

Southern Traditions Hardwood Flooring Care and Maintenance Guide

Hardwood flooring is an important investment in your home. Here are a few essential tips that will help your hardwood floor last longer.

- Sweep or vacuum regularly to rid your floor of dust and eliminate abrasives that can scratch the floor finish.
- Quickly wipe spills from floor to protect wood from excess liquid.
- Regularly swept or vacuumed floors will almost eliminate any need to "clean" the floor with a cleaning product. But when a cleaning product is needed, we suggest only using a "hardwood specific, non-oil based cleaner." Cleaning products should be sprayed on to the sponge mop or hand towel, never on to the floor itself.
- Use mats outside and inside entrances to prevent sand and abrasives build-up on your hardwood floor. Avoid rubber or other dense mat backings that prevent airflow beneath rugs and retain abrasives and humidity.
- Use mats near sink, dishwasher and workstations to protect floor from cooking utensils, water spills, detergents, oils and other kitchen mishaps.
- Stick felt pads under any furniture or chair legs to ease movement and prevent scratches on the wood floor. Keep pads clean at all times and regularly check for signs of wear.
- Opt for large, soft polyurethane or rubber casters rather than narrow, rigid plastic ones.
- Protect your hardwood floor when moving heavy objects. Place on a reversed mat and slide smoothly over floor.
- Be careful with pointed objects such as spiked-heeled and sport shoes that may damage the finish of your wood floor, especially if they are worn or damaged.
- Maintain relative humidity level around 45% for your good health, your wood floor and furnishings. Wood is a natural material that reacts to relative humidity variations when moisture is absorbed or released.
- The floor needs to be protected from sunlight and intense artificial lighting to reduce discoloration of exposed wood. This phenomenon with wood surfaces is normal and natural, and varies according to species.
- Occasionally move furniture and carpets around and reduce intense light sources to minimize color contrasts.

Things to avoid:

- Never pour cleaner or any other liquid directly onto floor surface.
- Do not use a wet mop that leaves excess water on your hardwood floor.
- Do not use wax, oil-based detergents or other household cleaning agents on your floors, since these products may dull or damage the floor finish, leave a greasy film that makes floors slippery, and make maintenance of your hardwood floor more difficult.
- Do not use a steam cleaner/sweeper on your hardwood flooring.