

How to Maintain Hardwood Floors

Wood floors are the easiest of all floor surfaces to keep clean and new looking. Wood floors can be kept looking like new, year after year, with minimum care.

What is minimum care? A good rule of thumb is to vacuum and/or dust mop weekly. A damp mop can be used for spills, and when necessary general cleanup on floors which have non-waxed polyurethane or a similar surface finish.

Wood and water don't mix. No matter what finish your wood floor has, never pour water onto the floor. While a damp mop may be used on polyurethane and other surface finishes in good condition, excessive amounts of water seep between the boards and into small scratches causing deterioration of finishes. Wax-coated finishes should NEVER be cleaned or maintained with water, not even a damp mop.

Preventative Maintenance Tips:

- Always use only products specifically designed for wood floors.
- Keep grit off the floor. Use dirt-trapping, walk-off mats at all exterior doors to help prevent dirt, grit and sand from getting inside the building.
- Throw-rugs or small sections of carpet just inside the entrances are also recommended. Dirt and grit are any flooring's worst enemy. Keep door mats clean.
- In kitchens, use area rugs at high spill locations and at work stations (stove, sink, and refrigerator). Cotton is generally the best fabric since it is easily washed. Mats with a smooth backing, i.e. rubber or vinyl, may trap water beneath.
- Finishes and certain chemicals in wood oxidize and are affected by ultra violet light sources causing the wood to change color and develop a patina or age. To avoid uneven appearance, move area rugs occasionally and drape or shade large windows.
- Put fabric glides on the legs of your furniture; they allow furniture to be moved easily without scuffing the floor. Clean the glides regularly since grit can become embedded in them.
- Vacuum regularly, as often as you vacuum carpets; a brush attachment works beautifully.
- Sweep or use a dust mop daily or as needed, but do not use a household dust treatment as this may cause your floor to become slick, dull finish, or interfere with re-coating.
- Wipe up food and other spills promptly with a dry cloth or paper towel. Use a slightly moistened cloth for sticky spills if necessary. Then wipe the floor dry with another cloth or paper towel.
- Keep heels on shoes in good repair, especially high heels. Heels worn away exposing the steel support rod will dent any floor surface, even concrete.
- By observing these simple suggestions you'll go a long way toward keeping your hardwood floors beautiful and making their care easier.