



Expectations & Care Of Your New Hardwood Floor

Care for the First Week

After the final coat of finish has been applied wait three days before moving furniture back on the floor. Wear socks when walking on the floor for the first three days after the final coat, because the finish is susceptible to marring and scuffing. You should wait seven days before cleaning and putting rugs back on your floor. The reason for this is that the finish takes seven days to totally cure.

A Thermo Hygrometer helps you monitor your humidity!

Wood is a "living" product; it expands and contracts with humidity levels in the environment. Either too much humidity or not enough can produce changes in your wood floor. In the winter, when your furnace runs and humidity levels are low, the natural moistures within the wood dry out, causing the wood to "shrink." This may leave fine cracks between the boards. In the summer months, as the humidity increases, the wood will absorb moisture, expand again and cracks will disappear. Keep the humidity level in your home between 35 – 45% and the temperature between 60 – 80 degrees year round. A Thermo-Hygrometer will help you monitor the humidity in your home to keep it at a proper level.

Realistic Expectations of your Wood Floor

Your Floor may have Particles in the Finish -It is impractical to expect a dust free finish. Since your floor is being finished in your home it is not practical to achieve a "clean room" environment. Some dust may fall onto the freshly applied top finish. It will wear off as you use the floor.

Your Floor May Scratch or Dent - The term 'hardwood' has nothing to do with the hardness of the wood, unfortunately. Varying species of hardwood have different densities and will show damage less than others. Floor finishes vary in their resistance to scratching, but no one has yet invented a finish that cannot be scratched. Hardwood flooring will dent and the finish that is applied cannot prevent dents. Hardwood flooring can be dented by something as common as women's high-heeled shoes, a pet's claws, or an object when it is dropped.

Your Floor May Have Cracks Between The Boards - Although your new floor may start tight with no cracks in between boards, as a natural product, it will contract and expand with the change in moisture of its environment, most often due to the seasonal changes. This natural process may result in fine cracks between some of the pieces in your floor. Some stain colors, such as white, will show this process more than others. In order to minimize extreme shrinkage effects, use a humidifier and maintain the humidity in your home at 35-45% throughout the year. "Gaps between boards" is one of the most often heard complaints.

Customer expectations should include the fact that normal gaps will occur during seasons that are dry and your hardwood floor will return to normal as humidity returns to the wood. Occasional permanent gaps that are not prominent, when normal seasonal gaps close, are considered acceptable.

Your Floor may "Cup" - In summer, when the humidity is at its highest, moisture is absorbed by the wood, which then expands. This expansion causes the strips of wood to push against each other. The individual boards may rise up on the edges, forming a ridge on both sides called 'cupping.' These variations can be minimized with proper ventilation, temperature control and the use of a dehumidifier. "Cupping" is not usually permanent and your floor will likely become a smooth surface once the moisture is released from the wood. Standing water on a floor may also cause cupping.

Protect Your Solid Investment

Solid hardwood floors are among the easiest to maintain. Protect their warmth and character with simple, everyday cleaning techniques. Here are tips to prevent damage to your hardwood floors:

Surface Damage - Dirt, grit and sand are your hardwood floor's worst enemies. They act like sandpaper on the finish, causing scratches, dents and dulling. Place floor rugs or mats at entrances to trap dirt and prevent damage. In addition to entryways, place rugs in any areas where water may be splashed, such as near a kitchen or bathroom sink. Keep high heels in good repair. Stiletto heels without proper tips can cause dents and scratches.

Water & Other Spills - Water can also be harmful to your hardwood floor. Never allow standing water on your floor for any length of time. Standing water can warp the floor and damage the finish. Large amounts of water can cause the wood to swell and make your floor crack, splinter or cup. Simply wipe up all spills as they happen.

Furniture - Moving furniture without protector pads can scratch, dent and abrade your floor's finish. Place floor protector pads under all furniture legs. Floor protectors can accumulate grit and should be periodically cleaned and/or replaced. Lift furniture when moving - avoid dragging. **Rugs**- Rugs should be made of a breathable material. They should not have a rubber back, because it does not allow your floor to breath.

Pets - Regularly trim your pets nails or claws to reduce scratches to your floor's surface. Even the trimmed nails of a large dog will inevitably scratch a floor's finish.

Sun - Most wood species change color or tone with exposure to ultraviolet light. Moving rugs and furniture will eventually blend uncovered sections with the rest of the floor. Blinds and curtains can help protect from the sun's UV rays.

Regular Maintenance

Vacuum, Sweep or Dust Mop - A vacuum with special bare floor attachments are the surest way to get rid of all the dirt and dust. Or use a good dust mop - one with a 12- to 18- inch cotton head. Do not use a vacuum with a beater bar as this may scratch or dull the finish.

Cleaning - Use the finish manufacturer's recommended cleaning system. A good system will include a microfiber mop head, mop handle, and hardwood floor cleaner. A professional wood floor cleaning product will safely remove tough stains and spills without dulling the finish. Use a damp, soft mop head or cloth to clean the surface. Always wash with the grain of the wood. Since wood naturally expands when it is wet, never wet mop, steam clean or use excessive water to clean your floor.

Cleaners - use neutral pH cleaners made specifically for wood floors. All-purpose cleaners or oil soaps can dull your finish or build up a residue which can affect the ability to recoat your floor later.

The regular cleaning and periodic professional maintenance of your hardwood flooring will insure a home and lifestyle of beauty and comfort for years to come.