

RANDOM WIDTH HARDWOOD FLOORING

Random width hardwood flooring provides an authentic, timeworn look that adds a visual interest with a vintage flair. Authentic and handcrafted is staying true to the craftsmanship and processes of the past. Historically, our great-grandfathers milled hardwood lumber from the log into various widths, based on the size and grade of the tree, in order to maximize material and limit waste. Hardwood Design Company salvages material and is intentional about minimizing waste and staying true to the craft and artistry of the past.

RANDOM WIDTH FLOORING INSTALLATION TIPS

- Determine the square footage of the area or areas of installation. Based on the total square footage calculations will need to be made for each board width in the random flooring to determine each board width square footage. Hardwood Design Company will figure this calculation for you to ensure you have a true random width flooring.
- Assess the installation areas and determine how the different widths can be used. Determine where furniture and cabinetry may be placed so you can avoid using wider widths in the areas that will not be seen. Also, takes into consideration area rug placement as well. Place your favorite boards in areas that will be visible.
- Prior to installation, the installer will need to separate all bundle widths into individual bundle piles, so they are visual during installation. This will ensure that you will not run out of one specific width during the installation process as the same width piles will be visual throughout the install of your hardwood floor.
- Do not repeat installation in a pattern, otherwise, you will run out of some widths before the installation is complete.
- Randomly stagger the flooring board length as well. You don't want board lengths to match up across the floor.
- For narrower and less frequented spaces such as hallways, closets, and guest rooms consider using narrower boards.
- For larger and more frequented spaces such as living areas, large foyers, and kitchens consider installing your widest board width down the center of the room and working random widths from the center to the perimeter of the room.
- There is a lot of creative freedom allowed in the installation of a true random width floor. You can put the same width boards in consecutive rows. You can "favor" different width in separate rooms. You can run out of sizes of one width and continue installing with the remaining sizes.

INSTALLATION PITFALLS TO AVOID

Over installing wide boards at the beginning of the job. Most people prefer the wider boards over the narrow boards. There are two primary reasons that this problem occurs.

- First, installers like to cover an area as fast as possible. Larger boards accomplish this significantly faster than small boards. Whether this is conscious or subconscious, I don't know. I have never heard anyone personally admit to this, but I have observed it dozens of times.
- Second, the volume of material and linear feet are assumed to be the same. Take two identically sized piles of 8" flooring and 4" flooring. The square footage is the same but there is twice as many linear feet of 4". You will need to have twice as many rows of 4" installed. It is very common for an installer to look at those stacks and jump to the conclusion that they need a similar number of rows of each based on the size of the pile. Couple this tendency with the desire to install fast and it's easy to see how you can find yourself out of wide boards and still have a large quantity of the narrow boards halfway through a job.
- Another complicating factor to this can also be the way a project is installed. Ideally, you would start in the most important areas and complete them first. This way, you could give this part of the job extra attention and have the option of "cherry picking" the most desired materials for this area. As you work your way to the least visible or more remote areas of your project, you can use the sizes or types of boards that you chose not to use in the key parts of your home. Unfortunately, most projects happen in reverse of this. The least important areas, such as a second floor, are usually completed well in advance of the major living areas that have more details or carpentry work. In the name of progress, the decision is made to do the job in phases, starting with the areas that probably matter the least in the overall project.
- Using price as a determining factor for choosing an installer.

CHOOSING AN INSTALLER

Your installer should, at a minimum, have the following characteristics:

1. Be experienced.
 - Ask for customer references and project work portfolios.
 - Be careful to use years of experience as the only metric here
 - If you are working with a builder, they will be a great source for installer recommendations.
2. Take pride in the craftsmanship that they bring to the table. They should prefer doing jobs that showcase their skills and experience. They should seem excited to do your project.
3. View challenges as an opportunity to showcase their abilities.