

# Solid vs Engineered Flooring Guide

## Understanding Your Flooring Options for the Perfect Choice

Choosing between solid and engineered flooring impacts cost, installation, and performance. This guide explains the key differences.

### Solid Hardwood Flooring

**Construction:** Single piece of solid wood, typically 3/4" thick with tongue-and-groove edges.

**Benefits:**

- Refinish 6-10 times over 100+ year lifespan
- Adds maximum property value
- Develops character over time
- Traditional, authentic appearance

**Limitations:**

- Cannot install below grade or over concrete
- Expands/contracts with humidity
- Limited to 5" widths typically
- Professional installation required

**Best For:** Above-grade installations, traditional homes, long-term investments.

### Engineered Hardwood Flooring

**Construction:** Real wood veneer (2-6mm) bonded to plywood or HDF core layers. Total thickness 3/8" to 3/4".

**Benefits:**

- 75% less expansion/contraction
- Install anywhere including basements and over concrete
- Available in wide planks (up to 12")
- Multiple installation methods (float, glue, nail)
- 20-30% lower cost than solid

### Limitations:

- Limited refinishing (1-3 times)
- 30-50 year lifespan
- Quality varies by manufacturer

**Best For:** Basements, condos, radiant heat, wide planks, budget-conscious projects.

## Key Comparisons

### Subfloor Compatibility

**Solid:** Wood subfloors only, above grade **Engineered:** Any subfloor including concrete, below grade, over radiant heat

### Stability & Moisture

**Solid:** Requires 30-50% humidity, significant seasonal movement **Engineered:** Handles 25-65% humidity, minimal movement

### Refinishing & Lifespan

**Solid:** 6-10 refinishes, 100+ year lifespan **Engineered:** 1-3 refinishes (depends on veneer), 30-50 years

### Installation

**Solid:** Nail/staple only, professional required (£3-5 labour) **Engineered:** Float, glue, or nail, DIY possible

## Quick Decision Guide

### Choose Solid If:

- Installing above grade only
- Want maximum longevity
- Plan multiple refinishing
- Have humidity control
- Prioritise resale value

### Choose Engineered If:

- Installing below grade/over concrete
- Want wider planks (6"+)
- Have radiant heating
- Need stability
- Prefer DIY option

## Quality Indicators

**Solid:** Look for Select grade, 6-9% moisture content, precise milling

**Engineered:** Check veneer thickness (4mm+ for refinishing), 7-11 core layers, quality adhesives

## The Bottom Line

Solid hardwood offers unmatched longevity and refinishing potential for traditional above-grade installations. Engineered provides superior stability and installation flexibility for challenging spaces. Consider your subfloor, environment, budget, and long-term plans. Request samples to compare quality firsthand.