

## Hardwood Flooring – Maintenance Tips

### CLEANING

Caring for your hardwood floor has never been easier. Know your hardwood floor whether it is UV cured urethane or oil wax finished. Both finishes cleaned the same way, however in addition to the daily care procedures, oil wax finished hardwood require occasional cleaning and re-oiling for rejuvenation. How frequently these need to be done depends on how much use the floor gets.

*Always follow the manufacturer's care & maintenance and their recommended cleaners.* Proper hardwood cleaners do not strip your hardwood's finish or build up any film residue.

Never wash your hardwood floors with liquid, and wipe up spills immediately, using a dry cloth to thoroughly dry and clean the affected area. You may consider using area rugs to protect susceptible areas (around kitchen sink, at entrance for wet footwear, etc.).

Do not use mop with water or steamers. Do not use water, vinegar, ammonia-based products, floor wax, oil or soap-based detergents, or any other type of unapproved cleaner on your floor. These chemicals can damage the floor finish and leave a dull and greasy residue behind.

### AMBIENT CONDITION REQUIREMENT

The required temperature of **65-80oF (18-27°C)** and relative humidity level of **35-55%** must be maintained year-round, wherever hardwood floor is installed. Follow instructions for install over radiant heat. Consistent ambient condition can be maintained with proper ventilation, humidifying in dry seasons, dehumidifying in wet seasons, heating, and constant monitoring.

### PROTECTION

Use mats at entrances to keep debris and moisture from being tracked inside. Regular cleaning or vacuuming of these rugs will prevent accumulation of dirt.

Use weight-bearing, non-staining floor protectors, such as felt pads, under all furnishings. We recommend replace plastic casters with wide rubber or soft polyurethane caster. Felt protectors under the legs of all pieces of furniture will prevent damage caused by scratching. Frequently

check and replace any damaged protector/caster so it does not scratch/mark the floor. Pets' nails should be trimmed and cleaned on a regular basis, to prevent marking on the floor.

Gradual color changes should be expected, but constant exposure from direct sunlight or intense lighting can cause hardwood floors to change color too quickly. Moving area rugs and furniture occasionally will help ensure a more uniform color change.

## **HUMIDITY CONTROL**

Humidity control is probably the most over-looked maintenance procedure by homeowners that usually involves unneeded service complaints or calls.

ALL woods expand and contract to various degrees due to humidity or direct exposure to liquids. ALL homes are different in seasonal humidity changes. Proper relative humidity levels for your floors are between 40%-50% - this also happens to be the most comfortable for you.

Low levels of humidity can cause shrinkage. This will be noticeable as separation between boards, and may be in specific areas (most commonly over heating ducts or around vents) or evenly throughout the floor. High levels of humidity will result in the wood expanding and possibly cause buckling in specific areas, or again, throughout the floor. Given enough time and too much humidity, the boards will actually be compressed along the edge and will show gaps between the boards when the moisture content of the floor returns to normal levels.

The use of humidifiers in the winter, and (possibly) dehumidifiers in the summer are usually required – please check with the manufacturer for recommended operation procedures. DO NOT be alarmed if we ask that your floor be left for a time (sometimes months) to allow humidity levels to return the floor to its proper shape if you experience these effects. Even with the use of humidifiers/dehumidifiers, it can sometimes take more than a month to return the moisture content in the wood to appropriate levels! Remember every home and its environment within are different, and will be up to you to maintain!

We also recommend the purchase of a digital humidity/temperature meter. These are affordable and will give instant and exact readings of humidity in your home – your humidifier/dehumidifier may not be keeping the levels it says it is and may require adjustment!

## **SCRATCHES & DENTS, ETC:**

ALL woods are susceptible to scratching or denting. Some species of wood are more dent resistant than others, and preventing this is entirely up to you. Some preventative recommendations are as follows:

1. High heels will easily dent any hardwood floor due to their small size and the pressure displaced at the “tips” of the heels. Use your discretion – we have seen floors damaged heavily from large formal parties!
2. Use “floor protectors” on as much furniture as possible (within reason), especially chairs. Even those pieces that you think may not be moved – why take the chance? These will help you prevent scratches/gouges if the items are moved or dragged. Remember: these are very affordable, so check often on pieces that are moved constantly (like eating-area chairs) and replace before they wear through. Heavy-duty Teflon protectors are available for larger, heavier pieces/appliances as well.
3. If moving large pieces of furniture or appliances that may already have floor protectors, try to place something underneath to avoid scratches. A few minutes of preparation can avoid very costly repairs!
4. Doormats are a must if you have hardwood at entries to the home. This will help reduce moisture, dirt and salt in the winter from being tracked into the home. Also, mats are a very good idea in front of the sink or refrigerator if you have hardwood in the kitchen. This will help reduce damage from liquids and high traffic as well.

As you can see, most hardwood flooring maintenance involves the simple use of good judgement. However, if there are any questions, please feel free to contact us. If not, follow the above guidelines and enjoy a beautiful, natural product!