



Atlantic Flooring, Inc.
Showroom:
502 Highway 64 East
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Caring for your Hardwood Floors

Few things match the beauty of hardwood flooring, and with simple proper maintenance, your hardwoods can retain the sheen, warmth and durability that make them a classic flooring choice. It is important to remember that in caring for your hardwood floors, you are actually caring for two separate surfaces, the finish and the hardwood beneath.

The first thing to remember is to keep grit off the floor. Those fine particles of dirt and dust can act like sandpaper on your hardwoods, and subtly scratch and dull your hardwood finish. Vacuum hardwoods at least once a week, and dust mop or sweep the floors in between vacuuming.

When spills on your hardwood floors happen, immediately clean them, and tracked on dirt, with a clean, soft cloth. After wiping the spill away, dry the area with a dry cloth. Moisture is the enemy of both the hardwoods and their finishes; never allow a wet area to stand. Use protective mats, runners, and area rugs. Rugs at exterior doors reduce the amount of dirt and grit that can enter your house, and mats and runners in high traffic areas will reduce the wear on your hardwood surfaces. Mats, rugs, and runners can capture an amazing amount of dirt, so be certain to shake them out often and clean them regularly.

Be careful about the movement of chairs and tables on hardwoods; this can cause excessive wear to the floor's finish. Use felt or fabric covered casters or glides on all furniture legs that come in contact with the floor, and replace them regularly. When moving a piece of furniture, lift it, don't slide it. If it is too heavy to be lifted, place a towel or heavy sock under each leg to avoid damaging the floor.

Be mindful of what kinds of footwear are best for hardwood floors. High heels or shoes with deep treads that can hold grit or small stones can create permanent gouges or marks.

Keep the humidity in your home between 45 and 55%. Excessive humidity can cause wood fibers to swell, causing cracks and buckles in the finish. Unusually dry conditions can cause separations between the floor boards. Depending on which extreme you are encountering, install a humidifier or dehumidifier.

Select the appropriate cleaner; the right cleaner will match the specific needs of your hardwood flooring's finish. Never use any product on your hardwood floors until you have carefully read the label. If it does not specifically say "suitable for hardwood floor," don't use it! Also, never use self polishing waxes, vinyl or tile floor care products. Although they may leave your floors looking glossy at application, the polishes will discolor over time, and will create problems when future refinishing of your hardwood floors is required. Be careful not to over-clean your hardwoods - too much cleaning with commercial products will ultimately dull the finish.



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Also, never pour water or allow water to puddle on your hardwood floor. Water and wood are not a good combination, especially if you have applied a wax finish to your floors. Remove any wet spots from your hardwoods immediately, and dry the area thoroughly.

If your hardwood floors are sealed (that is, have a polyurethane finish), use clear vinegar and hot water on a barely damp cloth to clean them. Commercial cleaning products can damage the polyurethane surface, and make adhesive of a new coat of polyurethane in the future a problem. And never use wax on sealed wood floors. It can create a dangerously slippery surface, and also create difficulties should a future recoating of polyurethane be necessary.

If your hardwood floors are waxed, decide between a buffable and non-buffable wax product, and stay with it. Mixing the two can cause a dull and streaky finish. Buffable waxes are a good choice for high traffic areas; non-buffable waxes (which contact acrylics) are recommended for low traffic areas protected by rugs. And never use a cleaning product that includes or requires water on a waxed floor. Carefully read the products label, and be certain it is compatible with the kind of wax you are using. And never wax over dirt! By following these few simple steps, your beautiful hardwood floors will be as satisfying in years to come as they were the day they were installed.