HARMONY
TIMBER FLOORS

MAINTENANCE

HAMPTON

www. harmonytimberfloors.com

CARE AND MAINTENANCE FOR YOUR FLOORS

NOTE: The below Care and Maintenance Instructions are applicable for solid timber flooring, engineered timber flooring, bamboo flooring, hybrid vinyl flooring and laminate flooring, unless otherwise indicated.

ROUTINE MAINTENANCE IS THE KEY!

NOTE: It is important to understand that timber floors are a natural product and must be treated with care.

Many customers have unrealistic expectations about the life and durability of timber flooring and its coatings. Some customers expect the timber floor coatings to never mark or wear, to be impervious to spillages and moisture, or to never requiring any form of maintenance. It is better to create realistic expectations upfront by explaining clearly that timber floors are a long-term investment that will last the lifetime in your home. If routine cleaning and maintenance is carried out and the timber floors are protected from various elements such as the sun and moisture, customers can expect to have many years of pleasure from their timber flooring. Basic routine maintenance including sweeping, vacuuming or mopping with a barely moist microfiber mop with the manufacturer's recommended cleaner, will remove the build-up of dirt and grit, which if left will accumulate and act as an abrasive resulting on wear occurring to the timber floors.

AVOID DIRECT SUNLIGHT

Timber, like many natural materials (like your skin) will change colour on exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation. The amount of change is dependent upon the amount of direct and indirect sunlight exposure the timber flooring gets and different species of timber respond differently to exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation. This colour change is the most dramatic in the first 6 months after a timber floor has been installed, sanded and polished and the same applies to pre-finished engineered timber flooring. It is highly recommended that furniture and rugs be moved periodically during this time to avoid leaving areas of uneven colour. We see many modern homes with huge expanses of unprotected glass allowing intense morning/afternoon sun to beat directly onto the timber flooring. The incredible heat generated not only cooks the surface of the timber flooring, speeding up the process of oxidation and by which all finishes degrade, but also increases the chance of the floorboards cupping, peeling, shrinking, bleaching, splitting, checking etc.

Remember timber floorboards will only cup for one reason that is from gaining or losing moisture at a faster rate on one side than the other. Heat beating on the surface dries out moisture from the topside of the timber floorboards making them drier than the bottom and more susceptible to cupping. The timber floorboards cup away from the area of highest moisture with the top edges curling upwards towards the board centre. As a result, it is critical that customers have blinds, curtains or excellent quality window tint installed and ensure that they are closed at the time of the day when most exposed to ultraviolet (UV) radiation.

Failure to do this will have adverse effects on the timber flooring coatings and performance overall. Also, it is important to note that with hybrid vinyl flooring and laminate flooring, these products can bleach when exposed to natural light over time. In order to ensure a uniform appearance for these products, it would be advisable to reposition rugs and furniture periodically. Areas unprotected by blinds, curtains or an excellent quality window tint, will almost certainly suffer adverse effects on the timber flooring coatings and performance overall and will not be covered by our surface wear warranty. Remember, Australia has some of the highest levels of ultraviolet (UV) radiation!

WATER / MOISTURE ARE TIMBERS' BIGGEST ENEMY!

It is critical to prevent your timber flooring from coming in direct contact with water. Any spillages need to be cleaned up immediately with a mop or towels etc. It is also advisable to do maintenance checks around the perimeters of the timber flooring, particularly against windows, doors and sliding doors, to see if any ingress of water has taken place. If any water has affected the timber flooring, it will normally be visible in the form of black markings on the edges. It is also important to check areas around the dishwasher and ice-maker fridge for any potential water damage.

Prior to mopping vacuum your timber flooring with the brushes out on the vacuum head. When cleaning your timber flooring, place the recommended quantity (usually half a cap full) of Parquetpro Cleaner in a 500ml spray bottle. Wet the micro fiber mop head and ring it out. The micro fibre mop head must be damp not wet. Then mist spray the solution in the 500ml spray bottle onto the timber flooring and mop. When the mop head gets dirty, rinse it out. Do not machine wash the mop head as it degrades quickly. Do not use a steam mop on your timber flooring! Steam mops force steam (moisture) into small incisions, breaks or cracks that appear in the surface of your floor, causing the finish to peel and delaminate. All finishes degrade over time by the process of oxidation, a process that is accelerated by heat. Furthermore, avoid wet mopping of the floor, which can leave excess moisture or streaking.

It is also important not to place pot plants directly onto the timber flooring, even if they have a tray to catch the water. Condensation of the water in the tray could cause black markings to occur on the timber flooring. Similarly, do not place pot plants in bamboo or grass baskets directly onto the timber flooring, as it has happened that leaching has occurred from the bamboo or grass baskets onto the surface of the timber flooring, leaving distinctive water marks.

FURNITURE PROTECTION

In almost all cases, when called in to assess the condition of a customer's timber flooring, we find most of the damage tends to occur around and underneath the dining table from poorly or unprotected feet on the chairs. The same applies to bar stools. These areas are subject to a lot of wear and tear, with constant scraping of chairs in and out can quickly degrade the coatings. Most customers have diligently placed felt protectors on the bottom of the feet of the dining chairs and bar stools, only to have them knocked off or damaged over time, leaving the hard wood or metal tip exposed.

The best types of furniture protection are the hard-plastic cups containing the felt pad that have a nail or pin that can be hammered into the feet of the chairs itself. They don't fall off and should wear extremely well. With furniture legs, it is not so much weight but movement that damages timber floorboards. However, there are a number of other alternatives on the market to consider. It is up to the customer to regularly check their furniture for wear and tear of their floor protection. Underneath office chairs that have wheels, it is critical to place a good quality, non-staining mat or rug, as the wheels will severely damage the timber floor coatings. When moving any furniture, it is important to check that the protection place on the furniture is in place and in good condition.

PROTECTING OF NEWLY INSTALLED FLOORING DURING THE CONSTRUCTION PROCESS

Never cover newly installed flooring with plastic or non-breathable products, as it could cause the flooring to sweat and have an adverse effect on the product. Always use breathable products like Ram Board or similar, as these are breathable products. Please also visit the Australasian Timber Flooring Association website www.atfa.com.au for a comprehensive guideline on how to cover flooring during the construction process.

TEMPERATURE CONTROL

It is important to maintain the relative humidity in the area where the timber flooring has been installed at between 40-65% RH. This will assist in ensuring that your timber flooring retains its stability. By installing a hygrometer in your home, you can keep a track of your relative humidity. Methods to assist in controlling the relative humidity in your home include circulating the air with fans and opening windows and doors, running air conditioners etc.

Do not leave your home closed up for long periods of time as this could have an adverse effect on your timber flooring. When extreme cold or heat is present, steps need to be taken to control the relative humidity at between 40-65% RH in order to ensure that your timber flooring retains its stability.

PETS

We all love our furry, but sometimes they can cause damage to your timber floors. It is advisable to keep your pets toenails clipped in order to avoid scratches to your timber flooring. Furthermore, pet urine and vomit is highly acidic and if not cleaned up in due course will etch in the coatings of your timber flooring.

SHOES AND HIGH HEELS

Many people don't wear outside shoes inside for cleanliness reasons. They switch to softer indoor footwear and this is not only reducing the cleaning required but also prevents tracking abrasive grit and dirt into the home. This grit acts just like sandpaper on your timber floor. High heels, especially if broken, can also be your timber floors worst enemy, particularly stiletto heels, which are an absolute no, no!

RUGS AND MATS

Good quality, non-staining mats placed inside and outside all entrance doors are the next best solution to prevent tracking abrasive dirt and grit inside. Good quality, non-staining mats placed in high traffic areas such as at the kitchen sink or in hallway, greatly assist in the reduction of wear to these areas. Move good quality, non-staining mats and rugs periodically, as ultraviolet (UV) light can change the colour of the exposed timber flooring giving the floor an uneven appearance.
Furthermore, it is important to not to place rubber-backed or latex-backed anti-slip mats underneath mats and rugs. It is also important to consider the backing on your mats and rugs and ensure that they are non-staining and not made of latex, rubber. Coco fiber mats can also cause staining on your timber flooring.

Place good quality matting at the entrance to the timber floors. The aim of a matting system is to remove dirt / grit and moisture from the feet of people entering the building to prevent that material scratching or wearing away the finish film. Underneath office chairs that have wheels, it is critical to place a good quality, non-staining mat or rug, as the wheels will severely damage the timber floor coatings.

REGULAR INSPECTIONS

Do inspect your timber floors regularly for any signs of damage or wear and tear, taking the appropriate action where necessary. This step alone can save you much heartache and money. Early intervention in most cases means minor problems are able to be fixed without major expenses occurring.

Please feel free to call Harmony Timber Floors for advice on 1300 725 257 if you have any concerns

The purchaser has a duty of care to inform the manufacture of any claimed defects within 14 days after discovery. The purchaser must then give the manufacturer the opportunity to inspect the claimed defect within 60 days of receiving written notification. The nature of the defect and the length of time it would have been clearly apparent will also be considered when inspecting. If it appears as if this defect could clearly have been present for some time, then the situation will need to be carefully considered. Failure on the part of the purchaser to inform the manufacture of any claimed defect could affect their warranty claim. This is of particular relevance where a claimed defect has clearly been noticeable for a long period of time and degraded to a point, that if notice had been received earlier, a solution could have been found to avoid the claimed defect progressing.

CLEANING PRODUCTS

Never ever use common household products like all-purpose household cleaner, window cleaner, steel wool pads, aerosol furniture polish, wax or similar products to clean your timber floors. Some are too abrasive and will scratch the surface of your timber flooring, whilst others will make your timber floor dangerously slippery and could leave a film of silicone or wax on the timber flooring, which will interfere with any future recoating of your floor. A lot of people might think Mentholated Spirits or Kerosene is all right to use. They are not! Any type of petroleum distillate will degrade the finish of your timber flooring over time and eventually cause it to look irreversibly dull and drab. It is best to use the finish suggested by Harmony Timber Floors, following the directions for use. However, if none is available, then some warm water with a little mild, neutral PH detergent added works well.

Again, mist spray or squeeze the mop out and damp mop only. Some choose to buff the floor with a soft cloth afterwards to ensure no water is left on the timber. Running ceiling fans at the same time as mopping will assist in drying the timber flooring quicker. To remove stubborn or sticky marks, do a test patch using little Mentholated Spirits or white vinegar, mixed with water and applied to a clean rag. Harmony Timber Floors suggest using a product Parquetpro which is a PH Neutral cleaning agent, which can be directly purchased from them

PERIODICAL RE-COATING

Coatings used on Harmony engineered timber floors are extremely hard and durable. But like everything, wear and tear occurs over time. If the proper care and maintenance is carried out periodically, it is unlikely you will be required to sand and polish your timber flooring for many, many years.

However, where your coatings have worn through to the raw timber, then it would be time to consider sanding and polish your timber flooring, or at a bare minimum replace the severely damaged timber floorboards. Failure to do this will cause the effected timber floorboards to stain more easily. This is why we highly recommend all consumers purchase at least a spare box of the engineered timber flooring that they have purchase, in case any future repairs or engineered timber floorboards are required.

Harmony Timber Floors regularly change their profiling, dimensions and colours of their engineered timber flooring to meet the needs of the market. Hence we cannot be expected to have stock of old engineered timber flooring on hand. If a warranty repair is required and the original materials are not available, then the repairs will be carried out using similar engineered timber flooring. Depending on the severity of the wear and tear to the timber flooring, the recoating process may only requires the timber flooring to be cleaned and then abraded, after which another finish coat is applied. It is a much simpler and a less costly process than a full re-sand and polish. This section is of no relevance to hybrid vinyl flooring and laminate flooring. Furthermore, it is important to note that engineered timber flooring with a 0.6mm top wear layer cannot be sanded and polished.

WIREBRUSHED ENGINEERED TIMBER FLOORING

Engineered timber floors with a wirebrushed finish requires an extra degree of care and maintenance when cleaning. As this product has an open grain dirt can build up in the open grain. Not only does it make the engineered timber flooring look dirty, the dirt can also impact on the coatings causing them to delaminate. This is particularly noticeable in high traffic areas. Please ensure when cleaning engineered timber flooring with an open grain, that you vacuum the areas entirely prior to mopping and use a clean micro fibre mop. Wet the micro fibre mop head and ring it out. The micro fibre mop head must be damp not wet. Keep checking the micro fibre mop head is cleaned periodically to avoid pushing dirt further into the open grain. Also it is advisable to use mats in high traffic areas, particularly with engineered timber flooring that has a wirebrushed finish.

SUMMARY: SOME DOs AND DON'Ts IN A NUTSHELL

DOs

- Do move good quality, non-staining mats and rugs periodically, as ultraviolet (UV) light can change the colour of the exposed timber flooring giving the floor an uneven appearance
- Do have blinds, curtains or excellent quality window tint installed and ensure that they are closed at the time of the day when most exposed to ultraviolet (UV) radiation.
- Do move items of furniture, mats and rugs around periodically in order to ensure your timber flooring oxidizes evenly, providing a more even appearance.
- Do place good quality, non-staining mats inside and outside all entrance doors are the next best solution to prevent tracking abrasive dirt and grit inside.
- Do use a lightly damp micro fibre mop and the recommenced manufacturer's cleaning agent, following the recommended cleaning instructions.
- Do clean up any spills immediately.
- Do vacuum with the brushes on the vacuum head out.
- Do switch to softer indoor footwear and this is not only reducing the cleaning required but also prevents tracking abrasive grit and dirt into the home.
- Do use a PH Neutral cleaning agent as recommended by the manufacturer
- Do ensure that the PH Neutral cleaning agent is mist sprayed onto the timber flooring, followed up by immediately mopping it up with the micro fibre mop.
- Do clean up any pet accidents immediately.
- Do place protection on the feet of furniture in the form of felt protection.
- Do purchase at least a spare box of the engineered timber flooring that they have purchase, in case any future repairs or engineered timber floorboards are required.
- Do inspect your timber floors regularly for any signs of damage or wear and tear, taking the appropriate action where necessary.

DON'Ts

- Do not use mats and rugs made of made of latex or rubber matting.
- Do not expose your timber flooring to direct sunlight for long periods, particularly at the time of the day when most exposed to ultraviolet (UV) radiation.
- Do not let sand, dirt or grit gather on the timber flooring. These elements will act like sandpaper and are abrasive, scratching the surface of the timber flooring and causing a dulling to its coatings.
- Do not use excessive amounts of water when cleaning the timber flooring. Excessive amounts of water can cause your timber flooring to swell. Use water sparingly.
  Do not use a steam mop on your timber flooring!
- Do not wear high heels or stilettos when walking on timber floors. They can severely damage the timber floors and leave dents on the surface.
- Do not wear shoes with soles that are deeply ingrained, such as work boots, as they can often have a stone stuck in the sole and cause dents and scratches on the timber flooring. Be careful and always check the soles of your shoes first.
- Do not use regular household detergents or cleaners on timber floors. These products can dull the coatings on timber flooring.
- Do not let your pet's claws grow to long as they can cause scratches on your timber flooring.
- Do not allow pet urine or vomit sit on timber flooring for long, as they are highly acidic and will etch in the coatings of your timber flooring.
- Do not leave the feet of furniture unprotected, as this will cause the coatings to scratch when moving items of furniture around.
- Do not leave areas where the timber flooring has been installed unventilated for long periods of time.

Please note that any warranty repairs do not cover any accommodation costs. Labour costs are also not covered for any warranty repair unless the flooring was installed by Harmony Timber Floors PTY Ltd and is covered by our warranty installation period. Any warranty repairs will be carried out with the same or closest matching materials available. This is why we strongly encourage purchasing a spare box or two of materials to ensure an effective repair if ever required. If during any warranty repair it becomes apparent that the defect is not due to our fault, such as water damage etc. the situation will need to be reviewed.

Please also refer to Installation Guidelines on our website before attempting a DIY installation.

These Care and Maintenance Instructions are part of the Harmony Timber Floors Care and Maintenance Instructions program and failure to comply fully with them will result in the product warranty being null & void in part or in full.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to visit our website:
www.harmonytimberfloors.com or calls us on **1300 725 257**.

Please also visit the Australasian Timber Flooring Association website **www.atfa.com.au** for further information on how to Care and Maintain your timber flooring.