



HARMONY

TIMBER FLOORS

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR MAINTAINING TIMBER FLOORS

NOTE: it is important to understand that Timber floors are a natural product and must be treated with care. Many customers have unrealistic expectations about the life and durability of timber floor coatings. Some expect the coatings to never wear or mark, and to be impervious to spillages and moisture or to never need maintenance. It's better to create realistic expectations upfront by explaining clearly that wood floors are a long term investment that will last the lifetime in your home, if routine cleaning and maintenance are carried out, and they are protected from moisture and abrasion. Routine basic maintenance includes sweeping, vacuuming or dust mopping to remove dirt and grit which if left this will accumulate and act as an abrasive as it is tracked throughout the home. This schedule should also include the occasional light damp mopping with the manufacturer's recommended cleaner.

SHOES-MATS-DOGS; Many people don't wear outside shoes inside for cleanliness reasons. They switch to softer indoor footwear and this not only reduces the cleaning required but also prevents tracking abrasive grit and dirt into the home. This grit acts just like sandpaper on your floor. Good quality mats placed inside and outside all entrance doors are the next best solution to prevent tracking abrasive dirt and grit inside. Area mats placed in high traffic areas such as at the kitchen sink or hallways greatly assist in the reduction of wear in these areas. Move them periodically as ultraviolet light can change the colour of exposed timber giving the floor an uneven appearance. If shoes are worn inside, they should be kept in good order to prevent denting of the timber floorboards; dog's claws should be kept trimmed for the same reason. In almost all cases when called in to assess the condition of a homeowner's Timber floors I will find the most damage around and underneath the dining table. It is a heavily used area and the constant scraping of chairs in and out can quickly degrade the finish. Most have diligently placed felt protectors on the bottom of the chair legs only to have them knocked off or damaged over time, leaving the hard wood or metal tip exposed. The best types of protectors are ones with a hard plastic cup containing the felt pad that have a nail or pin that can be hammered into the leg itself. They don't fall off. With furniture legs, it is not so much weight but movement that damages floorboards. Or you can look at the full rubber type. It is up to you the homeowner to regularly check chairs & tables to see if the felt is still intact and has not fallen off, if you want to protect your floors.

WOOD & WATER DO NOT MIX DO NOT USE STEAM MOPS ON TIMBER FLOORS: They force steam (moisture) into small incisions, breaks or cracks will appear on the surface of your floor and could cause the finish to peel and delaminate. All finishes degrade over time by the process of oxidation - a process that is accelerated by heat.

CLEANING PRODUCTS TO USE; Never, ever use common household products like all-purpose household cleaner, window cleaner, steel wool pads, aerosol furniture polish, wax or similar products to clean your floor. Some are too abrasive and will scratch the surface, others will make your floor dangerously slippery or could leave a film of silicon or wax on the timber which will interfere with any future recoating of your floor. A lot of people might think Methylated Spirits or Kerosene is all right to use. THEY ARE NOT. Any type of petroleum distillate will degrade the finish over time and eventually cause it to look irreversibly dull and drab. It is best to use the finish manufacturer's proprietary cleaner, following their directions for use, but if none is available then some warm water with a little mild, neutral PH detergent added works well. Again Mist Spray or squeeze the mop out and damp mop only. Some choose to buff the floor with a soft cloth afterwards to ensure no water is left on the timber.

AVOID DIRECT SUNLIGHT; Timber, like many natural materials (such as your skin) will change colour on exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation. Even an old floor that is re-sanded will expose new timber fibres to the light, which begins this colour change process. The amount of change is dependent upon the amount of direct and indirect sunlight exposure the floor gets and the response of different species of timber is variable. This colour change is the most dramatic in the first 6 months after it is sanded and finished. It is recommended that rugs be moved periodically during this time to avoid leaving areas of uneven colour. We see many modern homes with huge expanses of unprotected glass allowing intense direct unfiltered sun to beat directly onto the floor surface. The incredible heat generated not only cooks the surface of the Timber speeding up the process of oxidation by which all finishes degrade, but also increases the chance of the floorboards cupping.

TIMBER FLOORBOARDS CUP FOR ONLY ONE REASON; that is from gaining or losing moisture faster on one side than the other. The heat beating on the surface dries out moisture from the topside of the boards making them drier than the bottom. The board's cup away from the area of highest moisture with the top edges curling upwards towards the board centre. To avoid unwanted colour change, the possibility of the floorboards cupping or accelerated degradation of the finish it is best to filter the sunlight that shines directly onto your timber floors with blinds, drapes or window tinting.

PERIODICALLY RECOAT YOUR TIMBER FLOORS; your engineered hardwood floor should be recoated when the original finish shows signs of wear, but before it has worn down to bare wood. Once worn to bare wood, the floor will stain easily and may require complete re-sanding. The recoating process only requires the floor to be cleaned down and then abraded, after which another coat of finish is applied. It is a much simpler and less costly process than re-sanding. If you are unsure of the condition of your floor contact YOUR RE-SELLER for advice.

PROTECT YOUR FLOORS IMPORTANT: place mats at all exterior door entrances, preferably inside and out. Place area mats in front of the sink and rugs down hallways and other heavy traffic areas. Be aware that some rubber backed rugs, foam backed rugs and non-slip pads contain additives that may discolour the floor. Periodically move your rugs around to avoid irregular discolouration patches from direct and indirect light exposure.

REGULAR INSPECTION; finally do inspect your floors regularly for any signs of damage or wear and take the appropriate action. This step alone can save you much heartache and money. Early intervention in most cases means minor problems are fixed without the expense and disruption or re-sanding the entire floor. Again call your distributor for advice.

CARING FOR YOUR TIMBER FLOORS

PROPER CARE AND MAINTENANCE WILL PRESERVE THE BEAUTY OF YOUR TIMBER FLOORS

MAINTENANCE TIPS: SUMMARY

- Fit protective pads to the legs of chairs and tables to prevent scuff marks when moving furniture.
- Under desk chairs that have castors fitted we recommend the use of a protective floor mat to prevent damage to the floor.
- Floors exposed to direct sunlight should be protected by window coverings such as curtains or blinds
- Install matting at the entrance to timber floors. The aim of a matting system is to remove dirt / grit and moisture from the feet of people entering the building to prevent that material scratching
- **SOME DO NOT TIPS:**
- Do not let sand, dirt or grit gather on the floor. This can act like sandpaper and abrade or scratch the surface causing a dull finish.
- Never use excess water to clean the timber surface. Excessive amounts of water can cause your timber floor to swell. Use water sparingly.
- High heels should never be worn on timber floors. They can severely damage timber floors and leave dents in the surface, especially when the shoe loses its heel and you have a metal spike as the heel.
- Do not use household detergents or cleaners on timber floors. These products can dull floor finishes, if you do use detergents, use sparingly and it is best to use a PH Neutral.
- Pets living on timber floors can scratch or gouge the floors. Keep claws trimmed regularly.
- **CLEANING:**
- Use a **damp** mop only. A micro-fibre mop is recommended. Avoid wet mopping of the floor, which can leave excess moisture or streaking.
- Regularly vacuum your timber floors, the vacuum should be protected on the underside, this will minimise the chance of scratches.
- Apply the cleaning material by the "MIST SPRAY METHOD", using this method minimises the chance of getting high levels of water on your floor.
- The "MIST SPRAY METHOD", is done by diluting the cleaning material and then lightly mist spraying the floors and then wiping with a "MICRO FIBRE MOP"
- To remove spot rub these areas

When a spillage occurs soak up the bulk of the liquid quickly.

Do Not Flood Mop Any Timber/ Floor. It's the safest solution.