

Tips for Creating Your Dream Home by Sara Shragal



The Hard Facts on Hardwood Flooring

Confused about the difference between wood hardness ratings and real vs. manufactured wood flooring? If so, you're not alone. And if you're thinking about installing [hardwood flooring](#) in your home but can't decide which style suits your budget and home design, here are a few basic facts you should know before going any further:

Laminate Flooring – Laminate flooring isn't real wood flooring even though, technically speaking, it is still composed of wood. However, it looks amazingly similar to real wood, is often less expensive than real hardwood flooring and is highly durable and resistant to abrasions, thus becoming a widely popular choice among homeowners today.

Engineered Wood – Also referred to as “composite wood,” engineered wood consists of two layers of different material. An upper wood veneer is overlaid upon plywood to give the appearance of solid flooring. Because engineered wood is man-made, it is stronger than real wood and less apt to humidity warping. The downside is that when damaged, you cannot sand out scratches or dents – an advantage to real wood flooring. It also has a propensity for absorbing liquids when not treated with sealant.

Solid Hardwood Flooring – This is the real hardwood flooring – or 100 percent real wood flooring. Hardwood flooring comes finished or unfinished, which can affect the price – as unfinished varieties are less expensive. Unfinished wood also requires maintenance upon or before installation. It must be sanded, sealed – and possibly stained - before use. Another item to note is that rooms known for their dampness – bathrooms, for example – should not be outfitted with real wood. Long life is the typical advantage to real wood flooring, as it can be re-sanded and resealed numerous times.



With this little bit of information you have at least a starting point. And if you're still not sure where to begin, most retail home improvement outlets and members-only showrooms like DirectBuy, employ product specialists and interior design consultants who can help you choose the right flooring for both your [home improvement](#) plans and your lifestyle.

Sara Shragal is a staff writer for DirectBuy. For more information or other helpful tips for your home, visit www.directbuycares.com. You can send suggestions for future columns to questions@directbuycares.com.