomites Engineered and Triangulo® Engineered product lines have thicker wear layers and can be stapled-down.

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r a d i a n t   h e a t

**Can I install BR-111™ solid hardwood flooring over radiant heat?**

**No.** BR-111™ solid wood floors are not recommended for installation over radiant heat systems. Engineered floors can be installed over hydronic-style (where hot water circulates through tubes) radiant heat systems.

**Can I install BR-111™ engineered floors over radiant heat?**

**Yes,** if the radiant heat is a hydronic-style system where hot water passes through tubes that are fully encased in concrete or underneath plywood. Systems where the hot water tube is installed in a plywood joist or cut out and laid next to the tube are not suitable as these systems do not allow enough clearance between the top of the hot water tube and the bottom of the floor. Electric net systems are also not suitable.

The BR-111™ 5/16" Engineered products have had great success over hydronic radiant heat systems. The Dolomites Engineered and Triangulo® Engineered products also work well with this style of radiant heat, however, the use of a humidifier is recommended with these thick-sawn engineered lines. Dwellings without humidifiers will have low relative humidity, causing the thicker wear layers in some species of these lines to exhibit face checking.