

Hardwood Flooring Care & Maintenance

Note: All woods are affected by light. Some exotic species will darken while others species will tend to lighten over a period of time when exposed to natural and artificial light sources. Some wood species darken and/or lighten at a faster rate than others. This is a natural characteristic of wood and does not constitute any type of product defect.

Routine Maintenance

1. Use a damp cloth to blot up spills as soon as they happen. Never allow liquids to stand on your floor.
2. For tough spots, such as oil, paint, markers, lipstick, ink, or tar, use 10% acetone/nail polish remover on a clean white cloth, then wipe the area with a damp cloth to remove any remaining residue.
3. Sweep, dust, or vacuum the floor regularly with the hard floor attachment (not the beater bar) to prevent accumulation of dirt and grit that can scratch or dull the floor finish.
4. Periodically clean the floor with cleaning products made specifically for pre-finished hardwood floor care, such as Shaw's **R2X Hard Surface Cleaner**.
5. Do not wash or wet mop the floor with soap, water, oil-soap detergent, or any other liquid cleaning material. This could cause swelling, warping, delamination, and joint-line separation, and void the warranty.
6. Do not use steel wool, abrasive cleaners, or strong ammoniated or chlorinated type cleaners.
7. Do not use any type of buffing or polishing machine.
8. For spots such as candle wax or chewing gum, harden the spot with ice and then gently scrape with a plastic scraper, such as a credit card. Be careful not to scratch the flooring surface. Wipe clean with a damp cloth.
9. For tough stains, you may need to use a heavy-duty stain remover made specifically for hardwood floors.
10. A more frequent dust-mopping or vacuuming schedule may be required in very sandy areas such as a beach home.

Environmental Protection

1. Entry mats will help collect the dirt, sand, grit, and other substances such as oil, asphalt, or driveway sealer that might otherwise be tracked onto your floor.
2. Do not use rubber or foam backed plastic mats as they may discolor the flooring finish. To prevent slippage, use an approved vinyl rug underlayment.
3. Use floor protectors and wide-load bearing leg bases/ rollers to minimize indentations and scratches from heavy objects. As a rule, the heavier the object, the wider the floor protector.
4. Maintain a normal indoor relative humidity level between 35% and 65% throughout the year to minimize the natural expansion and contraction of the wood.
 - a. Heating season (Dry): A humidifier is recommended to prevent excess shrinkage due to low humidity levels. Wood stove and electric heat tend to create very dry conditions.
 - b. Non Heating Season (Wet): An air conditioner, dehumidifier, or periodically turning on your heating will help to maintain humidity levels during summer months.
5. Avoid excessive exposure to water during periods of inclement weather.
6. Do not walk on your floor with stiletto heels, spiked golf shoes, or other types of sports cleats.
7. Do not allow sharp, pointed, or rough textured objects to be exposed to the hardwood flooring.
8. Keep your pet's nails trimmed to prevent them from scratching your floor.
9. Periodically rearranging your area rugs and furniture will allow the floor to age evenly. UV sunlight will soften the tone of different species of hardwood to varying degrees.
10. Use a dolly when moving heavy furniture or appliances; but first, put down a piece of quarter inch plywood or Masonite to protect the floor. Never try to slide or roll heavy objects across the floor.
11. A protective mat should be used for furniture or chairs with castors.

Repairing Your Hardwood Floor

1. Minor damage to your hardwood floor can be repaired by using a color fill. This special product should be matched to the color of your floor and, when properly used, will make the damaged area virtually invisible. In addition, the repaired area will hold up to traffic and wear.
2. A qualified hardwood flooring installer should repair extensive damage to traditional engineered or solid hardwood flooring.

Glueless Hardwood Board Replacement Repairs

1. Shaw glueless hardwood may be assembled and dis-assembled several times. Carefully disassembled glueless joints will retain their original locking integrity during re-assembly.
2. New replacement plank(s) should be acclimated in the replacement area for at least 72 hours, to allow them to equalize to the conditions of the flooring in the room where the replacement(s) will take place.
3. Remove baseboard, wall base, or quarter-round as needed to replace the damaged board(s). Take the flooring apart, 1 row at a time, by lifting the rows to detach them; then separating the individual boards.
4. Be sure to stack the individual planks in the proper order for re-installation. This usually eliminates the need to cut planks for start or end of the row lengths.
5. Replace the damaged board with a piece from the edge of the original installation.
6. Insert the properly acclimated new plank(s) along the outer edge of the original flooring installation during re-assembly. This minimizes the chance that a newer plank might stand out from the wear condition of the original installation.
7. Re-install the baseboard, wall base, or quarter round, and the replacement-repair is complete.

Maintaining Laminate or Hardwood Flooring in Heavy Use Areas

The key element in the maintenance of Laminate or Hardwood flooring in heavy use areas is to keep the flooring surface free from smeared or streaked areas, which then lead to increased maintenance rather than less since streaked or smeared areas also attract dust and dirt to stick to the flooring surface. Sticky areas of flooring cause trouble in two ways; one, the area attracts dirt; and two, the sticky dirt transfers to shoe traffic and spreads the soil and grit around a wider area.

The use of protective walk-off mats in areas around beverage service, entry doorways, vending areas etc. will help with everyday tracked in dirt and other spots and spills that once on the flooring surface, attract dirt more readily.

Shaw Hard Surfaces Technical would advise that your maintenance staff adopt "Dry Cleaning" methods for maintaining your Laminate or Hardwood flooring product in heavy use areas. This regimen would involve the following methodology:

1. Once or twice daily **dry** dust-mopping of the Laminate or Hardwood flooring surface using a premium grade **cotton** dust mop head. Even shoe scuff marks can be removed from the pre-finished Laminate or Hardwood flooring surface using a dry cotton dust mop. (We do not see optimum results when using synthetic or blended fiber dust mop heads.)

2. Spot clean any sticky areas on the flooring using a three step method of applying a mild, neutral pH cleaner like Shaw's **R2X Hard Surface Cleaner**, to a cotton cloth; using that cloth to clean the sticky spill area, and then buff-drying the sticky spill area with a dry cotton cloth to prevent residue from the cleaning process to remain on the surface. (This "buff-dry" anti- residue step is very important to keeping the flooring appearance clean [not smeared], and uniform!) There is no need to wet mop the entire flooring area for one or two spills. Spot clean and thoroughly dry the spill areas, and continue dry cleaning the rest of the flooring using the dust mop.

3. Small, slightly sticky areas can also be removed using the dry dust mop; but remember, when the dust mop head begins to tack or grab to the floor, (does not glide easily), it is time to switch out for a replacement one.

4. The cotton dust mop heads used for daily cleaning should be routinely removed from service, laundered, (hot water washed and thoroughly rinsed and dried), and then placed back into service. Purchasing several cotton dust mop heads and setting up a rotating use schedule is easiest on the maintenance team, and provides additional back up equipment so you are prepared for those heavy traffic or inclement weather days.

Remember: Frequent routine dry dust-mopping and spot cleaning / buff drying of problem areas can be accomplished much more quickly, and with much less risk of slippery surface areas, than wet or damp mopping of the entire flooring surface.