

Cleaning & After Care Guidelines

V.028.05

The Correct Way to Clean Hardwood Floors...

Adopting the right approach to cleaning your hardwood floors probably isn't something you think about too much, but it's an important part of preserving your flooring investment and keeping it looking its best.

In many ways, cleaning hardwood floors couldn't be easier, but there are a few simple steps which are important to follow. Following these steps will mean that your hardwood floor not only stays looking better for longer, it'll last longer too. So, by sticking to the best cleaning method for your hardwood floor right from the beginning, you'll not just be doing "the necessary", you'll be preserving your investment at the same time.

Before you start cleaning your hardwood floor, make sure you vacuum the floor or go over it with a soft brush to lift up any dust particles, which are sitting on the surface. Dust particles can act as an abrasive on your wooden floor and will effectively dull the surface as well as risk damage if left hanging around too long. Ideally, you should aim to make it part of your routine to vacuum or sweep your hardwood floor at least once a week.

When it comes to cleaning itself, the best tool to do the job is a damp (not wet) mop. One of the Top Tips we'd recommend here is to use a diffuser spray to apply a mist of water to the mop rather than submerging it in a bucket of water. Applying water to your mop this way means that you're certain never to add so much water that your floor will become over-soaked during the mopping process.

In the ideal world, you'll use a specialist wood flooring cleaning product to clean your floor, because the end result will be so much better. Specialist wood flooring cleaners, because they've been designed to do the job to the very best standard, mean that you won't get streaking and you don't risk damaging your floor due to inadvertently choosing the wrong product.

However, if you prefer to stick to a household detergent to clean your hardwood floor, it's really important that you make sure it's a non-bleach, non-abrasive detergent (as products containing these properties may dull or damage the finish, leave a greasy film and make the floor slippery and more difficult to clean) and always be certain to mix it with a generous amount of water.

Once you've gathered together your cleaning agent, your mop and your mist spray, set to work along the boards, always going with the grain as you clean. Working this way will not only make your job easier, it'll also reduce the risk of streaking once the floor has dried.

How To Remove Stains From Wood Floors...

No matter whether your hardwood floor is new or old, once you've chosen and installed your new wooden floor or refurbished your old wooden floor, it's everyone's nightmare to get a stain. Sometimes, when it comes to removing stains from wood floors, you'll have some tough decisions to make.

Stains vary in seriousness and may be simple to remove or may require a significant plan of attack to get rid of. That said, before tackling any stains, it's really important to take into consideration the overall condition of your floor as well as what type of stain you're faced with and how long it has been in place. Only by assessing all of these elements can you be sure you'll choose the right course of action for the challenge you're facing.

When it comes to stains on your wood floor, prevention is always better than cure, so it is clear that the quicker you can clear away any spills which occur, the less likely you are to have major problems with stains in the longer term. That said, if you do discover a stain, the more accurately you can assess what has caused the stain the better you'll be able to deal with it.

If your floor has been stained by alcohol, nail varnish, sweets or non-greasy food or warm water, an appropriate wood floor cleaner should do the trick if you get there quick enough. On the other hand, if the stain is of an oily or greasy nature, such as ink, food or dye, the best idea is to try cold water and an ammonia based cleaner before deciding on any more serious courses of action.

On a new-ish floor, which has a good top coat seal on it, the likelihood is that stains will only be surface deep, which makes your task much easier. With a surface deep stain, normally, the use of a chemical based floor-cleaning product should be all that's required. On older floors, which are less well protected however, if all else fails, the last resort may be to sand the stain back and re-coat the floor. In fact, if you have a fair number of stains on your floor, you might decide to look on this as an opportunity to sand back the whole floor and re-seal it in its entirety to avoid future staining and provide additional protection.

How To Repair Wooden Floors...

The great news about wooden floors, unlike many other types of flooring is that most of the damage you are likely to throw at them can be repaired. The method of repair you choose will depend largely on the severity of the damage your floor has suffered, and in some instances can be carried out by even the most inexperienced DIY-er, albeit others might require specialist intervention. Either way, the old adage "prevention is better than cure" should not be ignored when it comes to wooden floors.

You can prevent damage to your wooden floor by always lifting, rather than dragging furniture across the floor; by cleaning and treating it regularly and by mopping up any spills as soon as practically possible. It is also recommended that you use protective pads under all furniture legs and barrier mats near all external doorways. All of that said, with the best will in the world, accidents do happen and repairs need to be done, so what should you do if your floor does get damaged?

If you find that your floor is damaged by an all over covering of light scratches, the solution is usually simple, straightforward and can be carried out by even the most inexperienced person. It is very easy to hide or remove light scratches on a wooden floor by adding a new coating of sealer to your floor or if your floor is oiled, simply applying more oil; if it is lacquered, you can buy a lacquer repair pen to do the job. If you have been supplied a product which is stained, a touch up kit is usually available if the scratch has revealed the natural timber. What's more, you can also buy wax filler sticks from many DIY shops or flooring specialist suppliers, which are the ideal solution to camouflage light to medium scratch damage. When it comes to deep scratches and dents, there are special resin fillers available, which can be applied to even out any problem areas. In our experience, it's really only when damage to your floor starts to get quite extensive should you need to think about specialist repairs. The worst-case scenario is usually where scratching has become so extensive that the floor requires a complete re-sand and re-seal to get it back to looking its best. While such instances may not be what you hope for, the good news is that a complete re-sand and re-seal, if done well, will have your floor looking like new again and prepare it for a good few years of wear and tear.

When choosing someone to re-sand and re-seal your floor, it's a good idea to speak to the original supplier of your floor to ask if they offer this service, because, if they don't do it themselves, they're more than likely to know someone good who does.

Surface Finish: Natural Oiled;

It is important to note that your new Natural Oiled product will need a top up coat of Natural / Danish Oil after installation. Natural Oiled products after installation may have small colour variation within the surface finish – this is to do with the oil drying levels. Nourishing the surface of your new floor after installation will give a more even appearance. In the event that any liquid spills or spot marks mar the surface of the floor, this is not a surface defect but indicates a lack of general care or requirement of a top up coat.

Maintenance of Natural Oiled products.

Re-application of the oil is based upon localised usage and appearance but on average your floor will require a thorough clean and re-oil every 6 to 12 months. If your floor starts to look tired or worn, re-application of a Natural Oil is recommended to maintain the appearance of your floor. Cleaning of the floor is recommended prior to the re-application of the oil or any other surface finishing. This is done by very lightly applying a water and sugar soap solution and the wiping it off immediately and fully prior. You can then commence with the re-oil. It may be that due to ingrained dirt, you are unable to thoroughly clean the surface. In this instance, it is recommended that you hire a professional to sand down the floor prior to re-applying the oil.

Surface Finish: Ruvo Oil

The new generation surface coating is an oil-based polyurethane. This highly durable surface treatment is well suited for today's demanding commercial and domestic locations. Ruvo Oil gives the appearance of Danish oil without the repetitive maintenance of natural oil. Ruvo Oil also has unique benefits for repairs and maintenance. The combination of oil and polyurethane creates an extremely hard wearing, low maintenance surface.

General maintenance and repair of Ruvo Oil on natural timber:

You can reapply to any damaged areas by lightly sanding back the surface and reapplying the Ruvo Oil. This is what we call zone repair. Over a short period of time, the product will re-blend into its surroundings. For commercial application, a final coat is recommended on completion of installation. Drying time of the product is 3 to 4 hours at an ambient room temperature. It is recommended to leave a 3-5 year reapplication period in domestic circumstances, depending on usage. This oil is best cleaned with a lightly damp cloth, general brushing and sweeping and damp dusting. We also sell a very effective cleaning spray which is a spray and wipe system which will make your floor look brand new!

Maintenance of Ruvo Oiled and stained timber:

If excessive damage to the surface of the timber floor reveals the natural colour of the oak flooring, a touch up pack is available in the appropriate stain. You may have to touch up several times to get the required shading. Once the stain is dry, in approximately one hour after the final coat, you would then lightly apply a topcoat of Ruvo Oil, completing the repair.

Important points

- ñ Use protective pads under all furniture legs
- ñ Use barrier mats inside and outside all external doorways
- ñ Never allow any liquid to remain on the floor. Stains should be removed while they are still wet. After removal of stain, wipe the floor with a clean, damp cloth.
- ñ Never use wax, oil based detergent or any household cleaners. These may dull or damage the finish, leaving a greasy film and making the floor slippery and more difficult to clean.

Advice on the flooring environment

Commercial application: Please note that due to the fact that the use of a floor in a commercial area cannot be predicted, you are more likely to require a further application of the surface finish upon installation, especially in highly trafficked areas such as hallways. Please also note that the re-application time scales indicated on this sheet are for domestic, rather than commercial installations and re-application will vary for commercial use and is down to the discretion of the maintenance manager.

Control of humidity remains an important factor in preserving the wood appearance and form; it is therefore important to maintain a stable humidity level all year round. The appearance of spaces between the boards indicates a drying out of the wood and insufficient degree of humidity. Heating systems may have to be utilised throughout the year to maintain the correct humidity level.

Failure to control the underfloor heating system (by overheating) can result in shrinkage or delamination of the top layer of the boards. It should be noted that the room temperature should be controlled, especially in rooms that are subject to UV light and are therefore more prone to higher temperatures.

It should be remembered that the floor layer is the last person to inspect the flooring. Care should be taken to ensure that a balance is maintained when laying out the floor; any planks that are suspect should not be installed. A waste factor of 10% should be taken into account. Any flooring fitted with a visual defect can not be considered for claims.

We reserve the right as a manufacturer of flooring to recommend our product ranges up to 200mm engineered to be suitable for underfloor heating using the guidelines detailed within these instructions and recommendations.

Due to the fact that we as the manufacturer are not in control of your total installation and the onus is on the end user to control their environment by way of temperature control and this control cannot be documented, in the event of any delamination or shrinkage, this cannot be defined as a manufacturing defect and therefore is not the responsibility of the manufacturer to repair or replace. However, we reserve the right to repair or replace the floor if it is deemed to be a manufacturing fault by an unbiased third party. This does not affect your statutory rights.

The information and, in particular, the recommendations relating to the application and use of our products, are given in good faith based upon the manufacturers current knowledge and experience of the products when properly stored, handled and applied under normal conditions. In practice, the different in materials, substrates and actual site conditions are such that no warranty in respect of merchantability or of fitness for a particular purpose, nor any liability arising out of any legal relationship whatsoever, can be inferred either from this information, or from any writing recommendations, or from any other advice offered. The proprietary rights of third parties must be observed.