

Which is better?

All three have their pros and cons. Rotary Peeled provides the highest use of raw materials for lowest cost, lowest visual appeal and weakest grain structure. Sliced provides better yield with medium cost, better visual appeal, and better structural integrity. Sawn Face lowest yield for the highest cost, best visual appeal, and strongest grain structural due to a natural sawing process vs slicing or peeling of the grain.

During the manufacturing the wood plies are stacked on top of each other in the opposite directions. By reversing the direction of each ply as it is placed on top of each other helps counteract the natural tendency of wood to expand and contract with changes in humidity levels and moisture. By crossing the plies the finished planks are much more dimensionally stable than solid wood planks and won't show those unsightly gaps that happen with most solid wood floors. This added dimensional stability allows engineered wood planks to be installed over concrete slabs. (Note: the concrete slabs still must be clean and dry. See the manufacturer's installation recommendation for more details.)

The finish layer (top ply) of an engineered wood plank is often a different wood specie then the plies in the middle. This allows manufacturers to offer a wider variety of domestic and exotic hardwood species while keeping the costs down. Most engineered wood floors will be either a 3-ply or 5-ply.

Engineered wood floors can be used on all grade levels, including below grade concrete slabs. (Again, be sure to check with the manufacturer for installation recommendations.)

The planks are generally stapled-down, glued-down or floated over different types of substrates, such as a wood sub floor or concrete slab. The glue-down and floating installation methods allow the engineered wood planks to be used over concrete slabs since you cannot staple into concrete. Also, some engineered wood floors can be floated over an existing floor, such as tile or vinyl flooring. Caution should be used when trying to install planks over an existing floor to be certain the old floors is well adhered and that your installation application meets the manufacturer's installation recommendations.

Engineered planks come in varying widths, including: 2 1/4", 3", 5", and 7" widths. In addition, many plank styles can be mixed, such as 3-5-7 inch planks installed side by side. By varying the board widths you can change the total appearance of the floor.