

Grace Laminate Plus Flooring Installation Instructions



PLUS

IMPORTANT INFORMATION: It is strongly recommended that these instructions are read in full prior to commencing any flooring installation. Of course, if there are any questions at all or you are unsure about any aspect of the preparation, installation, finishing or maintenance of your new floor, please contact your place of purchase for clarification prior to commencement. Failure to follow these instructions may affect the performance of and/or the warranty on your new floor. If you are reading a printed version of these instructions, please know that things change from time to time and that the latest version of this document will be found at your Grace Laminate Retailer.

GENERAL INFORMATION: Grace Laminate Plus Floors are engineered to provide a quality, robust flooring surface that's resistant to scratches, wear, staining and indentations. The patented Uniclic joining system provides for fast, easy and strong floating installations, achieved by clicking the boards into position without the need for messy adhesives. Grace Laminate Plus floors can be installed atop any level, dry, clean and sound surface, including existing hard floor coverings. An expansion gap needs to be left, during the installation of the floor, to the entire floor perimeter, allowing the floor to expand or contract (as one sheet or "raft") across the subfloor in line with seasonal variations in relative humidity. A successful installation will rely heavily on strict adherence to these installation instructions. It is important to note that the two most common causes of floor failure or client dissatisfaction are installations over uneven subfloors and installations that do not provide sufficient perimeter expansion. It is also important to note that the Uniclic joining system allows for most boards to be installed without the need for a hammer and tapping block, however, some boards may need to be tapped together when fitting boards into profiles or installing around door frames. Care should be taken to ensure that the Uniclic tapping block is used when tapping boards into position.

Laminate floors should be installed in a "laminated friendly environment". This means that laminate flooring is not designed to be exposed to extremes of humidity or temperature. It is important to know that floors exposed to such conditions may fail. Sensible protection of the flooring from such extremes, particularly in unoccupied homes, must be afforded. Measures can include curtains, awning, blinds, window tinting, and early commissioning and/or regular use of air conditioning or humidity control devices. Protection of the flooring from any radiant heat source should also be provided, e.g. around combustion heaters and other heat sources, as these generate extreme low humidity. Grace Laminate Plus should not be installed until these measures are in place and should not be installed more than 2 weeks prior to occupation of the home. It is important to understand that any warranty, expressed or implied, may be voided if the floor is exposed to extreme conditions.

IMPORTANT HEALTH & SAFETY INFORMATION: It is essential to employ safe working practices when preparing for, cutting or fitting floor coverings. Protective eyewear, ear protection and safe footwear (steel capped preferably) should be worn throughout the installation to help prevent against injury. Eye protection (safety glasses), dust extraction and respiratory protection (appropriate dust masks) should be used when cutting flooring or trims using a saw of any type. Safety Data Sheets are available by contacting your local Grace Laminate retailer. If using ancillary products like levelling compounds etc, it is recommended to adhere to the specific safety requirements as stated by the manufacturer of the product. It is important to use all electric and non-electric tools in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions and safety guidelines.

PREPARATION

1. What you'll need to install your Grace Laminate Plus floor

To install your laminate floor you need the following standard tools;

- Relevant safety equipment and personal protective equipment (earmuffs, safety goggles, gloves, dust mask etc)
- A Uniclic Installation Kit (available at your place of purchase)
- A hammer and a set square
- A circular/drop saw or hand saw
- A jigsaw
- A pencil, tape measure, a sharp knife
- Any floor preparation materials you might need to level or prepare your subfloor

Apart from that, you will of course need your Grace Laminate Plus flooring, enough approved underlay, trims and profiles to finish the edges of your floor and a Maintenance Kit to ensure your floor looks it's best after you've finished the installation. It is important to note that the Grace Laminate Plus accessories have been specifically designed to provide optimal results for your Grace Laminate Plus floor and that using other products may cause damage to your floor. In such cases the relevant guarantee provided will be voided. We therefore advise to use only approved accessories with Grace Laminate Plus floors.

2. Installation preparation

- It's a good idea to bring the packs to room temperature prior to installation by stacking them in the room for up to 24 hours prior, particularly where the packs have been stored in especially hot or cold locations in the hours prior to installation. If storing packs on site, ensure they are stacked on pallets or similar, to keep them off the subfloor until installation.
- Remove all existing carpet or soft flooring and underlays. Grace Laminate Plus can be installed directly atop most existing hard flooring (ceramics, vinyl etc) but only when the existing flooring is well stuck and meets the criteria below for levelness, moisture content etc.

All subfloors need to be;

1. Sound and structurally stable enough to be installed atop. Any loose parts of the subfloor or hard flooring need to be secured, repaired or removed and replaced.
2. Flat with no unevenness greater than 2mm over the length of 1 meter in any direction. This should be measured using a 1 metre long straightedge and no part of the subfloor surface should deviate more than 2mm from the underside (middle) of the straightedge. Should deviation greater than 2mm exist, concrete subfloors can be ground flat for filled / levelled using a self-levelling/smoothing compound like Ardur K15. Timber subfloors can be sanded flat, filled with an appropriate filling medium or sheeted with a suitable underlay to render them flat and stable.
3. Clean and free of old adhesives, building rubble etc prior to installation.

Concrete subfloors need to be;

1. Dry enough to install atop. Concrete floors should be tested using a hygrometer with a reading lower than 80% deemed dry. Three tests should be conducted for the first 50m² of any installation and one additional test per 50m² thereafter. In the instance that a subfloor is obviously or knowingly wet (insufficiently dry), it is always best to remedy the cause of the excessive moisture first. Installation can then be undertaken by first installing black 200uM builders plastic sheeting to provide a cost effective moisture vapour barrier. If installing black plastic sheeting, ensure to install the plastic sheeting up all vertical surfaces to create a "well" and remember to overlap all joins by 600mm and tape all joins using a vapour tight tape.

Timber subfloors need to be;

1. Dry enough to install atop. Timber floors should be tested using a pin probe style, penetrative electrical resistance meter with a reading lower than 12% in Southern States like Victoria or 14% in areas like North Queensland are deemed dry. It is important to allow for species calibration from an electrical resistance meter. Three tests should be conducted for the first 50m² of any installation and one additional test per 50m² thereafter. In the instance that a subfloor is obviously or knowingly wet (insufficiently dry), it is imperative to remedy the cause of the excessive moisture prior to installation.
2. It is important that timber subfloors have sufficient cross flow ventilation in the crawl space under the subfloor with unblocked vents on all four sides of the building. Inspection of the crawl space is recommended prior to installation with damp smells or puddles of water in any area to be considered red flags that require further investigation.

3. Check the delivered goods

Packs should be checked on arrival to site to ensure that they are the correct product and colour and that they are free of damage. Damage to any packs should be reported to your place of purchase immediately. If storing packs on site for longer than 12 hours they should be stored flat and off the ground in a dry, well ventilated and safe place. The underlay delivered should also be checked on arrival. Ensure that your underlay is the recommended underlay as results or performance cannot be guaranteed on underlays other than Quick-Step Combi-Lay or Quiet Step Combi-Lay. If you have any questions at all, please consult your place of purchase.

It is recommended that you know how the trims and profiles to be installed with your flooring are installed as some profile bases are best installed prior to installing your floor. If you are in doubt, again please contact your place of purchase prior to installation.

Always install flooring in well-lit areas / conditions to ensure boards with visible faults are not installed.

4. Selecting the installation direction

Grace Laminate Plus floors will look and generally perform better when installed along the length of an installation area. Another consideration is the direction of natural light, with installations looking better parallel to the source of incoming light.

5. Compartmentalisation

In large or multi-room installations, you might need to install trims at door thresholds or throughout the installation area. This is known as compartmentalisation. Check with your place of purchase prior to installation whether the area to be installed needs to be compartmentalised and for more information on the recommended location of in-floor trims.

6. Finally...

- Check that the doors can still open and close after the floor and underlay have been installed.
- Kitchen island benches and cabinets or any heavy fixtures should be installed prior to the installation of flooring and should not be installed atop laminate flooring. The floor must be able to move freely around any heavy objects to avoid bubbling of the floor, open joints and separating planks.
- Laminate flooring should not be installed externally or in areas that cannot reasonably be protected from the extreme temperatures or conditions. Sauna's, sunrooms, commercial kitchens etc are considered unsuitable for laminate flooring.

- Any questions prior to or during the installation process should be directed to your place of purchase. It is always advised to seek advice before continuing with installation of flooring.

INSTALLATION

The Grace Laminate Plus Range is made with hydroseal technology in order to provide a highly water resistant surface that's guaranteed for 5 years in wet areas. It is important to note that terms and conditions do apply to these warranties and should be read prior to purchase and installation. It is however important to know that Grace Laminate Plus panels are not suitable for use in damp spaces like pool areas, saunas and rooms with built-in drains like showers. Despite their waterproof surface, these floors do not comply with the damp proofing requirements for wet areas. As always, damp proofing in accordance with the local standard should be completed prior to installation.

With Uniclic® panels you can choose where you want to begin... Just think about the easiest way to install the floor. We will demonstrate the installation for right-handed people, from left to right. You can work in the other direction if you like.

Uniclic® is unique because you can install the planks in two different ways. Method A: Position the panel to be installed at an angle of 20 to 30° to the panel already installed. Move the panel gently up and down and at the same time exert forward pressure. The panels will click into place with sufficient forward and downward pressure. You can either insert the tongue into the groove, or the groove on to the tongue. The tongue in groove method is the most common and easiest way. Method B: With Uniclic® you can also tap the panels into each other without lifting/ rotation. For this method you must use the special Uniclic® tapping block.

The planks should not be joined with a single tap. To avoid damaging the panels you must tap them together gradually.

7. Mix the panels

Make sure the panels are mixed sufficiently when you install them, so that you do not end up with too many identical, light or dark panels next to each other. To obtain the best visual effect, it is best to fit the floorboards in the direction of the longest wall and parallel to the incidence of light.

8. Planning ahead

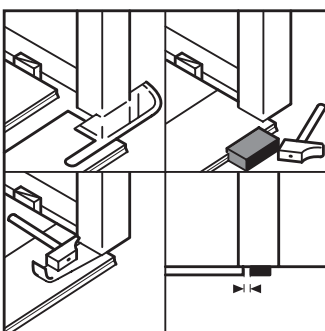
It is more difficult to finish along walls using thin "slithers" of flooring as the final row and it looks better to avoid thin slithers on one side of a hallway. This said, measuring to see where boards will sit in the installation prior to installation can balance the floor aesthetically. Whilst this is not always possible or practical, it is best done prior to installation.

9. Skirting on or skirting off

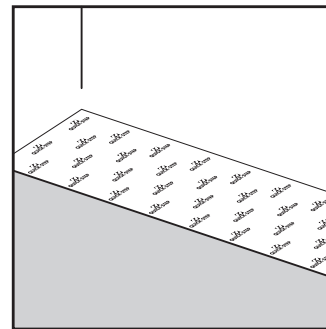
During the installation, an expansion gap will be left at the entire perimeter of the floor and where the flooring meets vertical finishes (skirting boards, walls, kitchen cabinets & kickboards, pipes etc). This gap will need to be covered after the installation has been completed. If skirtings have not been fitted, skirting boards usually cover this gap well for most installations. If you already have skirting boards and don't want to remove and re-fit them, scotia profiles in matching colours are readily available from your Grace Laminate Plus Retailer.

10. Undercut door frames and fit profile bases

Before you start, it is easier to undercut any door frames using an undercut saw or a flexible blade hand saw and an offset of flooring. Removing the bottom of the door frame and approximately 40mm of adjoining skirting boards allows the floor to expand freely under the door frame and finish neatly at the floor junction. In many instances, the base of trims or profiles to be installed are best installed prior to installing the flooring itself.



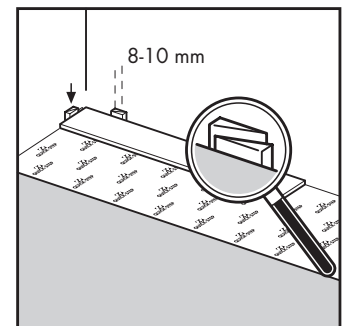
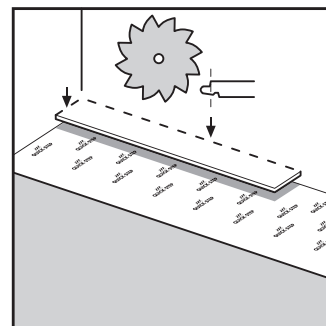
11. Install the underlay



Underlay is essential for all laminate installations. The specially designed Quick-Step underlays have a damp-proof, insulating, noise-reducing and slight leveling function. The smooth top surface makes installing the laminate panels easier and allows the floors'

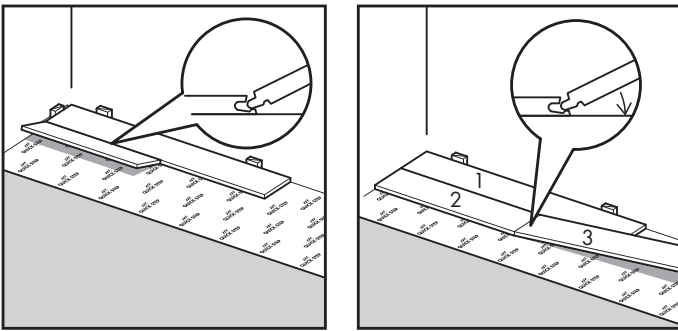
expansion afterwards. They provide excellent protection from sub-floor moisture with an SD >80%. If an alternative underlay is to be used, ensure that it at least meets all performance criteria of an approved underlay. You can find more information about Quick-Step underlays and how to install them from your Grace Laminate Plus Retailer.

Roll out your Quick-Step Underlay one row at a time. As subsequent rows are installed, ensure the joints are taped using the underlays' integrated peel and stick tape. Any holes, tears or joins in underlay should be taped well using a vapour-tight tape.

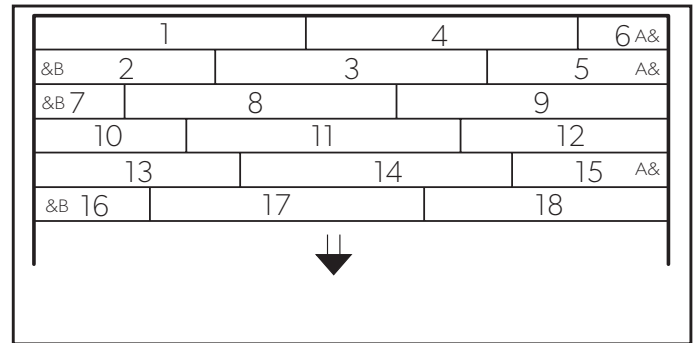
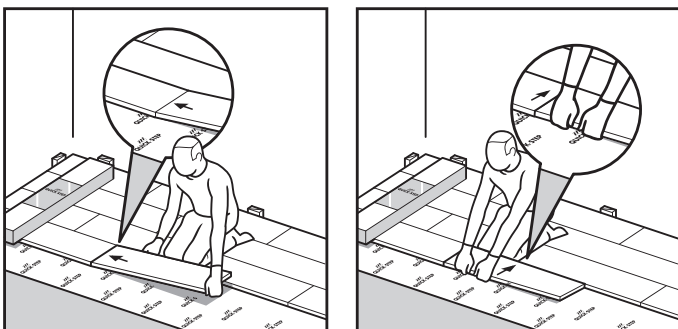
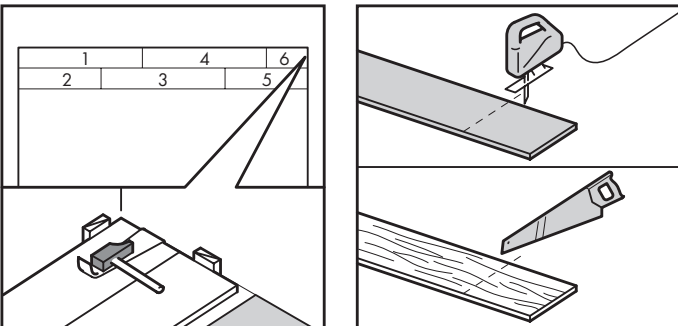
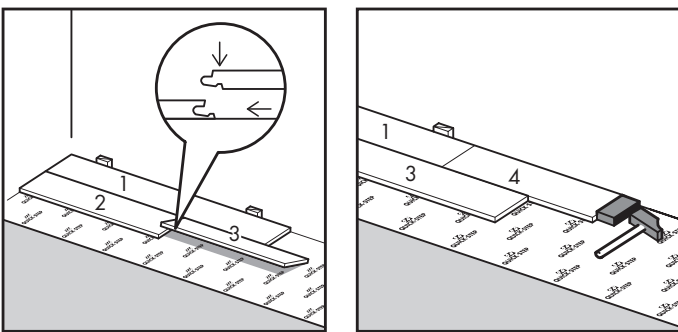


12. Install the first and consecutive rows

Begin the first row with a whole plank. First saw off the tongue on both the long and the short sides. Then fit to the corner of the room using spacers from your Uniclic Installation Kit. In smaller areas and cooler, lower humidity climates, an expansion gap of 10-12mm is recommended. In areas of higher humidity (North Queensland) a gap of 14-16mm should be left to the perimeter. Remember that large installation or multi-room installations will often require compartmentalisation (refer section 5).



Continue now install the first board in the second row, ensuring that the end (or short) joints of any consecutive rows are at least 300mm apart to create a random staggered appearance and reduce wastage. Continue to install the boards as shown in the pictograms below and remembering to maintain the expansion gap using the spacers. After the first few rows are installed, use the offcut from the last row installed to start the next row.



HINT: To obtain a clean cut, the pattern side should face down when you use a jigsaw, sabre saw or circular handsaw and up when you use a handsaw or a radial arm drop saw/crosscut saw.

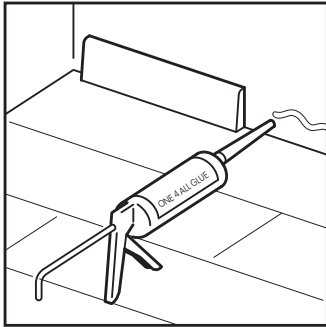
To install a board using the rotation method, position the panel to be installed at an angle of 20 to 30° to the panel already installed and sit the tongue of the board in your hand inside the groove of the board on the floor. Move the panel gently up and down and at the same time exert forward pressure. The panels will automatically click into place as the board being installed is pushed into the existing board and down. With Uniclic® you can also tap the panels into each other without lifting or rotating (great for installing boards in tight spaces or under door frames etc). For this method you must use the special Uniclic® tapping block. The planks should not be joined with a single tap. To avoid damaging the panels you must tap them together gradually.

In places where it is too difficult to install the Uniclic® planks with the tapping block (e.g. against the wall), you can tap them together using the pulling iron and a hammer.

Once enough rows are installed, it is easy to continue the installation as follows: Put an unopened pack of panels on the already installed rows. Switch your position and click the short side of the panel in the previous panel. Now place your BOTH hands close to the joint as shown in the figure and pull the long side of the plank towards you. The panels will now click together. Continue like this to the end of the room.

Once you have installed your last board, you should remove all spacers, sweep/clean the floor and start to install trims and profiles.

FINISHING



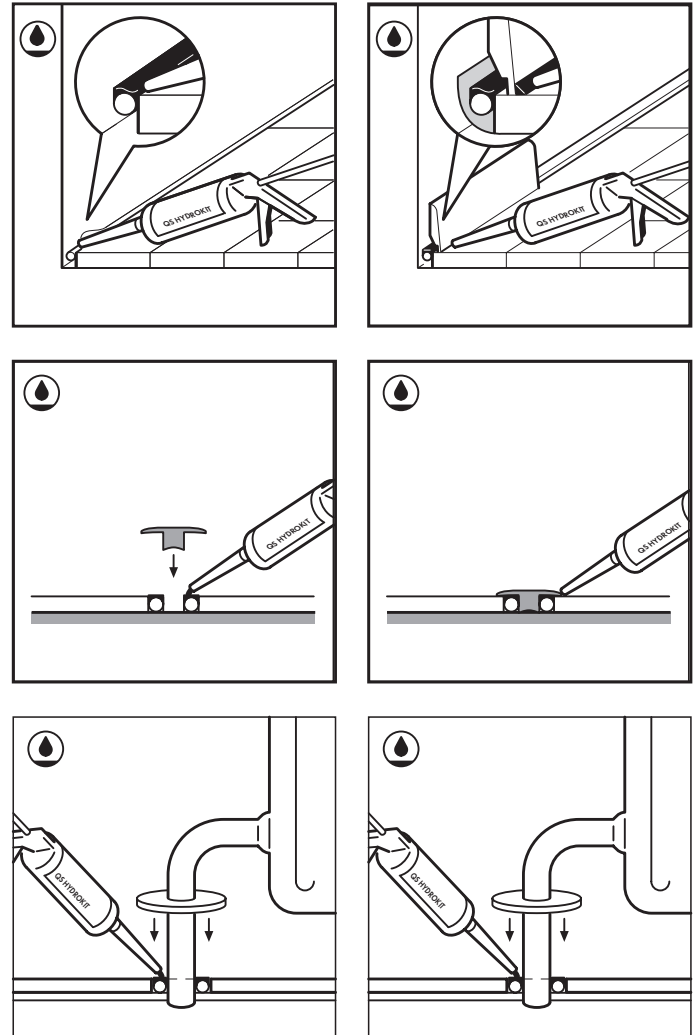
Fix skirting boards or scotia using quality construction adhesive and/or brads or small diameter nails. It is important to never attach or glue the skirting board or scotia trims to the floor. This method allows the floor to expand and contract under the

profile. In places where profiles, skirting-boards or scotias cannot be placed (around steel door frames etc), Quick-Step hydrokit can be used to fill the expansion gap.

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"). Click the panels together on the short side and drill a hole centred on the joint between the two panels. Now you can install the panels

In places where it is difficult to install the planks with the tapping block (e.g. underneath radiators), you can tap them together with the pulling iron and a hammer.

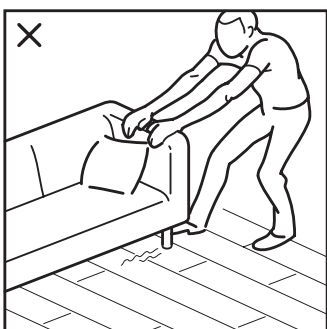
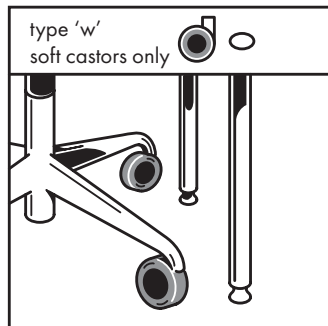
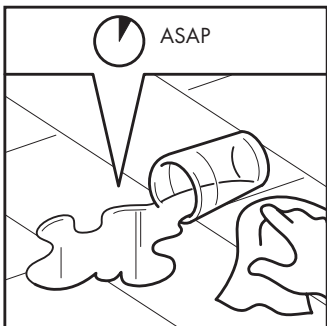
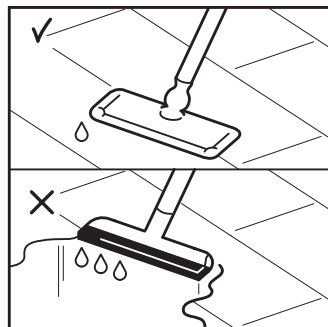
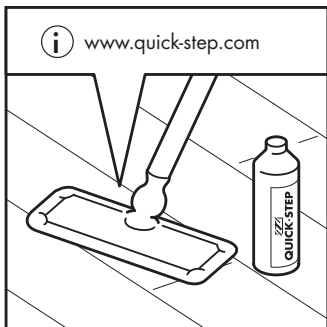
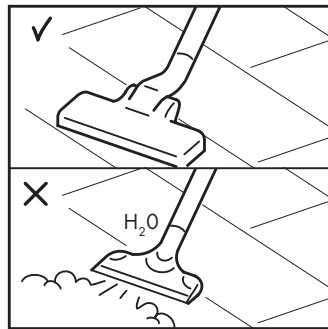
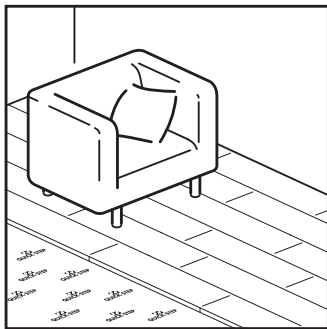
FINISHING IN ROOMS LIKE BATHROOMS, LAUNDRY ROOMS AND WET AREAS (FOR Grace Laminate Plus RANGE ONLY)



We recommend the sealing of the floor perimeter in bathrooms, laundries or other areas prone to have excessive amounts of water on the floor. This is to prevent water flowing in and under the floor at the perimeter. Sealing the perimeter expansion joints combines a compressible PE foam with diameter 8 to 10mm and the flexible and waterproof Quick-Step® HydroKit. Push the PE foam in the expansion joints and apply the flexible Quick-Step® HydroKit.

In addition to the floor perimeter, we recommend that the underside of the trim/profile and door jambs or other floor penetrations be sealed using the hydrokit in these wet areas. It is also recommended to separate wet areas where possible using an Incizo trim (i.e. at bathroom or laundry door junctions).

MAINTENANCE



You can immediately walk on your new Grace Laminate Plus floor after installation. It is important to read through the Maintenance Instructions as following these instructions will help to keep your new floor looking better for much longer.

For daily or dry maintenance, we recommend the Quick-Step mop (used dry) or vacuum cleaner. Make sure the vacuum cleaner is equipped with soft wheels and used brush down to avoid damage to your new floor. It is important to understand that steam mops are not recommended for any hard surface floor covering.

For slightly damp maintenance, we advise the Quick-Step Maintenance Kit (see instructions). Be aware that the use of other cleaning products might damage your floor. It is also important to know that whilst the microfibre mop head on the Quick-Step Mop is machine washable, that fabric softener should not be used in the wash cycle as this can create a difficult to remove film over your floor that can develop over time.

All spills should be wiped up immediately as excess water left on the floor may permanently damage your floor, as well as causing a possible slip hazard

Protect furniture and chair legs using felt floor protectors.

Avoid bringing dirt, water, sand and grit indoors by providing a suitable dirt and moisture trapping floor mat at all external entrances.

Ensure that any office chairs and furniture with castor type wheels either have soft wheels that are suitable for a laminate floor and/or are protected from direct contact with the floor. In the case of office chairs, a vinyl protective desk mat is also strongly recommended.

When moving heavy furniture back onto your floor or at any other time, ensure items are not dragged. If items are too heavy to be lifted, roll them carefully over a sheet of plywood that will protect the floor from damage.

In the case that your floor is exposed to potential stains, remove the staining agent as quickly as possible. If light rubbing with Quick-Step Cleaner is insufficient, acetone or nail polish remover can be used with a white cloth to assist stain removal. Never use scouring products! Never use wax or varnish coating on the floor.