

Care and maintenance for oiled and waxed wooden flooring

Timber is a living material. A wooden floor, although no longer growing as part of a tree, is still very much part of its environment. As such, it responds to the light, temperature, humidity and wear to which it is exposed. As a general rule, a proper wooden floor takes four seasons to settle in. Over this time, it is normal to see some movement in the boards owing to changes in temperature and humidity.

As the floor ages the colour of the wood will mellow and change. This is a natural process that occurs as the surface of the wood is exposed to oxygen in the air and to ultraviolet light from the sun. Painted surfaces, upholstery, furniture and rugs all undergo this same process over time.

Looking after your floor

Wooden floorboards expand and contract across their grain as a result of increases and decreases in their moisture content. The following guidelines will help you maintain a consistent environment that best suits the nature of wood:

- **Temperature:** The recommended temperature in a room with wooden flooring is between 18 and 23°C. This ensures that the wood does not overheat and dry out.
- **Humidity:** We recommend that you buy a hygrometer (combined with a programmable humidifier / vaporizer) to allow you to keep a close eye on the humidity levels in the room. This is especially important during winter when the months are cold and dry. Our timber flooring is seasoned so that it has a moisture content of between 8 and 11%. **The relative humidity of the air in a room with timber flooring should be between 50 and 65%.** This ensures minimal shrinkage and expansion of the timber.
- **Under-floor heating:** It is very important to observe the recommended room temperature and relative air humidity levels at all times if you have under-floor heating. We recommend that you keep the heating system on at a constant temperature throughout the year. Fluctuations in temperature from the extremes of cold to hot should be avoided. If the heating system temperature needs to be increased or decreased we advise that this is done in stages of no more than 1°C per day. Please also see our information sheet '*Under-floor heating with wood flooring*'.
- **Wear and Tear:** Sharp objects such as high heels or chair and table legs can dent your floor. Whenever possible protect your wood by fixing felt or rubber pads under chairs or sofas, and under furniture that may be dragged across the floor. Particular attention should be given to areas in the room that encounter heavy foot traffic such as entrances, walkways, corridors and areas in front of sinks. The floor in these places may need additional protection, such as a mat, and may also need more frequent re-oiling.

Cleaning your floor

- **Regular cleaning** should be carried out using a soft broom or a vacuum cleaner. It is very important to prevent any excess moisture coming into contact with the floor. Oiled floors, because of their more porous nature, should not be cleaned using excessive amounts of water. Spot cleaning should be done with a damp cloth. Light mopping can be carried out only if the mop is very well wrung out. A mild detergent should be used, as bleach or abrasive cleaners are not suitable. We would recommend a product such as Osmo '*Wash and Care*'.
- **Periodic cleaning** of areas that receive heavy foot traffic can be carried out with parquet cleaner or wax remover, which can be wiped over the surface. Wax can then be reapplied over these areas. This can also be used to try and remove more stubborn stains and marks. Deep scratches in the timber can be coloured in using a stain. Specialist products including buffing machines are available from the Solid Floor showrooms.

Re-waxing

Your floor is finished with an oil and wax combination. Oil is the traditional finish for wood flooring and wood finished by this method has a soft, natural sheen that mellows with age. The oil does not sit on the surface of the wood but rather sinks into the grain. As a result the finish is more forgiving of scratches and scuffing, as wax can be rubbed into small scratches, virtually erasing them. This type of finish should provide you with years of protection against reasonable wear and tear.

Waxed floors will need to have a maintenance coating of wax reapplied to them after a period of time. The frequency with which this is necessary will depend on the amount of wear on the floor and on your own preferences. High- traffic areas such as hallways may need more frequent applications. Generally, the floor will need waxing every six to twelve months. If the floor starts to look 'dry', however, then it is time to re- wax.

The method for re-waxing:

- Apply a thin coat of wax either by hand with a soft cloth or with an electric buffing machine.
- Let it dry, then buff to the desired sheen either by hand with a soft cloth or using a buffing machine.

For details of all products and services please contact us