

Hardwood Flooring Care & Maintenance

Your hardwood floor, if properly maintained, will survive your home. However, being a product from nature, hardwood flooring has several characteristics that must be considered. The following checklist is designed to familiarize you with these characteristics. Your knowledge of the following points will help assist you in not misinterpreting these characteristics as defects.

- Beautiful hardwood floors are a product of nature and therefore, not perfect. Accepted industry standards permit a defect tolerance not to exceed 5%. The defects may be of a manufacturing or natural type.
- Your floor will be affected by two distinct humidity seasons – heating and non-heating. Wood floor dimensions will be affected by varying levels of humidity. Care should be taken to control humidity levels within the 30-55% range.
- Heating season (dry): Humidifier is required to minimize shrinkage due to low humidity levels. Wood stoves and electric heat tend to create very dry conditions. Gaps between the boards may develop despite your best efforts.
- Non-heating season (humid): Proper humidity levels can be maintained by the use of an air conditioner, dehumidifier or by turning on your heating system periodically during the summer months. Avoid excessive exposure to water from tracking during periods of inclement weather. Do not obstruct, in any way, the expansion joints around the perimeter of your floors.
- Never clean your wood floor with water and/or vinegar. Do not use any wax or cleaner that must be mixed with water, such as oil soap. This may result in loss of the warranty. Water can dull the finish and permanently damage the wood. Only use cleaners approved by the manufacturer.
- Use mats at entrances to keep grit and moisture from being tracked in. Do not use rubber, foam or plastic-back mats, as they may discolour the floor.
- Exposure to sunlight will bring about subtle changes to the shade of any hardwood floor. Area rugs and furniture should be occasionally relocated to provide even changes in shading. This is not a defect.
- Grit and dirt may scratch your wood floor. Vacuum frequently.

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- Felt pads or floor protectors are required under furniture to minimize scratches. Certain types of casters may damage your floor. Use barrel-type caster wheels or wide, flat glides to protect your investment.
- Damage (dents, scratches, stains, etc.) caused by pets are not warranted.
- Your traffic areas will show signs of wear first. A decrease in the luster level of the wood floor will initiate in traffic areas.
- Every piece of wood in your hardwood is different and unique from each other. This is apparent from the variance in grain and colour. Wood is full of holes, like a sponge, and like a sponge it absorbs moisture. One piece of wood may have more/less grain than another piece, and therefore more/less holes. The more grain/holes, the more shrinkage and expansion with humidity changes. From this we see the development of over wood. Over wood will develop on site finished floors, through a couple of heating seasons. Over wood is not a defect.
- As the installer builds your floor he will cull the wood. Due to changes in the wood's moisture content, from time of milling, there will be warped boards and slight dimensional changes in each piece of wood. The installer will incorporate these pieces into your floor. Some gaps may be apparent, but limited.
- Minor splinters may be apparent on your new floor, but will wear off. This is not a defect.
- Use of stain, filler or putty stick for defect correction during the installation should be accepted as normal procedure.
- Inspect your floor from a standing height.

What you should not expect:

1. **A table top finish.** Each piece of oak flooring sands differently depending on its grain type (plain or quartered) making it virtually impossible for a completely flat surface.
2. **A monochromatic floor.** Wood, as a natural product varies from piece to piece. Remember, it is a natural and not fabricated and as such will have grain and colour variations consistent with its grain and species.
3. **A floor that will not indent.** In spite of the term "hardwood", wood flooring will indent under high heel traffic (especially with heels in disrepair). The finish that is applied will not prevent the dents.

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4. **A floor without cracks between the boards or within parquet pieces.** Although your new floor may start tight together, as a natural product it will continue to absorb and release moisture. This natural process will cause the floor to expand and contract from season to season resulting in cracks between some of the pieces in your floor. Some stain colours will show this process more than others.

5. **A squeak-free floor.** Although not very common, squeaks may come and go as a result of moisture or sub-floor changes.

Questions? Email: admin@carpetstudio.ca - Hardwood Flooring Care & Maintenance
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