Engineered Tread Installation Guide

For full tread and riser installation videos, visit www.artisticfinishes.com and select “Technical Info” on the home page and you will find Educational videos on different types of installations.

Also, be sure to read “Tread and Riser Installation Do’s and Don’ts”, an ongoing article in Wood Floor Business Magazine, with direct questions from installers about this very topic.

You may have installed many treads and risers before, but engineered treads are a little different. Artistic Finishes’ engineered tread species are European Oak, Bamboo, and Acacia. When installing these treads, you are generally going to follow the same procedures as your solid wood treads, but with a few key differences.

First, know the substrate material. Much like solid core doors, the ends of the treads are built with a solid wood material, similar to the wear layers themselves. This makes for a better look and performance of the tread, but once you cut either the back or the ends, you’re changing the composite sandwich of the tread and its ability to transfer moisture throughout. The MC, or Moisture Content, becomes more critical with alterations to the treads, so any end cuts and back cuts should be **sealed prior to install**. Use a quick coat and fast drying polyurethane for this step.

Secondly, you should already be using adhesive and nails, but look for an elastomeric adhesive with a high green-grab and waterproof capabilities. If installing directly onto stringers, be generous with the adhesive on the full lengths of the stringers. If you’re installing onto a sub-tread, use a wavy pattern across the entire sub-tread. We recommend and sell a superior adhesive - Wakol MS245, Modified Silane.

Next are the nails. Use a hardened trim nail, not just a finishing nail, because the trim nails have a tempered hardened steel. If you can find them with a ring shank, as opposed to a smooth one, then use those. I like a 2” 6-penny trim nail. Always pre-drill the location of each nail, using the nail you’ll be nailing into the tread. Cut off the head end of the nail before using it on your drill gun to pre-drill.

Work your way from the middle front of the tread to the back and then repeat the nails sequence on each side. Even if a sub-tread has been pre-installed onto the stringers, still place the nails over the stringers, 3” from the front of the tread’s edge. Know the distance from the ends to the stringers. Lightly mark with a pencil the middle of each stringer for the proper location of your nails.

IMPORTANT: Counter sink the nails below the thickness of the wear layer of the tread. This will require a nail punch. It will enable the wear layer to move independently from the substrate. This sounds trivial, but it will prevent any checking or wear layer splitting as the treads go through a couple seasonal moisture changes.

Lastly, fill the holes with a good wood filler which will complement the treads’ stain color. Pre-finished treads use a prefinished filler.