



INSTALLATION GUIDELINES

12 MM LAMINATE FLOORING

Maintenance Instructions and Limited Warranty Included

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Buyers and owners are responsible for thoroughly reading all materials provided by the retailer at time of purchase prior to the installation of flooring, including the installation guidelines, maintenance instructions, and the product warranty information. The following instructions apply only to Owl Distribution's 12 mm laminate floors, included within the Danforth, Legato and Emerald Plus Collections. This product is installed using a Välinge Click System, produced under license.

Owl Distribution is not responsible for the installer's application of the product and requires the product to be inspected prior to installation. The installer should contact the supplier immediately for replacement if the product (whether an individual plank or more) appears doubtful in appearance, such as grade, color, finish, or quality. The supplier is responsible for replacing flooring materials in a timely fashion if the product is determined to be defective. However, Owl Distribution is *not* responsible for flooring that has been previously installed or damaged on the surface (or tongue) of the plank by the installer. For flooring that is determined to be defective post-installation, Golden Elite will be responsible to reimburse the buyer for the materials only, labor costs or any other related expenses will not be reimbursed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| General Information..... | 1 |
| Materials & Tools..... | 2 |
| Subfloor Preparation..... | 2 |
| A. General Subfloor Preparation & Precautions..... | 2 |
| B. Concrete..... | 2 |
| C. Wood..... | 3 |
| D. Vinyl..... | 3 |
| Room Preparation..... | 3 |
| A. Wall Base Trim..... | 3 |
| B. Door Jambs..... | 3 |
| C. Wall Irregularities | 4 |
| Acclimation..... | 4 |
| Installation..... | 4 |
| A. Basic Procedures..... | 4 |
| B. Beginning the Installation..... | 5 |
| C. First Rows..... | 5 |
| D. Last Rows..... | 8 |
| E. Installing in Wet Areas..... | 9 |
| F. Pipes..... | 9 |
| G. Finishing..... | 9 |
| H. Precautions..... | 9 |
| Maintenance Instructions..... | 10 |
| Warranty..... | 11 |

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Laying the floor should be the last step of your project.
- Laminate floors can be installed at above or below grade level.
- Check with your building inspector before installing laminate stairways. In many areas, laminate stairs fail to meet code.
- Maintain relative humidity of 35-45% before, during, and after the installation at the jobsite.
- Laminate floors expand and contract with changes in relative humidity, making it necessary to leave 3/8" (10 mm) expansion space around the perimeter of the room and all other objects.
- Use a hygrometer [relative humidity indicator] to check moisture content in the air to ensure that relative humidity is within the recommended range.
- The heating system must be functional and the building must be heated up to 15-20° C (70° F) for a minimum of 7 days.
- The floor floats and is installed without glue. It is safe to walk on the floor during and immediately after installation.
- **The installation of Owl Distribution's laminate flooring is not guaranteed for any radiant heating floor system.**
- It is recommended to install flooring parallel to the longest wall in the room or parallel to the main window in the room.
- To calculate the flooring material requirements, measure the length and width of the room where you will be installing the laminate floors and multiply them together to determine its area. Add 10% to the room's area to determine square footage of laminate flooring, underlayment, and vapor barrier that you will require. We recommend you purchase a few extra cartons of flooring to be used in case you have some damaged pieces, miscalculate the size of the room or miss cut some pieces.
- *Document Each Test:* To ensure that the flooring product is being installed according to the outlined guidelines, Owl Distribution requires for the buyer or installer to document each step of the preparation process prior to installing the flooring. This involves taking a photograph of the test reader that displays the humidity level, the temperature of the jobsite, the subfloor, etc., along with the date and time that the photograph was taken. This can be completed quickly using a basic camera on your cell phone and helps protect the buyer or installer in the case that a claim needs to be filed.
- When installing in areas greater than 27' feet in any direction, such as one large room, two or more adjoining rooms, archways greater than 4 feet and large rooms with a connected hallway, a T-molding break must be installed across the room, at the archway or at the beginning of the hallway to allow extra expansion space. **Not following this instruction will void your warranty.**

MATERIALS & TOOLS

Materials

- Laminate floors
- Underlayment / Membrane
- Vapor barrier
- Transitional moldings (if needed)

Tools

- Measuring tape
- Carpenter's square
- 2" (51 mm) wide moisture resistant adhesive tape
- Utility knife
- Safety glasses
- Dust mask
- Pencil/marker
- 3/8" (10 mm) thick spacers
- Power saw (any of the following):
 - Table saw
 - Miter saw
 - Circular saw
 - Jigsaw
- Handsaw or doorjamb saw

SUBFLOOR PREPARATION

A. General Subfloor Preparation & Precautions

- Subfloors must be clean and free of dirt and debris prior to installation.
- Subfloors must be structurally sound and flat prior to installation.
- Subfloor moisture must be tested prior to installation and should not exceed 12% throughout the installation area.
- Carpet is not a suitable underlayment for laminate floors. All carpet, carpet pad and carpet tack should be removed prior to installation.
- Variations in the subfloor flatness should not exceed 1/16" per 3 ft. (2 mm/m). Floors must be leveled to meet this specification prior to installation. Level by filling depressed areas with floor leveling compounds and sanding or grinding down any raised areas. Subfloor thickness must be a minimum of 15 mm (5/8").

B. Concrete

- Concrete subfloors must be properly cured and allowed to dry for at least 30 days prior to installation. Test concrete subfloor for moisture prior to installation.
 - Tape 3' x 3' (91 cm x 91 cm) pieces of polyethylene vapor barrier to subfloor.
 - If condensation appears on the film after 24 hours or concrete appears dark, in color, moisture is likely present and a Calcium Chloride test must be performed.
 - The maximum allowable moisture emission is 5 lbs./1000 ft.² per 24 hours (2.26 kg/101.6 m² per 24 hours).
- A 0.12" (3 mm) thick underlayment and 8 mil. (0.2 mm) polyethylene vapor barrier must be used when installing over concrete.
- Overlap vapor barrier edges by 8" (20 cm) and seal with moisture resistant adhesive tape.
- Run vapor barrier 3/4" (2 cm) up wall and trim after wall base is installed.
- Underlayment edges should not be overlapped. Butt end edges together and seal with adhesive tape.

C. Wood

- Wood subfloors must be structurally sound and screwed or nailed to supporting beams.
- Do not install laminate floors over wood subfloors applied directly to concrete.
- If installing floors over a crawl space it is recommended that an 8 mil. (0.2 mm) vapor barrier be installed.
 - Overlap vapor barrier edges by 8" (20 cm) and seal with moisture resistant adhesive tape.
 - Run vapor barrier 3/4" (2 cm) up wall and trim after wall base is installed.
- A 3 mm thick underlay must be installed prior to installation of laminate floors.

D. Vinyl (sheet/tile), Linoleum, Ceramic Tile

- If vinyl, linoleum, or ceramic tile is installed over concrete an 8 mil (0.2 mm) vapor barrier must be installed over it.
 - Overlap vapor barrier edges by 8" (20 cm) and seal with moisture resistant adhesive tape.
 - Run vapor barrier 3/4" (2 cm) up wall and trim after wall base is installed.
- A 0.12" (3 mm) thick underlayment must be installed prior to installation of laminate floors.

E. Radiant heat

IMPORTANT: Due to the speed of sudden temperature changes, which has the potential to negatively affect laminate flooring construction, it is not recommended to install over any electrical radiant heating system.

Owner and installer are solely and jointly responsible for pre-installation subfloor moisture level check and must ensure that all conditions and/or specifications listed in this guide have been thoroughly met prior to installation of the floor.

ROOM PREPARATION

A. Wall Base/Trim

- Removal of existing wall base/trim is optional.
- Wall base or trim will need to be installed once the flooring installation is complete to cover the expansion space around the perimeter of the room.
- Always nail/adhere wall base and trim to the wall. Never nail/adhere it to the laminate flooring.

B. Doors/Door Jambs

Laminate floors should be installed under door jambs so your door jambs will need to be undercut accordingly. To do so:

- Use a laminate flooring off-cut and a small piece of underlayment to support your saw blade at the correct height for undercutting.
- Check door clearances and make any necessary height adjustments before installing laminate floors.
- Make sure to leave the correct expansion spacing.

C. Wall Irregularities

Walls are not always perfectly straight. Golden Elite laminate floors will need to be cut so as to fit within irregularities of your walls. To do so:

1. Install a complete, first row of the laminate floor and ensure that all long edges of the laminate flooring are aligned flush with one other.

2. Slide the whole row against the wall; you will now notice any of these irregularities (i.e. areas where the wall is not straight.)
3. Trace the contour of the wall onto the row of laminate flooring with a pencil or marker.
4. Once traced, uninstall the planks carefully so as to not damage the locking system and cut along the traced line.
5. Re-install the planks leaving the necessary 3/8" (10 mm) expansion space.

ACCLIMATION

IMPORTANT: Do not open boxes until ready to begin installation.

Laminate floors must be acclimated to the conditions of your home before they are installed. To do so, cross-stack unopened cartons in the area where they will be installed and away from outside walls, heat and air conditioning vents. Allow 48 hours for your floors to acclimate to the conditions of the installation area before opening the cartons. Installation temperatures should be at a minimum of 64° F (18° C) with a maximum relative humidity of 45%.

INSTALLATION

A. Basic Procedures

- It is recommended that planks be mixed from at least three cartons to achieve the most natural and varied results.
- Inspect every plank for damage before installing it. If any plank is determined to be defective, contact the distributor as soon as possible. Golden Elite recommends for the buyer to be present during the installation of the floor to inspect all the material with the installer prior to the installation.
- The first and last row of the installation should be wider than 3.5" (9 cm). To ensure this will be the case, prior to installation:
 1. Measure the width of the room and divide it by the width of the planks you are installing.
 2. If the remainder is less than 3.5" (9 cm) cut 3.5" (9 cm) from the width of the first row. If this is not possible, simply ensure that both edge planks are as even in width as possible.
- The first and last plank in a row should be a minimum of 16" (40 cm) long.
- Stagger the planks from row to row by a minimum of 16" (40 cm).
- Prepare the subfloor and room as per the corresponding instructions found in this guideline.
- Use spacers to maintain the 3/8" (10 mm) expansion space between the first row and the wall.
- Select a starting corner of the room and work from left to right.

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B. Beginning the Installation

Begin by first installing a foam underlay. Run the foam underlay in the same direction as the flooring planks. The underlay should be butted side-by-side with no overlap. Tape seams together. If you are installing over a concrete subfloor, a 6-mil poly (plastic sheeting) is to be

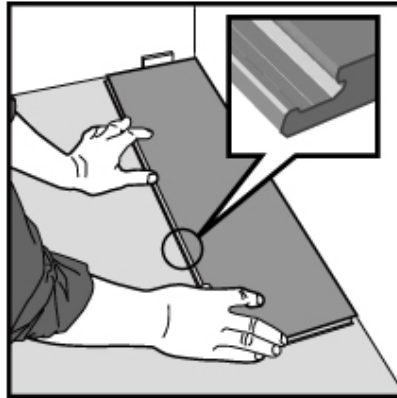
installed under the foam underlay. (Many foam underlays already have this plastic sheeting pre-attached).

Remember when installing your laminate floor to leave an open expansion gap of min 10 mm (3/8") around the perimeter of the room (use wedges), i.e also at pipes, stairs, columns, doorframes and thresholds. The floor must be able to move free - do not connect or install tight to any construction part. Install to a maximum of 33 ft. (approx. 10m) length /width at a time. If the room is larger, allow for an expansion gap, which can be covered with the appropriate laminate T-mold. Also leave an expansion gap to separate areas in rooms that are off square (for example L-, F-, T-, U- shapes). Always leave expansion gaps in door openings.

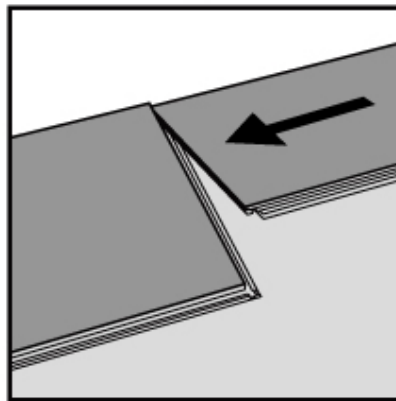
IMPORTANT: For reasons both for visual enjoyment and for structural integrity of the total installation, do not install end joints closer than 15" from the end joints of the previous row (for normal 4' length laminate).

C. First Rows

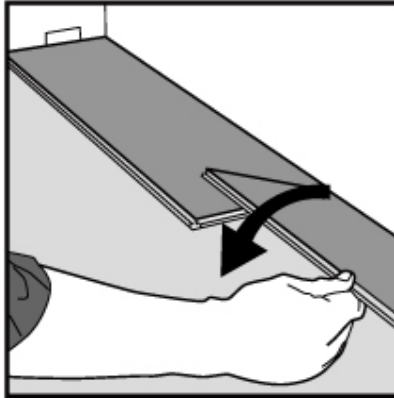
1. First plank, first row. Place a distance 3/8" (10 mm) width to the left and position the plank against the wall. Later, after 3 rows, you can easily re-position the flooring away from the front wall for the 3/8" (10 mm) expansion gap.



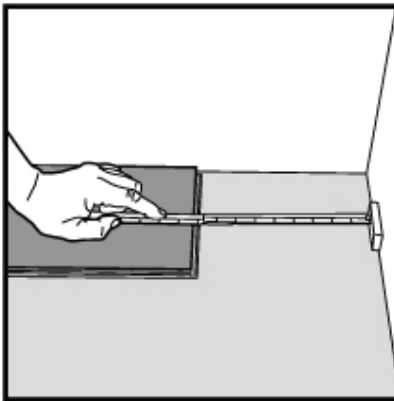
2. Second plank, first row. Place this plank tight to the short end of the first one.



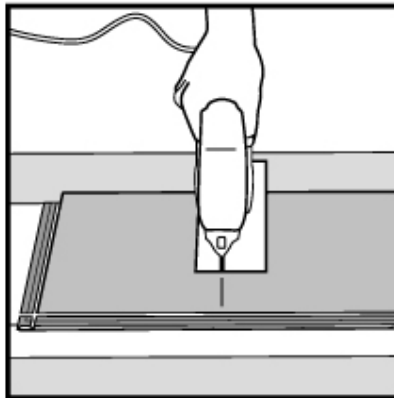
3. Fold down with a single action movement.



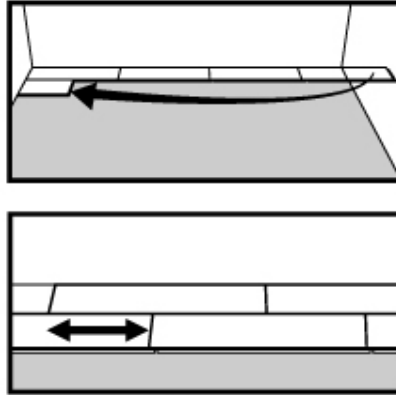
4. At the end of the first row, leave an expansion gap of 3/8" (10 mm) to the wall and measure the length of the last plank to fit.



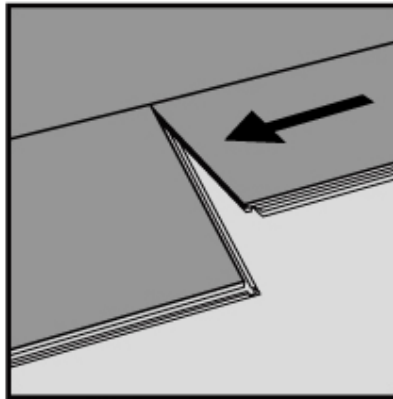
5. If cutting with a jig saw, the laminate surface should be turned down. If cutting with a hand saw, the laminate surface should be face up.



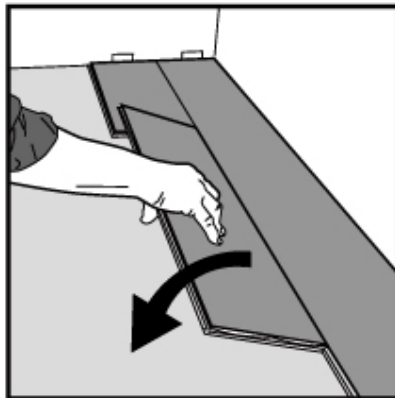
6. Second row, First plank minimum length of 1ft 7 11/16" (500 mm). Leave an expansion gap of 3/8" (10 mm) against the wall. Generally, the minimum distance between short ends of planks in parallel rows shall not be less than 6 inches (150 mm).



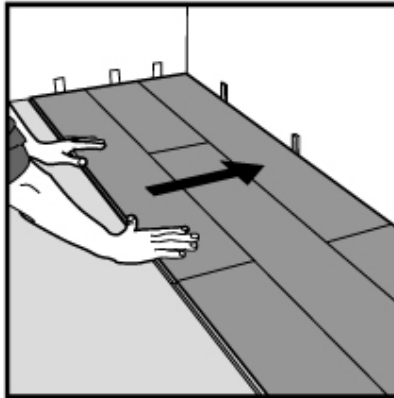
7. Install the second plank of the second row.



8. Place the panel tight to the short end of the previous panel and fold down in a single action movement.



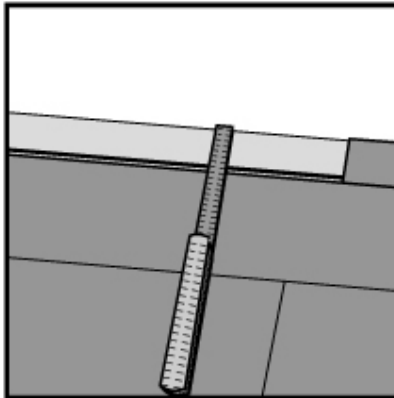
9. After 2-3 rows, re-position the floor to adjust the distance to the front wall to ensure an expansion gap of 3/8" (10 mm).



D. Last Rows

10. Last row (and perhaps also first row). Minimum width must be at least 2" (50 mm). Remember to leave an expansion gap of 3/8" (10 mm).

Tip! After cutting the final row panels lengthwise, glue the short ends.



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E. Pipes

In rows where there is a pipe, make sure the pipe falls exactly in line with the short side of two panels. Take a drill bit with the same diameter as the pipe plus 20 mm (3/4") for the expansion. Click the panels together on the short side and drill a hole centered on the joint between the two panels.

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F. Finishing

- Remove all spacers.
- Install the molding on the plastic membrane that runs up the wall from under the floor. Never attach the molding to the floor. This method allows the floor to expand and contract under the molding.
- For a perfect finish around pipes, use rosettes or flexible silicone caulking.
- In places where profiles or skirting cannot be placed, fill expansion gaps with flexible silicone caulking.

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G. Precautions

- Protect furniture and chair legs with proper felt or rubber caps.
- Avoid bringing dirt, water and sand indoors by providing a suitable solid backed floor mat at the door.
- Furniture on casters/wheels must use soft, rubber wheels that are suitable for a laminate floor and/or use a suitable protective mat.
- Ensure that humidity in the room is always at least 35%. Use a humidifier if you need to.

MAINTENANCE INSTRUCTIONS

Owl Distribution's laminate floors are among the highest performing floors available, but they are not indestructible and minor cosmetic scuffing is normal wear for any laminate floors. To ensure your floors perform as well in the future as they do the day after you install them:

DO:

- Place walk off mats and area rugs at main traffic entrances and protective pads under furniture legs to prevent scratching.
- Sweep or vacuum using the wand attachment.
- For spills, just wipe up with a cloth or sponge.
- Allow time for floor to dry after washing.
- Immediately wipe up wet areas from spills, foreign substances, or wet feet.

DON'T:

- Use soap-based detergents or "mop and shine" products, as these may leave a dull film on your laminate floor.
 - Use abrasive cleaners, steel wool, or scouring powder, which can scratch your floor. And, in very sandy areas or at the beach, sweep or vacuum regularly.
 - Wax or polish your floor.
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25-YEAR LIMITED RESIDENTIAL WARRANTY

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Buyers and owners are responsible for thoroughly reading all materials provided by the retailer at time of purchase prior to the installation of flooring, including the installation guidelines, maintenance instructions, and the product warranty information.

Some jurisdictions do not allow exclusion or limitation of incidental or consequential damages so that the above limitation and exclusion may not apply. Your warranty gives you specific legal rights and you may also have other rights, which vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.

This warranty only applies to the original end user and is not transferable. Owl Distribution needs the flooring receipts to verify date and proof of purchase to resolve any problem that may occur. If a defect is found, Golden Elite will repair the defective area or replace the floor with similar color, pattern and quality at your option.

Owl Distribution's limited, non-transferable 25-year residential and 5-year light commercial warranty begins from the date of purchase, and covers only the original purchaser, for twenty-five (25) years in dry, residential areas and five (5) years in dry, light commercial spaces. **Be sure to thoroughly read all articles and conditions pertaining to the warranty, its application and coverage.** Warranty is valid only where the proper installation criteria have been met.

NOTE: This warranty will be null & void if this product is installed with obvious visual defects. Should a defect be found in the flooring before installation, it is the installer's responsibility to immediately stop and directly contact Owl Distribution for further instructions and assistance before installation. Installation of a defective product implies acceptance of its condition and will void your warranty.

Improper installation and maintenance of this product will void the warranty.

No warranty will be offered for appearance related claims once the product has been installed.

The manufacturer warrants that this product in its original manufactured condition is free from defect in material, workmanship and grading.

The finish and wear guaranty warrants that, the original purchaser will not have problems with the finish peeling off or wearing through, from the date of purchase.

The manufacturer's warranty extends to the value of the product purchased and does not include labor or installation costs. Your warranty (replacement or refund) is pro-rated based on the expired life of the warranty.

What is NOT covered?

- Damages incurred by natural disasters (fire, flooding etc).
- Damages incurred through improper storage, handling or installation of the product.

- Damages incurred through excessive or inadequate levels of humidity in area of installation (Relative Humidity (RH) should be kept between 35% and 45%).
- Damages incurred by improper handling through shipping companies. This responsibility lies solely with the shipper; such claims must be forwarded directly to them.
- Dents, scratches or abuse to the floor.
- Abuse, lack of maintenance, neglect, abnormal use or misuse, corrosive chemicals, burns or any other usage not recommended by the manufacturer.
- Warping, chipping, bridging due to water and moisture damage or incorrect installation.
- Failure due to structural changes in the sub-floor, settling of the building or uneven subfloors that have not been properly levelled.
- Damages incurred by exposure to water or abrasive cleaning products.
- Installation of flooring with visual defects.
- Surface scratches & minor wear and tear from everyday usage.

For more information on this product, please contact your local Owl Distribution center.