



Home Tips®



• CHRISTIAN BUILDING INSPECTORS, INC., 3697 HABERSHAM LANE, DULUTH, GEORGIA 30096, 770-849-0920 • DECEMBER 2001 •

Q & A

How Do You Clean Hardwood Floors?

We just purchased our first house with hardwood floors. Would you give us some advice on how to clean the floor without damaging the wood?

The key to lasting beauty of your wood flooring investment is proper maintenance. The following are some excellent guidelines for maintaining today's wood floors:

For all hardwood floors, regardless of how the floor has been finished, there are certain steps that must be taken to maintain the beauty of the wood.

Every floor must be dust mopped, vacuumed or swept with a soft bristle broom daily, or as often as necessary, to remove grit and dust from the surface. Walking on a dusty or dirty floor is the fastest way to damage a finish.



Place walk off mats (carpet runners) at all exterior entrances. This will capture much of the harmful dirt before it even reaches the hardwood floor. Shake out, wash or vacuum

mats and area rugs frequently.

Floor protector pads of soft felt or similar material should be placed on the bottoms of the legs of the furniture. Floor protectors must be kept clean of grit and periodically replaced.

Keep high heels in good repairs. An unprotected tip will dent any hardwood floor.

Kitchen floors experience the most traffic in a home. To prevent premature wear of the floor, place an area rug in front of the sink and stove area. Shake out or vacuum the rugs frequently.

Finally, using a **humidifier or dehumidifier** in conjunction with a furnace or air conditioning system to maintain relative humidity in the home at 30-50% will maintain the moisture in the wood and minimize cracks between the boards.

Urethane Finishes Routine Cleaning - Use the finish manufacturer's or the prefinished floor manufacturer's recommended cleaning system. If the manufacturer is not known or has no recommendation, use a cleaner that will not

leave a residue that would inhibit bonding and recoating. NEVER wax a urethane finish. Do not generally wet a wood floor with water. When using any wood floor cleaner which requires mixing with water, follow mixing directions precisely. A cloth wetted with water and squeezed dry may be used to wipe up food stuffs and other spills, provided the area is buffed dry immediately. Heel or scuff marks and stubborn stains may be removed by lightly rubbing with a cloth and a wood floor cleaner.

Long-term Maintenance - Urethane finishes eventually will show wear patterns from surface scratching. When high traffic areas begin to look dull it's time to recoat or restore the finish. Always follow the manufacturer's recommendations.

Wax Finishes

Routine Cleaning - Use the finish manufacturer's or the prefinished floor manufacturer's recommended cleaning system. Never use a water based cleaner on a wax floor. Once dirt and dust have been removed, the luster may be restored by buffing. Apply additional



wax only in heavy traffic areas, if needed. Caution, do not over wax. An application of a solvent based cleaning product will remove dirt and allow the floor to be buffed clean. Spills must be wiped up immediately with a lightly water dampened cloth and then hand buffed dry.

To remove white spots caused by water spills, use fine steel wool (#000) and a small amount of mineral spirits, rub gently in a circular motion until spot is gone. Then apply additional wax to the area and buff.

Long-term Maintenance - Waxed floors that have been neglected may be restored by deep cleaning. An application of a renovating system with fine steel wool, proper dry times and a complete re-waxing will clean and reseal the wood as well as restore color and luster.

Note: Once wax, in any form, has been applied to a wood floor, only wax may be used as a coating over the floor. Urethane and other surface finished cannot be applied over an existing wax finish.

Acrylic Impregnated Floors Non-Urethane Coated

Routine Cleaning-For general cleaning always follow the manufacturer's recommendations and use their floor care products. **Long-term Maintenance** - An acrylic impregnated floor that has been neglected or improperly cleaned may need restoration. Stripping, sanding or screening the floor may be required, always contact the floor manufacturer for complete instructions.

