

## MAINTENANCE OF YOUR HARDWOOD FLOORING

In a study performed by The National Association of Home Builders (USA) it was determined that while most floor coverings today have a life expectancy of about a decade, hardwood flooring (when properly maintained) has a life expectancy of over 100 years.

That's value that stands the test of time and deserves to be protected.

To preserve the beauty & life of your hardwood floors, please find the following list of simple maintenance procedures & recommendations:

### Cleaning:

Most cleaning is performed by regular vacuuming with a soft bristle head attachment, or by sweeping/dusting to remove dust & particles that could abrade the floor. New "statically charged" micro-fiber wipers are very easy to use & economic for dusting areas of any size.

After removing debris use a liquid cleaner to remove fine dust, films, dried liquids, etc. It may not be necessary to clean the entire floor every time you vacuum - "spot cleaning" may be all that is needed.

The type of cleaner you use is very important. You should ONLY use the manufacturer's approved cleaners available

at Darmaga Hardwood (which are affordable & always in stock). Unfortunately, most "box stores" do not carry the appropriate cleaners, so please feel free to contact us or your builder if you have any questions. By not using the right cleaners, damage to the appearance and durability of your floor may occur, resulting in a shorter lifespan.



Remember:

- 1) NEVER apply large amounts of liquid to your floors – apply the cleaner indirectly or in small amounts from a spray bottle. Use terry cloth or micro-fiber mop and avoid heavy pressure.
- 2) Most coatings of hardwood floors are plastic-based & can be affected by window cleaning products and wax-based furniture polishes/cleaners, so be careful how you use those products near your floors as well!

### Humidity Control:

Humidity control is probably the most over-looked maintenance procedure by homeowners that usually involves avoidable service calls &/or complaints.

ALL woods expand and contract to varying degrees due to humidity or direct exposure to liquids. ALL homes are different in seasonal humidity changes. Proper relative humidity levels for your floors are between 40%-50% - this also happens to be the most comfortable for people.

Low levels of humidity can cause shrinkage. This will be noticeable as separation between boards. This can be seen in specific areas (most commonly over heating ducts or around vents) or evenly throughout the floor.

High levels of humidity will result in the wood expanding and possibly cause cupping. Over time and with too much humidity, the boards will actually be compressed along the edge and will show gaps between the boards when the moisture content of the floor returns to normal levels.

The use of humidifiers in the winter and dehumidifiers (in basements) in the summer may be required. DO NOT be alarmed if we or the builder ask that your floor be left for a time (sometimes months) to allow humidity levels to return the floor to its proper shape if you experience these effects.

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Even with the use of humidifiers/dehumidifiers, it can sometimes take more than a month to return the moisture content in the wood to appropriate levels. Remember every home & its environment within are different, & will be up to you to maintain! We also recommend the purchase of a digital humidity/temperature meter also available at Darmaga Hardwood. These are affordable and will give instant and fairly precise readings of humidity in your home.

Because your humidifier/dehumidifier may not be keeping the levels it says it is, you may need to make appropriate adjustments as required.

#### Scratches & Dents, Etc.:

ALL woods are susceptible to scratching or denting. Some species of wood are more dent resistant than others. Some preventative recommendations are as follows:

- 1) High heels will easily dent any hardwood floor due to their small size and the pressure displaced at the “tips” of the heels. Use your discretion – we have seen floors damaged heavily from large formal parties!
- 2) Use “floor protectors” (available at Darmaga) on as much furniture as possible - especially chairs. Even those

pieces that you think may not be moved – no need to take chances...

These will help you prevent scratches or gouges if the items are moved or dragged. Remember: these, like the cleaners, are very affordable - so check often on pieces that are moved constantly (like eating-area chairs) & replace before they wear through. Heavy-duty Teflon protectors are available for larger, heavier pieces/appliances as well.

- 3) If moving large pieces of furniture or appliances that may already have plastic floor protectors, don't rely on these - place something underneath to avoid scratches. A few minutes of preparation can avoid very costly repairs!
- 4) Doormats are a must if you have hardwood at entries to the home. This will help reduce moisture, dirt, & salt in the winter from being tracked into the home. Also, mats are a very good idea in front of the sink or refrigerator if you have hardwood in the kitchen. This will help reduce damage from liquids/high traffic as well.

Hardwood flooring maintenance involves the use of very simple precautions. Following the above guidelines will help you enjoy a beautiful & natural product for a long time!



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