SCRATCHMASTER™ DROP LOCK INSTALLATION GUIDE - Page 1

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR INSTALLERS

ScratchMaster™ floor features a patented fold-down, Drop Lock system with attached underlayment pad for easy installation and is installed as a glue-less floating floor. The planks lock together to provide a tight water resistant seam, can be installed over most floor surfaces, and are suitable for both residential and light commercial interior applications.

General Information:

1. Flooring should be transported and stored in a neatly stacked fashion on a smooth, flat surface.
2. ScratchMaster™ is recommended for seasonal homes and three season rooms. Installer must leave at least 3/8" (16mm) expansion.
3. ScratchMaster™ is not recommended for installs that experience temperature extremes beyond -40°F (-40°C) or greater than 150°F (65°C).
4. Although acclimation is not generally required, best practice recommends the floor be installed close to intended occupied temperature. Rooms to be installed should be between 65° and 85°F (18.33° and 29.44°C) for 48 hours before and during installation. Acclimation is required if the flooring has been exposed to extreme temperatures just prior to installation.
5. ScratchMaster™ should only be installed after other trades have finished and the jobsite has been cleaned and cleared of debris that could potentially damage a finished plank installation.
6. Inspect flooring for damage, defects, or shading issues before installation; claims for visual defects will not be accepted after cutting and/or installation.
7. Mix and install planks from several different cartons during installation to achieve desirable plank variation. Only use one run-number (production lot) on a particular job.
8. Leave 1/4 inch (6.35mm) for expansion around the entire perimeter of the flooring up to 50'x50' (15.2m x 15.2m), as well as around all vertical obstructions including cabinetry, stone fireplaces, pipes, heating vents, door frames, doorway transitions etc. For larger installations up to 100'x100' (30.4m x 30.4m), its recommended to leave 3/8 inch (10mm) spacing around the perimeter. Commercial installations with continuous spans larger than 100' are not recommended.
9. Flooring should be protected from prolonged direct exposure to sunlight.
10. Underfloor heating is possible with warm water heating systems. The temperature of the floor surface must not exceed 85 F at any point in time.
11. This product is not suitable for outdoor use or in rooms that may be exposed to flooding.

PLEASE READ PRIOR TO INSTALLATION

ScratchMaster™ is the newest generation of high-quality HSPC luxury vinyl flooring, with a rigid core, ensuring a strong click joint. It can be installed in a fraction of time compared to ceramic tiles, traditional luxury glue-down vinyl tiles, or wooden floors. ScratchMaster™ HSPC vinyl flooring is warm-to-the-touch, and absorbs more sound than wood, laminate, and ceramic tile flooring.

Tools and Materials Needed:

1. Utility Knife
2. Straight Edge Saw
3. Measuring Tape
4. 1/4 Inch Spacers
5. Transition moldings and baseboards
6. Tapping Block and Pull Bar
7. Soft Head Rubber Mallet

Hints for Measuring

Measure the length and width to determine the square footage of the room. Alcoves or offsets should be measured separately. Purchase at least 10% extra to cover waste, trimming, and for future replacement needs.

EASY TO INSTALL - NO GLUE NEEDED

It is the duty of the person installing the floor to inspect all flooring before installation. If during inspection the installer or buyer feels the floor is the wrong color, improperly manufactured, is off-grade, or is the wrong gloss level, he/she should NOT install the flooring. Please immediately contact the retailer from which the flooring was purchased. No claims will be accepted for flooring which is visibly wrong if such flooring is installed. Installed flooring is deemed to be visibly acceptable.

Subfloors General:

Planks can be installed over a variety of subfloor surfaces including concrete on all grade levels, wood, and many existing hard surface floors. The subfloors must be clean, smooth, flat, solid (no movement), and dry. Do not install flooring over floors that are sloped or over expansion joints or other moving joints in the substrate. Any uneven areas greater than 3/16 inch (4.76mm) in a 10 foot (3.05m) radius (1/8" in a 6 foot radius) should be leveled with a Portland cement based patching compound. An uneven subfloor can contribute to multiple problems, including joint damage during installation, post installation joint failure and post installation gapping of planks. Vinyl planks are resistant to water damage but they do not prevent the transmission of moisture. Care should be taken to keep moisture from collecting on either side of the vinyl floor to prevent the growth of unhealthy mold and mildew.

Concrete Subfloors:

Planks can be installed over concrete of all grade levels if a proper moisture barrier is used. A minimum 6 mil polyethylene moisture barrier must be used with below and on grade concrete subfloors. Moisture vapor emissions should not exceed 5 lbs./24 hours per 1,000 sq. when tested with the Anhydrous Calcium Chloride Test in accordance with ASTM F 1869 or 80% RH in accordance with ASTM F 2170 Standard Test Method for Determining Relative Humidity in Concrete Slabs using in situ Probes. Any uneven areas greater than 3/16 inch (4.76mm) in a 10 foot (3.05m) radius (1/8" in a 6 foot radius) should be leveled with a Portland cement based patching compound. Large holes and cracks in the cement should be patched, and expansion joints should be filled with a latex patching compound. Newly poured concrete floors must cure for a minimum of 90 days. Please note it is the person installing the floor and/or the homeowner's responsibility to ensure any moisture or alkalinity issues are resolved prior to installation.

Wood Subfloors:

Planks can be installed over a smooth, flat, level, wood subfloor, underlayment grade plywood, and any other underlayment recommended by the manufacturer for use with a vinyl plank floor. Subfloor should be flat within 3/16 inch (4.76mm) in a 10 foot (3.05m) radius (1/8" in a 6 foot radius). Wood subfloors must be suspended at least 18" above the ground. Adequate cross-ventilation must be provided, and the ground surface of the crawl space should be covered with a vapor barrier.

NOTE: Avoid subfloors with excessive vertical movement or deflection because subfloor movement will telegraph through to the finished installation. Indications of excessive deflection are: subfloor fastener release, squeaking, compromised or sectional contours such as bowing or dipping in floors and uneven flooring material. Nail or screw subfloor panels to secure boards with excessive vertical movement or deflection prior to installation of the flooring material. Our warranties DO NOT cover any problems caused by inadequate substructures or improper installation of substructures.

Existing Flooring:

HSPC floor planks can be installed over a variety of finished floors including single layer resilient sheet flooring/tile, ceramic, marble and terrazzo. The surface must be in good condition and show no signs of excessive moisture conditions. Large grout joints should be leveled so they are flush with the flooring surface. Carpet, heavily cushioned vinyl floors, or vinyl floors consisting of multiple layers are NOT a suitable subfloor for installation.

Underpad / Cushion:

DO NOT install this product over an additional underpad or cushion as this may cause excessive deflection and movement in the floor and damage the locking system. Installation over an additional underpad or cushion will void the product's warranties.

Planning the job:

- First, determine how you want the flooring to run. Typically for plank products, the flooring runs the length of the room. There may be exceptions since it is a matter of preference.
- To avoid narrow plank widths or short plank lengths near the walls/doors, it is important to do some pre-planning. Using the width of the room, calculate how many full boards will fit into the area and how much space remains that will need to be covered by partial planks.
- Lay the first row of planks along a chalk line and trim to fit the wall allowing ¼ inch expansion space. If you start the first row with a full width plank, it will be necessary to trim the tongues next to the wall and then place the cut edge next to the wall. Use a utility knife and a straight edge to score the top surface of the plank and then bend it downward to separate. If the starting wall is out of square, it will be necessary to scribe the first row to match the wall, allowing the opposite side of the row to present a true square base for the rest of the floor.
- Use expansion gap spacers to keep the ScratchMaster™ floor a minimum of ¼ inch away from the walls. You need to maintain a ¼" gap around all vertical obstructions including cabinetry, stone fireplaces, and around doorways. Larger installations require 3/8" expansion gaps.
- Remove wall base and undercut door jambs. Do not secure individual planks and tiles to the subfloor as it is designed to be a floating floor. Do not install cabinets or other permanent fixtures on top of ScratchMaster™ floor. Transition mouldings and baseboards cannot be tight to the floor but must allow the floor to move beneath them. Do not nail, screw or glue transitions or baseboards through floating floor to the subfloor.
- It is critical that the finished floor not be pinched or restricted from floating in any way as even just a few seemly minor restrictions can negatively affect a large area of an installation.

Plank Assembly Steps:

Step 1 The First Row

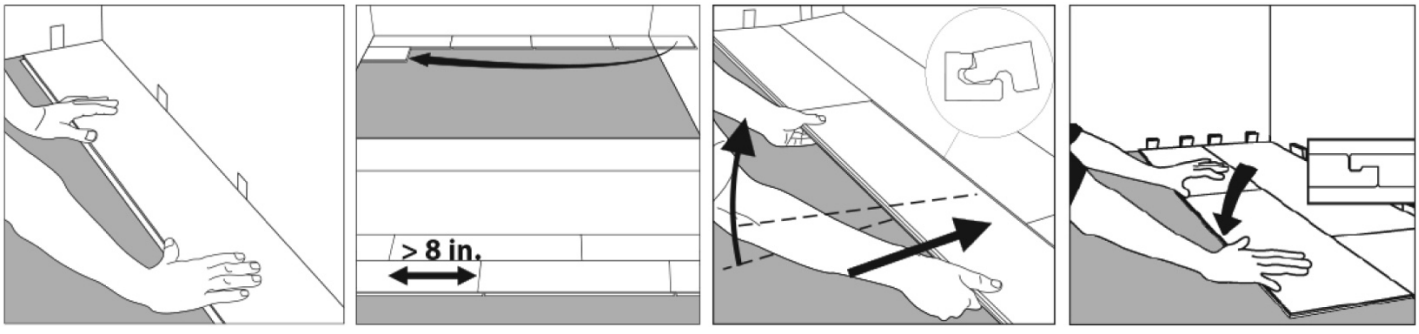
Starting from the LEFT with the tongue facing the wall, carefully place the first board in place. Use spacers along the wall to allow the required expansion gap of 1/4" 6.35mm). Align the next piece by overlapping the end of the first board so that the joint is tight when the board lays flat. Some slight adjustment of the board may be necessary to assure a tight fit. Press down on both ends of the short side until you hear a "click" sound. Gently tap the end joints together with a soft head mallet to ensure full engagement of the short side locking system (a visible gap between the planks at the end joints is an indication that the locking system is not fully engaged). Place spacers against the wall to restrain movement and maintain the expansion gap. Continue in this manner until reaching the final plank in the first row. Cut the final board to length allowing for the required expansion gap. Place spacers against wall to restrain movement and maintain the expansion gap.

Step 2 First Piece of the Second Row

You can often use the leftover piece from the end of first row to begin the second row. This piece must be at least 10" long but no more than 38" long. Visually, the installation will look more natural if the starting planks are a variety of lengths. After installing the first row of planks, line up the first plank of the second row so the outside end is even with the outside end of the left most plank in the first row. Insert the long side tongue of the second-row plank into the groove of the first-row plank while holding the second-row plank at a 30-degree angle from the floor. Lay the second-row plank down flat and use a tapping block and soft head mallet to lock the long side joint of the second-row plank firmly into place.

Step 3 Second and Subsequent Planks in the Second Row

Restrain movement of the first board by inserting a spacer in the expansion gap at the end of the board. Position the second board in place by inserting the long side of plank at a 30-degree angle and then sliding it until reaching the short side of the previously installed plank. Press down on both ends of the short side until you hear a "click" sound. Gently tap the end joints together with a soft head mallet to ensure full engagement of the locking system (a visible gap between the planks at the end joints is an indication that the locking system is not fully engaged), and use a tapping block and soft head mallet to lock the long side joint firmly into place. Install the remaining boards and rows in the same manner.



Step 4 Subsequent Rows

Ensure each plank of each subsequent row has at least 8 inches of overlap; that they are fitted brickwork style. This ensures a strong fit.

Step 5 Fitting the Last Row and Doorways

ScratchMaster™ can also be installed with a pull bar or tapping block and rubber mallet or hammer in difficult areas, such as the last row, and when fitting around door trim. Use a pull bar and rubber mallet or hammer to lock the joints together in the last row. Always use a pull bar on the cut edge of the plank. Factory edges can be damaged if the pull bar is used directly against the tongue or groove.

REPAIRS

In the unlikely event that a plank is damaged for whatever reason, the simplest method is to disconnect the planks carefully (lift up entire row to separate long sides, and slide planks side to side to separate short sides) until the damaged plank can be removed. Then replace the damaged plank with a new one and re-assemble the disconnected planks.

Updated January 2024 (for latest version and Drop Lock installation video visit www.nextfloor.net)