

Professional Tips & Tricks to Maintaining Hardwood Floors

Warning: Understanding how hardwood flooring is cut will possibly make you a hardwood snob. There are mainly two types of wood cuts: slice cut and spindle cut. The difference between the two is substantial when it comes to appearance and longevity. Known for its traditional appearance slice cut is when a mill cuts the tree lengthwise from top to bottom giving a much tighter growth ring appearance. A spindle cut is when a mill spins the tree end-to-end and runs a blade into the side shaving off large sheets of wood like a lathe. With this cut, most of the growth rings are far apart giving it an appearance similar to plywood. Knowing these two cuts may forever change your wood buying habits as the slice cut appears more elegant and traditional.

Hardwood Floor Construction

Real hardwood flooring comes in a few different makes: Solid 3/4" Tongue and Groove, Engineered Laminated Hardwood and Engineered Fiber Core Laminate.



3/4" Solid, Tongue & Groove Hardwood



Engineered Laminated Hardwood



Engineered Fiber Core Hardwood

- **3/4" Tongue & Groove Hardwood Flooring:** Known as traditional hardwood flooring, 3/4" tongue and groove can be sanded and refinished several times prior to replacement. This floor is known to last hundreds of years with proper care and maintenance and is known for its traditional appeal.
- **Engineered Laminated Hardwood Flooring:** Available in slice cut or spindle cut, this modern flooring gives you the appearance of Tongue and Groove with the durability of a laminated, plywood foundation. The laminated plywood foundation is constructed with thin layers of spindle cut wood glued perpendicular to each other so the wood fibers crisscross each other making it warp resistant. This flooring may be refinished once or twice depending on the thickness of the finished top layer.
- **Laminated Fiber Core Hardwood Flooring:** Available in slice cut or spindle cut, this flooring type is the least expensive as it contains fiberboard inside as a type of filler. It is a great product to reduce waste, but has a much shorter lifespan in regards to wear and tear. Layered similar to laminated plywood, if the fiberboard is ever exposed to moisture, the flooring is ruined as it will not return to its original form. The top finish layer is also incredibly thin and usually cannot be refinished.

Common Hardwood Floor Finishes

There are three common hardwood floor finishes that affect the appearance and longevity of hardwood flooring: Urethane finish, factory finish containing aluminum oxide and acrylic finish. Note: There are other finishes such as oil though they are very rare.

- **Urethane Finish:** Typically applied in the home after the hardwoods have been installed or refinished. Urethane is a clear finish that lasts for years with proper care and maintenance.
- **Factory Finish with Aluminum Oxide:** Applied at the factory, this finish is the most resilient available as the aluminum oxide is nearly as hard as a diamond making it the most resilient hardwood finish available.
- **Acrylic Finish:** Acrylic finishes last only a few months and are typically found in aftermarket products such as mop and glow or orange glo floor polishes. Note: Acrylic finishes need to be applied every so often to return the shine. Eventually it will need to be professionally stripped away as the many layers start to appear globby over time.

Cleaning Hardwood Floors

Mineral Spirits is a time tested hardwood cleaner for urethane or polyurethane floor finishes. Use sparingly and always check for compatibility first. There are several reputable hardwood floor cleaners also available at local hardware stores. When buying a store bought hardwood cleaner one word to look out for is "Shine." Most hardwood cleaners that contain the word "Shine" on the front of the bottle contain acrylic polymers that will eventually need to be stripped off the floor by a hardwood cleaning service.

Hardwood Cleaning: Over wetting a hardwood floor for an extended period of time may lead to damage and warping as the cells absorb the moisture similar to a straw. Microfiber mops do a great job at absorbing soils while using limited amounts of moisture as to not over wet the surface. Steam cleaners are not a good idea for cleaning hardwood floors as it can damage the protective finish exposing the wood to moisture.

At EverClean, we clean hardwood floors using special tools that expose the hardwoods to powerful scrubbers and cleaners while simultaneously extracting the oils and soils from the flooring. Call now for a free in-home quote: 615-379-3278