



## Let's be clear

ood floors have a radiance that brings a room alive. But sadly, as with nature, beauty fades over time. If your floors need repair, we can restore them to their original beauty; if they need to be replaced, we can fit a beautiful bespoke floor to delight you. We are specialist fitters of hardwood floors. We do nothing else. Carpenters and builders cannot begin to do the precision work we do - and we don't pretend to do theirs.

Being specialists, we use our own technical terms and techniques. It makes for accurate communication within our industry but it can be quite baffling to our customers. So here, in plain English, are some of the terms explained.

It is important because we want to be as precise as possible in our quotations and we like you to be fully aware of what challenges we meet, the materials we use, how we work, the time it takes to fulfill a project and how we arrive at the final cost. If you understand the facts, you are better informed and better able to make a decision.

This book unmasks the mysteries of our trade. In so few words it can't be comprehensive; it explains the basics. If there is anything you do not understand, we would love to hear from you.

## Timothy Hobern,

Managing Director, HS Wood Flooring

INDEX	Subfloors	1
	Fixing methods	3
	Styles	6
	Fitting	8
	Skirting	10
	Resurfacing	11
	Colours & Finishes	12
	Our promise	back page





# **SUBFLOORS**



The ideal floor demands the perfect subfloor

The beauty and firmness of a floor is dependent on a firm, level subfloor. Unfortunately, the subfloor may be hidden under the existing floor and, therefore, it is impossible to fully assess its condition during the site visit. So, when we quote, we use our experience to make the best assessment we can with the proviso that we can adjust our estimate depending on what we find.

If we are awarded the project, the first thing we do is to lift the existing floor, make a detailed survey of what lies beneath and, if necessary, amend the quotation.

If we find a subfloor that is in really bad condition, we will suggest fitting an overtop layer of plywood. Even then, we may have to build up the shallows and shave the heights to render as flat subfloor as possible.

Please note: a proviso referring to the unseen subfloor will be added to your quotation in case any extra work is necessary.

Different subfloors require different fitting methods and these may determine the type of flooring that you can choose. Below are the three main subfloors with which we work.





# **SUBFLOORS**



#### Concrete/screed

We can fit most types of flooring on concrete or screed subfloors. We can glue the floor onto the screed or float it over the top (see opposite)..

The problem with screed is the drying time. This varies between mixes, thicknesses and types. Before we lay a new floor, it is essential that it is completely dry otherwise the new timber will warp.

This means the screed must be poured and dry in good time to allow the floor to be finished in the time allotted to the project.

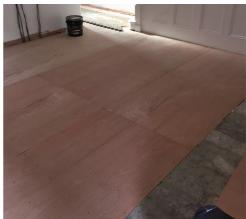
#### Joists

For a sound structural base, we will fit transverse planks that are at least 20mm thick across the joists.

Levelling the existing joists can be time consuming and costly. If height is not an issue, we will fit an 18mm plywood or chipboard base to the joists for a more stable floor.



Fitting boards transversely to the joists



A plywood overtop provides a firm foundation for the new floor to be fitted above

### Existing floorboards or other timber.

If the existing floor boards are in reasonably good condition, we can lay a new floor by simply fixing it straight to the original Pine floorboards. Sometimes an upper floor already has a plywood or chipboard base so we work with that.

This type of subfloor is suitable for all types of flooring to be laid over the top. We can then glue, nail or float the floor on to it.

Sometimes, the existing Pine floorboards may be uneven or running in the same direction that we want to lay the new flooring. In this case, we can fit and fix plywood straight onto them as a new subfloor. This keeps the floor level, reduces squeaks and results in a far firmer, solid floor.



Gluing boards together for a floating floor over an underfloor heating system

# **FIXING METHODS**



Gluing boards to a concrete screed

#### Float

When a floor is installed over a heat conducting mat used for underfloor heating system or a soundproof underlay, it is known as a floating floor. It can also be used to keep costs down as there are economic underlay options available.

When floating a floor, we apply PVA glue to the groove of each board along the side and on the end so that the boards then fit together and become a single unit once the glue has dried.

The downside of a floating floor is there can be a lot of movement if the subfloor is uneven. It can also have the effect of giving the floor a cheap feel underfoot as floating floors are often associated with laminate flooring.

**NOTE:** Unless fitted by a specialist, a floating floor laid by a builder or a carpenter is asking for trouble; they lack the tools and experience.

#### Nail

This is used over timber subfloors. We drive a secret nail at 45° through the tongue and into the subfloor. The nails are spaced at intervals of 400mm. The gives the floor a firm feeling without the cost of adhesive. The only downside is that squeaks can happen between the subfloor and the nail if there is any movement. To prevent this, we can place glue strips under the nails this firms up the floor. More adhesive can be used if needed.

#### Glue

This method is mostly used on screed subfloors and gives a reassurance of a solid feeling underfoot. It is also reduces the chance of squeaky floors.

It can be costly due to the price of adhesive. If your subfloor is not evenly flat then we have to use more adhesive per square metre than the manufacturers recommend. Skimping on the adhesive is never advisable as we only get one shot at getting it right.



We use a special tool to invisibly nail the broads to the batons



# **FIXING METHODS**





A really neat fit between the floor and the door jamb ... with the help of a special saw that enables ...

### Doors A

We make a clean cut through the bottom of the door frame at the height of the new flooring and then fit the floor into this gap. This way, we achieve a seamless fit with as few joins around the door frame as possible. We will also adjust the clearance of the door if needed to ensure it swings freely and does not damage your new floor.

## Picture frames V

A picture frame is a mitred edge that butts up to a door mat well or the hearth of a fireplace. It is a neat visual way to finish a floor. We use the same flooring timber to make a frame around the hearth or mat. The width and size of the frame is adjustable so we will make it to suit your own taste.



A stylish picture frame around a fireplace ...



... and the front door mat well



# **FIXING METHODS**



... the floor to slip underneath the door and the skirting

## Step details ▼

In most cases, we will clad over your existing stairs using the timber from the flooring combined with a solid Oak nosing that can be coloured to match the floor. Alternatively, we can have pre-made and pre-finished treads made to your liking. The stair tread and riser can be the same timber or the riser can be painted.

Oiled treads matched by distinctive nosings

## Pipes **V**

Fitting a floor around radiator pipes needs an expert. Some fitters make a horrible mess then hide their crime with a cover. In our book, there is only one way; we drill a neat hole 15-22 mm diameter then cut the board cleanly through the middle of the hole and join it back together around the pipe.







and the right way



# **STYLES**

We can fit it in all sorts of patterns from Parquet (double or single block to brick), Chevron, Versailles, Basket Weave or uniquely intricate marquetry patterns. Most are available from stock but we can also create bespoke patterns - at a price! Just ask and we can show you some different options that will bring your room to life.

## Parquet

Parquet is a beautiful traditional style of flooring that can add real elegance to a floor

### Chevron

Like parquet but a more accentuated zig zag pattern that comes in virtually any colour and finish you like. They come as engineered blocks that are stronger and fit more tightly for a firmer floor

Versailles

Wood Floor

There are any number of patterns, all inspired by the floors of one of the world's greatest palaces. Colour and grain play an important part in the design



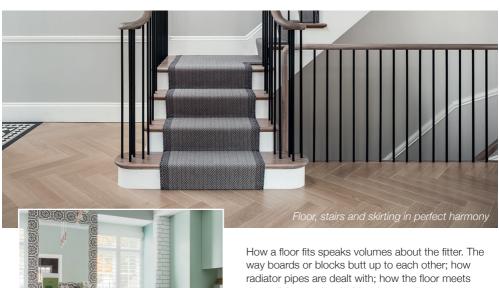
# **STYLES**



For more information about hardwoods, colours, patterns and finishes, visit our website www.hswoodflooring.co.uk



# **FITTING**



the wall; how a threshold makes an elegant transition from one floor to another.

We have the experienced craftsmen, the best materials and the right tools to create a floor of distinction, a masterpiece that will be the envy of your friends and neighbours.

#### Perspectives

Our oversize chevron hardwood floor meets a ceramic pattern that continues up the wall between two windows. The line of sight as well as the colour is all important. This kitchen featured in 'Essential Kitchens, Bathroom & Bedroom magazine May 2017 (page 68)



### Threshold

Each threshold situation is unique so we work to give the best result depending on the flooring, the subfloor, the thickness of the wood and the floor we are joining up to. We try to achieve a finish between different floors, and introduce as few different elements and/or materials as possible.



# **FITTING**



#### **Borders**

These are neat ways to finish your parquet or plank floor. A border is not always suitable but we can advise what we think will work.

A tramline or feature strip is a striking way to define your border. We make this using any number of different timbers to contrast against the flooring.



#### Curved borders

When installing curved borders around a step or rounded wall, great care, skill and patience is needed to achieve perfection. We shape each block form a large plank of Oak or other matching hardwood.







## SKIRTING



The skirting makes the perfect connection between the floor and the wall covering the necessary expansion gap between the two.



New skirting will give you the best results. It is more expensive but gives a really neat finish. It allows gap for the floors to expand under the new skirting. You can also chose the style and the height of the board.

There are two options:

Ready made: We recommend a company called Skirting World Ltd. There are many styles for you to choose from and have it delivered

Bespoke: You can design your own profile with our help. Then, we will use our router make the skirting out of 18mm MDF and apply a coat of white primer.

Concerns:

- Needs decorating. We don't decorate.
- Removing the old skirting can damage the walls
- Most expensive option.
- Some skirtings cannot be matched.

### Undercutting

Undercutting involves running a saw around the bottom of the skirting board so the flooring can slotted underneath.

We use a special saw and set it short of the depth of the skirtings. We look for signs of a hidden pipe or wire and mark them out. Sometimes we find a chased a wire or pipe left by last people working on the property. We will assist in the repair but will not be held responsible for any extra costs that may occur.



A scotia can hide a problem with the skirting

#### Scotia

This is the most common option. It is easy to install and quite inexpensive. In some cases, it will not need any decorating.

#### Concerns:

- Can look cheap and obvious.
- Is associated with laminate flooring.
- Can detract from the loom of a high quality floor.
- The non-specialist's 'go to' option.



This shows how beautifully the cover plate (highlighted) complements the existing skirting.

#### MDF Cover Plates

It is easy to install, looks neat and comfortable on most types of skirting. However, it is not always suitable as some situations will not allow it.

#### Concerns:

- Needs decorating. We don't decorate.
- Some skirtings are too low for this option or will protrude too far from the door frames. However, we will find a way.



## RESURFACING



A buffer is used to give a silk-like texture to the floor before a wax oil or lacquer is applied

#### Sanding

Sanding your existing floor is a great way to bring them back to their former beauty. Our machines are virtually dust-free.

For old Pine floors, we can fill in the gaps between the boards with a pine fillet and, for bigger spaces, a two-part filler. For existing Oak floors, we usually sand the top millimetre off the floor so most floors can be sanded again and again. We can work around your furniture but it can cost more, delay progress, and lead to a slight difference in colour.

However, if the furniture has to stay in the room, we will take great care to work around it to avoid any damage and work with you to minimise the



Our sanding machines are virtually dust free



## Wire brushing

We now have the ability to wire brush your existing timber floor. This will open up different colouring methods and let us get a close match to that prefinished floor you like but add a signature touch to it.

Wire brushing removes the softer grain in the timber leaving you with a textured finish. Useful when you have young children or pets and you want a surface less slippery and less likely to show scuffs and scratches.

The wire brushing also allows us to give your floor a deeper two-tone effect.



# **COLOURS & FINISHES**



For an extra cost we can lay out a colour test in your home

Technology continues to give us more and more colour and texture options - even on the same type of wood. When these options are multiplied by the number of wood varieties, the choice becomes impossible! Because of this, Oak is the most commonly used; it is robust, with an attractive grain, hard wearing, easy to colour and texture, environmentally sustainable and one of the most affordable.



The dark floor in Kate Spade's Regent Street store shows off her vivid signature colour style

Hardwood supplied for floors are pre-coloured and pre-finished so you can get a good idea of what your want before the floor is fitted. But existing floors in reasonable condition can be sanded, coloured and textured in your home.

We always happy to discuss the options with you.



**OLD.** The old Oak floor was sanded and coloured then wax oiled for this stunning finish



**NEW.** Bleached 400mm wide Spruce gives a wonderful dimension of space.



### Reactive stains

Reactive stains are created to not just colour the timber but also to react with the tannins in the wood to give striking features. We can closely mimic the smoked effect of an ammonia smoked pre-finished floor or give the timber an aged effect. Colour oils applied over reactive stains accentuate colours in all sorts of exciting ways especially on a brushed surface.

There is no limit to what can be achieved when colouring a floor. With a bit of imagination and daring spirit, we can create a unique finish just for you.

## Oils and lacquers

There are two main finishes we use: oils and lacquers. Both have their merits. Both can be used to achieve a beautiful finish.

Products are constantly being improved. We keep abreast of the latest products or learn new ways to improve the products we use and the way we use them. For example, wetting a floor to raise the grain before applying a colour oil gives a richer, deeper colour. And mixing colours into some of the lacquers can achieve a stunning new effect.



Applying a colour oil on top of a reactive stain on brushed oak.

# **COLOURS & FINISHES**



Applying lacquer for a harder wearing finish

For an extra cost, we can show the effects of colour mixes as samplers on the actual floor either before we start work on it or while preparing it.

#### **OIL Advantages**

- More natural look
- Easier to maintain and repair
- More colour options
- Can be layered to create double colours or different effects.

## **Disadvantages**

- Six to eight hours drying time.
- Less hard-wearing.

#### **LACQUER Advantages**

- Harder wearing, better sealing
- Quicker drying times
- Less need for maintenance.

### Disadvantages

- Harder to repair and maintain
- Less range of colour options
- Can have a plastic look.

Different sheens are possible with either oils or lacquers - matt, satin or gloss. We do not advise mixing matt and satin finishes. Gloss can be hard to keep clean and will show up every imperfection.

## **OUR PROMISE TO YOU**

- 1. We will give a professional friendly service from the initial site meeting right through to completion of the job.
- 2. We will be transparent and honest in all our dealings with you and we will be crystal clear about our costs and charges.
- 3. We will use the products listed in our quotation unless unavailability or suitability comes into question. We will clear this with you in advance and revise our quotation if necessary.
- 4. We will keep you regularly updated as to progress and be approachable at all times to answer your questions.
- 5. We will always be punctual and polite. We will work as quickly as we can without compromising the quality of our work. We will work cleanly and as quietly as the work allows.
- 6. We will respect your privacy and treat your furniture and fittings as if they were our own.
- 7. We will work to the standards and guidelines expressed by the manufacturers and suppliers of the products we use as well as maintain highest ethical and professional standards we set ourselves.
- 8. We will approach any disputes in a fair and open-minded manner.
- We will advise you on keeping your floor looking beautiful and quote for a maintenance programme if you request it.
- 10. We will only use products that are environmentally approved and/or ethically sourced from the forests of the world.
- 11. We will not invoice you until we are sure that you will be happy with the work we have done. A contented customer is our constant aim.



3 Orbis Wharf, London SW11 3GW
Telephone: 020 3793 8915 or 020 3793 0389
Email: office@hswoodflooring.co.uk
www.hswoodflooring.co.uk



