

# Wood Floor Maintenance and Care Guide



---

The key to lasting beauty of your wood flooring investment is proper maintenance for the life of your floor. Included in this page are care guide lines, maintaining urethanes finishes, wax finishes, and the Do's & Don'ts of your wood floor product.

## **The following are some excellent guidelines for maintaining today's wood floors.**

- All Hardwood Floors regardless of how the floor has been finished, there are certain steps that must be taken to maintain the beauty of the hardwood floor.
- Every floor must be dust mopped, vacuumed or swept with a soft bristle broom daily, or as often as necessary, to remove grit and dust from the surface. Walking on dusty or dirty floor is the fastest way to damage a finish.
- Place walk-off mats at all exterior entrances. This will capture much of the harmful dirt before it even reaches the hardwood floor. Shake out, wash or vacuum mats and area rugs frequently.
- Floor protector pads of soft felt or similar material should be placed on the bottoms of the legs of the furniture. Floor protectors must be kept clean of grit and periodically replaced.
- Keep high heels in good repairs. An unprotected tip will dent any hardwood floor.
- Kitchen floors experience the most traffic in a home. To prevent premature wear of the floor, place an area rug in front of the sink and stove area. Shake out or vacuum the rugs frequently.

Finally, using a humidifier or dehumidifier in conjunction with a furnace or air conditioning system to maintain relative humidity in the home at 30-50% will maintain the moisture in the wood and minimize cracks between the boards.

## **Surface Finishes** (water based urethanes, oil modified urethanes, conversion varnish and moisture cured urethanes)

- Use the finish manufacturer's or the prefinished floor manufacturer's recommended cleaning system. If the manufacturer is not known or has no recommendation, use a cleaner that will not leave a residue that would inhibit bonding and recoating. NEVER wax a urethane finish. Do not generally wet a wood floor with water. When using any wood floor cleaner which requires mixing with water, follow mixing directions precisely. A cloth wetted with water and squeezed dry may be used to wipe up food stuffs and other spills, provided the area is buffed dry immediately. Heel or scuff marks and stubborn stains may be removed by lightly rubbing with a cloth and a wood floor cleaner.
- Always use the manufacturers recommended cleaning products, as most manufacturers warranties are voided if other products such as oil soaps are used.
- Wipe spills immediately with a slightly damp soft cloth
- Long-term Maintenance - Urethane finishes eventually will show wear patterns from surface scratching. When high traffic area begin to look dull it is time to recoat (screening-a light sanding, then apply same or compatible finish) or restore the finish. Always follow the manufacturer's recommendations.

## **Wax Finishes**

Routine Cleaning - Use the finish manufacturer's or the prefinished floor manufacturer's recommended cleaning system. Never use a waterbased cleaner on a wax floor. Once dirt and dust have been removed, the luster may be restored by buffing. Apply additional wax only in heavy traffic areas, if needed. Caution, do not over wax. An application of a solvent based cleaning product will remove dirt and allow the floor to be buffed clean. Spills must be wiped up immediately with a lightly water dampened cloth and then hand buffed dry.

To remove white spots caused by water spills, use fine steel wool (#000) and a small amount of mineral spirits, rub gently in a circular motion until spot is gone. Then apply additional wax to the area and buff.

Long-term Maintenance - Wax floors that have been neglected may be restored by deep cleaning. An application of a renovating system with fine steel wool, proper dry times and a complete re waxing will clean and reseal the wood as well as restore color and luster.

Note: Once wax, in any form, has been applied to a wood floor, only wax may be used as a coating over the floor. Urethane and other surface finished cannot be applied over an existing wax finish.

## **Acrylic Impregnated Floors**

### **Non-Urethane Coated**

Routine Cleaning-For general cleaning always follow the manufacturer's recommendations and use their floor care products. Long-term Maintenance - An acrylic impregnated floor that has been neglected or improperly cleaned may need restoration. Stripping, sanding or screening the floor may be required, always contact the floor manufacturer for complete instructions.

### **Urethane Coated**

Routine Cleaning - Some acrylic impregnated floors are coated with urethanes. For general cleaning of these types of floors, follow the manufacturer's recommendations and cleaning procedures for surface finishes. Many manufacturers using a special cleaning solution made for today's urethanes.

### **The Do's and Don'ts of Wood Flooring**

Advanced finish technology and innovative products make wood one of the most beautiful and easy-care flooring materials today. FinishingWoodFloors.com offers these guidelines that will help preserve a beautiful finish and keep maintenance to a minimum:

1. Always follow the manufacturer's recommendations (when known) for the proper care of a wood floor.
2. Know the type of finish on the wood floor. Follow the proper maintenance procedures for the particular finish.
3. Never wax a urethane floor. A majority of floors installed today have urethane finishes.
4. Never use sheet vinyl or tile floor care products on wood floors. Self-polishing acrylic waxes cause wood to become slippery and appear dull quickly. The only remedy in this situation is to sand and refinish the floor.
5. Consult with an installer, the finisher or the manufacturer if there is any doubt of the kind of floor finish.
6. Place mats and throw rugs at doorways, exteriors and interiors to help prevent the tracking of grit, dirt and sand.
7. Sweep or vacuum wood floors regularly.
8. Never wet-mop a wood floor. Standing water can dull the finish, damage the wood and leave a discoloring residue.
9. Wipe up food and other spills immediately with a dry or slightly dampened towel (wipe dry).
10. For a wax floor, buff to restore shine. You may want to invest in a buffer.
11. Do not over-wax a wax floor. If the floor dulls, try buffing instead. Avoid wax buildup under furniture and other light traffic areas by applying wax in these spots every other waxing session.
12. Put plastic or fabric-faced glides under the legs of furniture to prevent scuffing and scratching.
13. Remember: cleats, sports shoes and high heels can dent any floor surface.
14. When moving heavy furniture, protect wood flooring by slipping a piece of cloth or pile under the legs or covering each leg with a heavy sock or half of a milk carton.
15. For wood flooring in the kitchen, place an area rug in front of the kitchen sink to catch sink splashes and cut down on wear.