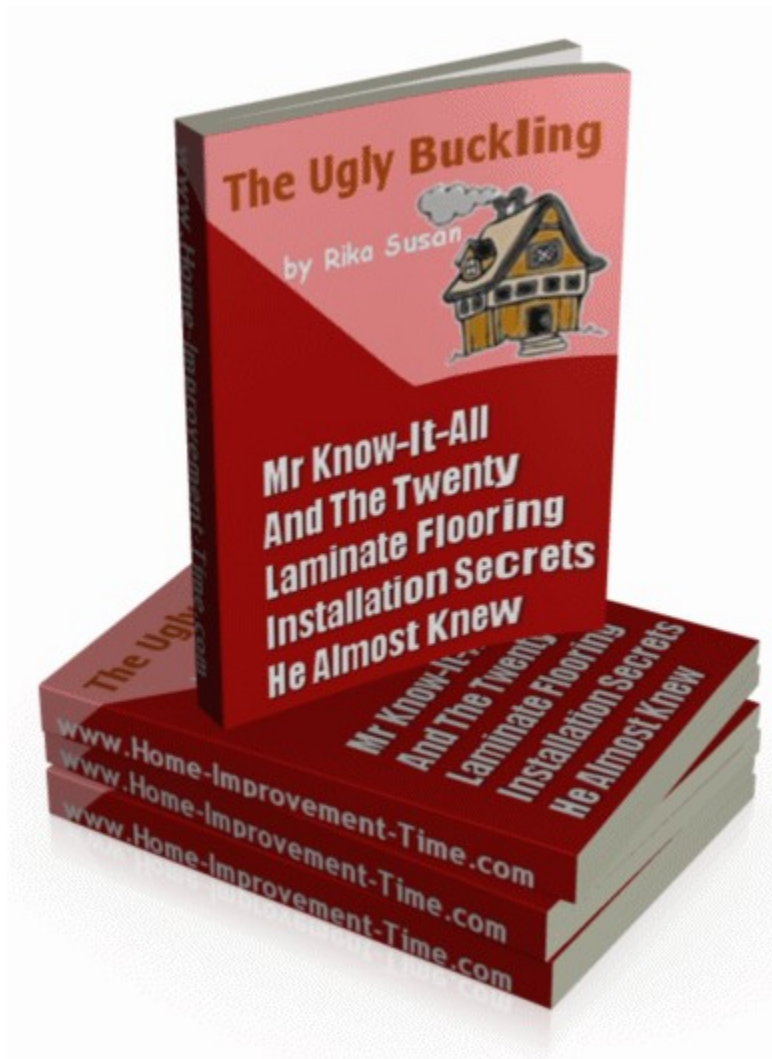


The Ugly Buckling



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The Ugly Buckling

Mr Know-It-All and the Twenty Laminate Flooring Installation Secrets He Almost Knew



by Rika Susan

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Once upon a time, not so long ago, there was a man called Mr. Know-It-All. He lived with his wife, his kids, two Labradors, a Siamese cat with kittens and two ducks in a beautiful home high up on a hill. To be precise, it was the last house on the left, overlooking the Bay.



Early one morning his wife wrapped her arms around him and whispered seductively: "Now, Dear, what with all the childhood calamities, cat's claws, drooling dogs, and duck doodoo, our carpeting really needs to be replaced. I think laminate flooring will be a nice change, don't you? I found these flooring secrets...".

Before she could finish her sentence, Mr. Know-It-All interrupted her: "No, no, Darling. I agree with you, but there is no need to waste time on so-called "secrets". Trust me, I know all I need to about installing laminate flooring. I will get to work on getting the carpets out. It won't take long at all". A few days later the house looked as if Home Remodeling Rambo had been on a rampaging mission in the home.



Then Mr. Know-It-All saddled up the kids, the dogs, the cats, the ducks and himself and went in search of the nearest Lowes or Home Depot. Being slightly on the stingy side, he asked to see the thinnest, cheapest, discount laminate flooring samples, with the lowest AC rating. For underlayment he chose the flimsiest padding he could find. Knowing that he has a good eye for distance, he didn't bother with spacers. Sealant and glue were forgotten. He could picture his circular saw with its nice, thick blade for cutting the planks. He was looking forward to the job. Throughout the expedition, he ignored the helpful salesman.



When he got home he jumped into the project with great gusto. He didn't fancy unsightly gaps around the perimeter of the room, so he measured the planks for a really tight fit. He lined up the planks perfectly and furiously got to work with the tapping block. The anchoring of the moldings were done straight through the flooring into the sub-floor. In no time, the floors began to take shape. Mr. Know-It-All felt extremely proud of himself and the job he was doing.

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He never even noticed that the planks chipped where he used the saw. He also didn't see the dents and damage the tapping block was causing, until it was much too late. Within a few weeks of finishing the flooring, much to her dismay his wife began to see buckling, blistering, and lifting flooring. But Mr. Know-It-All conveniently became Mr Ignore-It-All, never acknowledging that he had turned the home into a disaster area.

Soon his heartbroken wife began daily meanderings through her once beautiful home, mumbling almost incoherently: "If only he had listened to me. If only he had read Rika Susan's flooring secrets and her free(!) ["Ultimate Laminate Flooring Buyer's Guide"](#)".



The whole neighborhood began to refer to the house at the top of the hill, the last one on the left, overlooking the Bay, as the Ugly Buckling, while shaking their heads sadly.

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The Twenty Laminate Flooring Installation Secrets Mr Know-It-All Almost Knew

Secret 1

Leave Room Around The Perimeter For Laminate Flooring Expansion

Never, ever work right up to walls or cupboards. Any floating floor, such as [Pergo Laminate Flooring](#), expands and contracts due to factors such as humidity and temperature. You need to make provision for this, by leaving an expansion space around the perimeter of the room. For the exact measurement of this space, check with the particular supplier or manufacturer. If the room where you are doing the laminate flooring installation is very large, the space needs to be increased. With Pergo flooring, the required space is about 1/4 inch. This breathing space helps to prevent disastrous buckling that will destroy the looks of your floor. Don't worry about the spaces being unsightly. They will be covered with matching moldings once the job is finished.

Secret 2

Choose The Laminate Flooring You Are Sure To Click With

The success of a laminate flooring installation largely depends on the efficiency of the clicking mechanism of the planks. The tongue and groove designs of the latest glueless laminate flooring installations ensure that the planks simply snap or click together for a quick, effortless job. Make sure that you choose a reputable

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manufacturer, otherwise the end of the day may have you uttering words you don't usually have in your vocabulary!

Pergo Laminate Flooring comes with a patented dual-lock clicking design that is highly effective. The tighter the seal between the joints, the better the durability of the installation, and the smaller your chances of a moisture problem. Uniclic also has an excellent name in this regard. Go to the different suppliers and test the clicking mechanisms to ensure that you get a product that is easy to handle, yet locks together snugly.

Secret 3

Don't Be Too Stingy When Buying Laminate Flooring Planks

Every manufacturer will advise you to buy extra planks, according to specific formulas. Usually a margin of around 10% is seen as sufficient. You always want to be sure that you have enough planks to finish the job comfortably, and that you can do so from the same lot, as there may be subtle shade differences. Judging by the desperate pleas expressed in many a home remodeling forum, countless do it yourself buffs have discovered too late that a particular line has been discontinued or sold out, leaving him or her with a bare strip of floor. You may also discover a batch with a factory flaw. Rather err on the side of caution. Any reputable supplier will be only too happy to take back unopened boxes of planks if you don't need them, but return these within a reasonable time - check when you make your purchase.

An important benefit of laminate flooring is that sections of the floor can be replaced if there is a serious accident. It is therefore sensible to store some unopened, leftover planks, so that you will have replacements available if there is a mishap down the line.

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Secret 4

Stop Allergies In Their Tracks With A Laminate Flooring Installation

If your kids suffer from asthma or allergies, their doctor will probably advise you to rip out carpeting and replace these with a hardwood floor. A [laminate flooring installation](#) is an easy and relative inexpensive way around this prescription. In general, laminate floors are much easier to keep clean than carpets. Even if you have one of the best vacuum cleaners on the market, allergens will accumulate in carpeting over time. By installing laminate flooring, you replace a dust-gathering floor with a hard surface that needs little more than a quick sweep. This is an ideal baby nursery flooring solution. In the long run, installing laminate flooring can become an amazing money-saving measure.

Secret 5

Measure Success Before A Laminate Flooring Installation

Never, ever be in a hurry when you take your laminate flooring measurements. Better still, have someone double check them for you. Even better, get the help of a more experienced friend to ensure that this crucial step is done correctly. It can save you a lot of aggravation. Incorrect measurements also mean incorrect, costly cutting of planks. Doing your preparations with care will prevent this. Take into account the cutting you will do to ensure staggered joints. Some manufacturers supply ready-cut planks in a variety of lengths. This can be extremely helpful and a great time-saver.

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Secret 6

Increase Laminate Flooring Stability With Staggered Joints

Never, ever line cut plank ends up to one another. Not only will this not look natural, but by doing so you will probably have a lifting floor, due to one long joint taking all the strain. So, for the best in locks and looks, don't hesitate to cut planks. The first row is done with a full plank, the second row with a 2/3 plank and the third row with a 1/3 plank. This pattern is then repeated and ensures the staggering of joints. While this may mean extra work, the benefits in terms of a stronger, more durable floor will be immeasurable. The aesthetic appeal is also greatly enhanced in the process.

Secret 7

Cushion The Blow Of A Laminate Flooring Installation

If you are on a tight budget, you may be tempted to skimp when it comes to choosing the underlayment. In fact, this is one of the most important aspects of your installation.

Laminate floors can have an irritating, hollow sound or echo. By investing in a superb quality underlayment, you add a layer of padding that will dampen this sound. This comfort layer will also soften the surface of the floor - a fact your feet will appreciate! Extra padding is especially important in areas where you spend lots of time standing, such as in the kitchen.

Take your time when investigating the best options. Some ranges such as Pergo Laminate Flooring, may come with this layer already attached to the planks. While this is convenient, there is a debate about its efficacy. It may not offer the same sound dampening effect as a separate padding.

The thickness of the flooring also plays an important part in the sound level. This usually varies between 6mm and 12mm. Also take the Abrasion Class of the flooring line into consideration (see the next secret).

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Secret 8

Match Your Laminate Flooring Traffic To Your Movements

[Laminate flooring installations](#) come in a large variety of qualities. The thickness is an indication of the amount of traffic and abuse the flooring can tolerate. A thicker flooring will be chosen for use in high traffic areas. The maximum thickness needs to be opted for in commercial settings. Make sure that the upper layer is tough enough to tolerate the inevitable activity in a home with pets and children. Making the wrong choice to save a few bucks can become a costly venture.

The AC rating will help you to make the correct choice. This rating is determined by the European Producers of Laminate Flooring and relates to stress resistance. Factors such as scratching, impact resistance, burning, and abrasion are considered to rate the different ranges.

- **AC1 rating:** Flooring suitable for light traffic, such as in a bedroom.
- **AC2 rating:** General areas in the home, such as the living room and dining room.
- **AC3 rating:** Flooring suitable for more varied locations, up to light commercial use.
- **AC4 rating:** Higher traffic floors, such as boutiques and offices.
- **AC5 rating:** This is a top-rated floor, able to withstand the rigors of the amounts of traffic department stores or public buildings usually see.

Secret 9

Floor Prepping Smooths The Laminate Flooring Installation

Make sure your floor is absolutely spotless and as smooth as possible before your

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begin your installation. Any bumps or raised joints may become unsightly areas after a period of time. Don't make the mistake of thinking a flaw is hardly visible - if you can see it beforehand, it WILL show later on. Sand down areas if necessary. This bit of extra effort will pay handsome dividends in terms of a professional finish to your laminate flooring installation. All ridges must be removed, and low spots filled in.

Secret 10

Wet Behind The Ears? Tap Into Moisture Knowledge Ahead Of Time

One of the biggest pitfalls a laminate flooring installer can face, is inadequate moisture barriers. This is especially important in areas such as basements, bathrooms and kitchens. Double check the requirements and precautions you need to take with the supplier, manufacturer or other experts. This usually includes a polyethylene film of 0.2mm.

If you don't do this, your beautifully smooth floor will become an ugly buckling disaster area in no time. You need to be absolute sure of where and how to use sealant, what products to use, where to use glue, and what vapor barrier to install underneath the planks.

Spend time to get this sorted out before you start. Rather be safe than sorry, and make a dry floor an absolute certainty.

Secret 11

Tools Of The Trade Trim Laminate Flooring Installation Time

Make sure you have the correct tools before you get going. It can be extremely frustrating, not to mention costly, if you try to do a [laminate flooring installation](#) with the wrong hardware and accessories.

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Your list should include:

- Polyethylene Film
- Quality underlayment as prescribed by the manufacturer
- Hammer
- Measuring tape
- Level
- Moisture-proof, self-adhesive tape
- Spacers
- Tapping block (handle with care!)
- Pull bar
- Dust Mask
- Fine-toothed saw (be extremely wary of chipping if you use a circular saw)
- Pencil
- Safety Glasses
- Glue for laminate flooring
- Mildew-resistant silicone sealant

Secret 12

Don't Cut Corners During A Laminate Flooring Installation

The best tool to use for cutting, is a table saw with the finest of blades. You have to prevent chipping at all costs. A clean cut ensures a professional finish. Be careful if you use a circular saw. Remember to stagger the joints for stability. You may need to shorten a doorframe in order for the door to fit easily over the flooring. Do this by placing a plank next to the door with the decorative side down, and marking the depth. Trim the door with the handsaw.

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Secret 13

Mark Margins With Moldings In Laminate Flooring Installation

Finishing off your flooring project is easy with the decorative molding collections each manufacturer has available. Whether you are looking for a doorway solution, something to round off the flooring around basins or baths, or a sliding door gap, you will find a perfectly designed fitting. [Pergo Flooring](#) has end pieces, carpet transitions and hard surface reducers in an enticing range of shades, blending perfectly with your choice of Pergo Laminate Flooring. You will find similar accessories at other companies. There is no excuse for an unsightly finish. Your flooring can flow smoothly from one room to the next. Installing these moldings is simple. The moldings are usually fixed to the wall, not the floor.

Secret 14

Laminate Flooring Installations Are No Rip-Up

One of the main advantages of installing laminate hardwood flooring is that it can be done over virtually any surface, except a real wood floor on concrete or an existing carpet. This means that whether the old floor is vinyl, ceramic tile or wood, you don't have the hassle or expense of ripping up old flooring. Once the floor has been properly cleaned and smoothed, you can get right into the business of installing your new laminate floor. The snap-'n-click designs also make it extremely easy later on if you wish to replace the laminate flooring.

Secret 15

Turn Mishaps Into Molehills With Manufacturer's Flooring Products

If you have a busy, active family, a mishap at some point is almost inevitable. From small cracks, to chips will occur. Luckily manufacturers realize this, and

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ensure that you have a range of products to choose from, making repairs a cinch. If you have Pergo Laminate Flooring, you have access to Pergo Finishing Putty. Other lines have similar products or acrylic fillers.

Don't wait to do the repair. It will just get worse. Clean the floor properly. Use a small, sharp knife to neaten the edges. Fill the crack with a dollop of putty and smooth it with a plastic spatula. Wipe excess away with a damp cloth, and that's it. Many of the fillers are available in a range of colors to ensure that you can choose a product that will tone in with your laminate flooring installation.

Secret 16

Don't Tune-Up The Tapping Block When Installing Laminate Flooring

Many a novice laminate flooring installer has been found miserable wandering about while pulling fistfuls of hair from their heads. This phenomenon usually occurs after a too energetic percussion session with the tapping block. A quality click-lock floor doesn't need this harsh treatment. Over-enthusiasm with the tapping block leads to loads of unsightly chips and dents in your precious new flooring. Go gently on the planks. Using a soft touch is vital. A rubber mallet may give better results.

Secret 17

Prevention Is Always Better Than Undergoing Putty Training

Go through your home before you install laminate flooring. Identify the problem areas where damage to the floor may result, such as in doorways and underneath heavy furniture. By ensuring that you have area rugs where needed, damaging gravel and dirt can be removed from shoes before scratches are made in the flooring. All the manufacturers have a supply of felt pads to place under furniture feet. This is vital if you want to retain the luster and smoothness of your flooring. Make sure that casters won't damage the floor - rather replace these with softer rubber wheels. Your supplier will be able to give you additional accessories and

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tips in this regard. By taking care, the pot of finishing putty will remain unopened for much longer.

Secret 18

Install Cabinets Before Your Laminate Flooring Installation

Always install cabinets and cupboards before tackling the flooring if possible. You can then cut the flooring planks according to measure, leaving the necessary expansion space around the kick plate. A molding such as the Pergo quarter round or end molding can then be installed to ensure a neat finish.

Secret 19

Steps To Stair Laminate Flooring Installations

Laminate flooring installations can be done with success and safety on stairs. However, in this case the flooring is glued to the steps. To ensure a safe tread, underlayment isn't used on stairs. If the planks come with underlayment attached, this should also be removed. You should also not use over the top stair nose moldings, as this can be unsafe. The stair nose is anchored with nails. Check with your supplier that the laminate flooring is suitable for use on stairs and get detailed instructions for its installation. Always ensure that there is no moisture on stairs, as this can make them extremely slippery and dangerous.

Secret 20

Keeping Up Appearances With Laminate Flooring Installations

A laminate flooring installation is a low-maintenance home remodeling option. If you are busy and need an easy-care flooring solution, this is it. A quick sweep or

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vacuum is all that is needed. Where necessary a damp (never wet) mop can be used. Never use an abrasive or detergent cleaner, as this can damage the upper surface of the floor and may void your warranty. Wax and polish can leave residue on the floor that is unsightly and damaging. Refrain from using these. Be extremely careful if the floor has been washed, as it will be slippery. Mop up any liquid spills as soon as they occur. Standing fluids will cause buckling.

A manufacturer such as Armstrong Laminate Flooring has the highly effective Bruce Dura-Luster No-Wax Floor Cleaner. This will clean the urethane finish gently without leaving a dulling film. Similar dedicated laminate flooring cleaners are available from other manufacturers such as Pergo.

Learn How To Tackle Do-It-Yourself Laminate Flooring: The Moral Of The Story

These days laminate flooring installations are pet projects of many inexperienced do it yourself enthusiasts, often resulting in an elegant, gleaming, value-adding face-lift for the property. Although it won't be realistic to expect an easy, uncomplicated job, the new snap-'n-click designs of glueless laminate flooring make this an ideal home remodeling project to tackle. Laminate flooring installations make short shrift of tripping, tattered carpeting and dull, filmy real wood flooring.

Of course you can get professional installation help if you wish. In some instances this may be better in the long run. However, if you do a bit of homework, you may find a laminate flooring installation to be highly gratifying. Progress is measurable and the amazing results can be visible within a day. It is advisable to get expert advice beforehand, even if you plan to do it yourself.



If you are like me, you are wondering whatever happened to Mr. Know-It-All and his poor wife. A few months into the flooring fiasco, he decided to take his wife on

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a holiday in order to try to make up for his monstrous blunder. While on vacation, they entered a competition in which the prize was new flooring for their home. Miracle of miracles, they won!



On their return home, Mr. Know-It-All's wife made sure that he was banished to his study with a small supply of new flooring. This was agreed upon only after he read the Twenty Laminate Flooring Installation Secrets, and after consultation with a contractor, the supplier and the manufacturer. For the rest of the home, his wife called in a contractor. Within a few weeks, the Ugly Buckling was transformed into a stylish swan.

Of course, Mr. Know-It-All, his wife, the kids, the dogs, the cat and kittens, and the ducks have all [subscribed to get notified](#) of www.Home-Improvement-Time.com's growing list of home remodeling ebooks and guides, and are living happily ever after in the beautiful home at the top of the hill, the last one on the left, overlooking the Bay.

The End

[Before you decide on your flooring, take a look at these laminate flooring products, and order FREE samples while still available!](#)

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