



**WORLD FLOOR COVERING  
ASSOCIATION**

## How to Clean Hardwood Flooring.

Your hardwood floor is installed. Your house finally feels like a home. But now what? How do you care for your new investment? Read on. Need floorcare products, or help from a local floor care professional? [Click here](#) to find a professional hardwood flooring cleaning company in your area.

### **Meet Mat**

Floor mats are a wonderful thing when it comes to hardwood floors. Tiny particles, like dirt, can act like sandpaper and scratch your wood. By placing a floor mat at each entryway and encouraging family members and guests to wipe their feet, the majority of dirt and grime will remain on the mat. Also put a floor mat or rug in any area where water could be splashed — like near the kitchen sink. This will hinder any possible water damage.

Note that rubber-backed or non-ventilated floor mats or rugs can damage your floor. Instead use floor mats or rugs made especially for hardwood floors and be sure to shake them out regularly.

### **Regular Maintenance**

Along with a hardwood floor comes the responsibility of keeping it clean. The better care you take, the longer your floor will maintain its original beauty. Step one is to purchase a high quality broom so that you can sweep your floor regularly of dirt, dust and other particles.

Second step is a vacuum cleaner without a beater bar, to get in between the boards and other hard to reach areas.

Deeper cleaning techniques vary depending on the installation and finish of your hardwood floor. For “Finish in Place” hardwood floors, using an 8”x14” terrycloth mop with a rotating head that makes cleaning corners, under cabinets and along base boards as simple as pie is recommended.

Professional cleaning products recommended by your flooring retailer can be used to remove tough stains and spills without dulling the finish of your wood floor.

### **Cleaning Products**

Hardwood flooring manufacturers of prefinished wood floors have specific recommended cleaning products for maintaining the wood floor's finish. It is best to use their recommended cleaning products and follow their instructions so you do not void your warranties. If you don't know the manufacturer of your wood floors check with your local flooring retailer since there are many different wood floor finishes today. Always test the cleaner first in some obscure corner, such as closet or pantry to make sure you are using the right product.

### **Dos and Don'ts**

**Don't** use a wax on a wood floor with a urethane finish

**Do** use cleaners that won't leave a film or residue

**Don't** use ammonia cleaners or oil soaps on a wood floor — they'll dull the finish and affect your ability to recoat later.

**Do** use a professional hardwood floor cleaner to remove occasional scuffs and heel marks (just spray some cleaner on a cloth and rub the stained area lightly). Professional flooring retailers carry specially designed spray cleaners designed for today's hardwood flooring.

**Don't** wet mop or use excessive water to clean your floor (wood naturally expands when it's wet and can cause your floor to crack or splinter). For information on steam cleaning hardwood floors, see our blog post on Floor Talk.

**Do** clean sticky spots with a damp towel or sponge

**Do** minimize water exposure and clean spills immediately

### **Hardwood Flooring Refinishing**

Screen & Recoat: If and when your hardwood floor begins to look like it

belongs beneath the feet of gold miners in an old western saloon, it's time to consider screening and re-coating.

Screening is the process used to abrade or grind down your floor's polyurethane finish. Next, fresh coats of urethane are applied. The result is a rejuvenated floor that looks as good as the day it was installed!

**Sand & Refinish:** If the damage to your hardwood floor is severe, then you may require sanding and refinishing. This process involves sanding your floor down to the bare wood and refinishing it. Only go to this effort if screening and re-coating doesn't solve your problem. Replacement boards may be available so you don't have to refinish the entire area. Be sure to go pro whenever you have work done on your hardwood floors!

### **Protect Your Investment**

**Color Loss & Shading:** All hardwood floors fade or change shades over time. Like our own skin, hardwood's exposure to sunlight may greatly increase this process and cause permanent color change.

Window treatments are recommended to shade your floors from the sun's harsh UV rays. We also recommend rotating area rugs and furniture regularly, allowing hardwood floors to age evenly from UV exposure.

**Scratching:** To avoid permanent marks and scratches, it's a good idea to cover furniture and table legs with flannel protectors. Be careful when moving heavy objects across your floor to avoid scuffing.

**Pets:** Likewise, trim your pet's nails regularly and keep any and all other sharp objects away from your wood floors. Also, pet water and food bowls should not be placed directly onto a hardwood floor. Pet urine should be wiped up immediately and then wipe the area with a clean damp cloth.

Stiletto heels may be fashionable, but what's not in fashion (or covered by your warranty) are the dents and dings they may cause to wood floors.

Love your floors and your floors will love you back for a long, long time.