



HARMONY  
TIMBER FLOORS

## CARE AND MAINTENANCE INSTRUCTIONS FOR TIMBER FLOORING

### 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 timber flooring 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 flooring is a long-term investment. If routine cleaning and maintenance is carried out and timber flooring is 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 with the brushes out and mopping with a barely moist microfibre mop using the manufacturer's recommended cleaner, will remove the buildup of dirt and grit. Failure to routinely clean your timber flooring, which if left will leave the dirt to accumulate and act as an abrasive, will result in wear occurring to the timber flooring.

Please consult the ATFA website at [www.atfa.com.au](http://www.atfa.com.au) for further information on how to care and maintain you timber flooring.

### 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 or sanded and polished. It is highly recommended that rugs, mats and furniture 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/light surface cracks, gapping etc.** Remember 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 top side of the floorboards making them drier than the bottom and more susceptible to cupping. The floorboards cup away from the area of highest moisture with the top edges curling upwards towards the floorboards 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.** In order to ensure a uniform appearance for the timber flooring, it would be advisable to reposition rugs, mats 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 IS TIMBER'S 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, 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 the ice-maker fridge for any potential water damage.

It is also important not to place potted 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 stains 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.

## **PETS**

We all love our pets, but sometimes they can cause damage to your timber flooring. **It is advisable to keep your pets toe nails 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 resulting in damage to the coating.** Also, it is important to note that when pets run on the timber flooring, they will battle to grip it, so in order to avoid injury to your pets, try to avoid them running on the timber flooring. Harmony Timber Floors Pty Ltd will not be held accountable for any injuries to pets that have slipped on the 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 floor's worst enemy, particularly stiletto heels, which are an absolute no, no!**

## **TEMPERATURE CONTROL**

It is important to maintain the Relative Humidity in the area where the timber flooring has been installed at between 40-65% at all times. The optimal temperature to maintain where possible is 24 degrees Celsius. 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. However, note that when it is extremely humid outside it is not advisable to open the doors and windows, as it will actually increase the relative humid inside the property. 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, heat or wet weather is present, steps need to be taken to control the Relative Humidity at between 40-65% at all times in order to ensure that your timber flooring retains its stability.

It is normal for timber flooring to expand and contract seasonally. During the summer, gaps between the floorboards may close up and in winter, gaps between the floorboards may appear. **This is perfectly normal and not a defect.** It is critical to maintain the Relative Humidity at 40-65% at all times, as the Australian climate is extreme and when there is high humidity or excessive moisture in the air, issues such as telegraphing, peaking joints and checking/light surface cracking could arise and they would not be covered by warranty as these are purely climate related. It is also important to consider how electronic items are stored and installed, as the heat they generate can damage the timber flooring. Furthermore, where the timber flooring has been installed near a fireplace or heater, care needs to be taken, as the heat generated by the fireplace or heater could impact on the timber flooring by causing it to expand and resulting in floorboards buckling or separating when shrinking due to cooling down, cupping, crowning, peeling, etc.

## **PROTECTING NEWLY INSTALLED FLOORING DURING THE CONSTRUCTION PROCESS**

**Never cover newly installed timber flooring with plastic or non-breathable products, as it could cause the timber 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 at [www.atfa.com.au](http://www.atfa.com.au) for a comprehensive guideline on how to covering flooring during the construction process.

## FURNITURE PROTECTION

In almost all cases, when called in to assess the condition of a customer's timber flooring, we find the 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 and office chairs on wheels. 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 wooden 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 the 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 placed on the furniture is in place and in good condition.

## RUGS AND MATS

Using high quality, non-staining rugs and mats at all entrances and high-traffic areas such as in the entry, hallway and kitchen, helps to reduce dirt, grit, exposure to moisture and wear to the timber flooring. Timber naturally oxidizes due to exposure to (UV) light, oxygen and heat, which will change the colour of timber over a period of time. Furthermore, certain floor finishes are more prone to darkening than others. In order to manage oxidation, it is advisable to tint windows, install window furnishings, refrain from using harsh chemicals when cleaning and moving furniture, rugs and mats periodically in order to avoid and uneven colour appearance. It is advisable to move furniture periodically and to leave rugs and mats off the newly installed timber flooring for a period of 6 months post installation due to more recent unpredictable climatic conditions, in order to ensure even oxidation of the timber flooring. It is not unusual for the timber flooring to appear lighter under furniture as well as the rugs and mats once removed, due to the oxidation process, however once removed, should darken up over time, catching up with the surrounding timber flooring colour. Being a natural product, this is not guaranteed nor can a specific time frame be given. If following the above information, oxidation can be better controlled. Furthermore, it is important to not place rubber-backed or latex-backed anti-slip mats underneath rugs and mats. Instead use felt anti-slip mats. It is also important to consider the backing on your rugs and mats, ensuring that they are non-staining and not made of rubber or latex. Coconut and other natural fiber mats can also cause staining on your timber flooring. Underneath office chairs that have wheels, it is critical to place a good quality, non-staining rug or mat, as the wheels will severely damage the timber floor coatings.

## CLEANING AND CLEANING PRODUCTS

Prior to mopping, vacuum or sweep your timber flooring. Before commencing the use, the vacuum or broom, it is important to check the vacuum head and broom are free of sharp objects, exposed screws etc. Always check that your vacuum cleaner wheels have not worn prior to use in order to avoid scratching the flooring. When cleaning your timber flooring, place the recommended quantity (usually half a cap full) of Parquetpro Cleaner in a 500ml spray bottle. Wet the microfibre mop head and wring it out. Then mist spray the solution in the 500ml spray bottle onto the timber flooring and mop. Run fans, open windows to introduce a breeze or run air conditioning to assist in drying the timber flooring in a timelier fashion once mopped. When the mop head gets dirty, rinse it out. Do not machine wash the mop head as it causes them to degrade quicker. **Do not use a steam mop on your timber flooring! Steam mops force steam (moisture) into small incisions or breaks that appear in the surface of your timber floor, causing the finish to peel and delaminate. All finishes degrade over time, a process that is accelerated by heat.** Furthermore, avoid wet mopping of the timber floor, which can leave excess moisture or streaking as well as increase the likelihood of slipping. If using a cleaning product from another supplier, ensure it is a neutral floor cleaner and follow their instructions. **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 flooring.** Some are too abrasive and will scratch the surface of the timber flooring, whilst others will make your timber flooring dangerously slippery and could leave a film of silicone or wax on the timber flooring. **A lot of people might think methylated spirits or kerosene is all right to use. They are not! Any type of petroleum distillate will degrade the finish of the timber flooring over time and eventually cause it to look irreversibly dull and drab.** It is best to use the product suggested by Harmony Timber Floors Pty Ltd, following the directions for use. However, if unavailable, then some warm water with a little mild, neutral PH detergent added should work well and follow the manufacturer's instructions. Again, mist spray or squeeze the mop out and dampen mop only. Some choose to buff the timber floor with a soft cloth afterwards to ensure no water is left on the timber flooring. Run fans, open windows to introduce a breeze or run air conditioning to assist in drying the timber flooring in a timelier fashion once mopped. Timber flooring can be slippery when wet, so it is important to ensure that care is taken not to use too much water when cleaning. To remove stubborn or sticky marks, do a test patch using little methylated spirits or white vinegar, mixed with water and applied to a clean rag.

## **REGULAR INSPECTIONS**

Many customers have unrealistic expectations about the life and durability of timber flooring. Some customers expect the flooring to be bullet proof and 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 flooring is a long-term investment. **If routine cleaning and maintenance is carried out and the timber flooring is 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 and mopping with a barely moist microfibre mop using the manufacturer's recommended cleaner, will remove the build-up of dirt and grit.** Failure to routinely clean the timber flooring, which if left will leave the dirt to accumulate and act as an abrasive resulting in wear occurring to the timber floors coating. **Do inspect the timber flooring 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 Pty Ltd for advice on 1300 725 257 or 07 55 206 701 if you have any concerns. Also please feel free to consult the ATFA website [www.atfa.com.au](http://www.atfa.com.au).

## **PERIODICAL RECOATING**

**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 floors for many, many years.** However, where your coatings have worn through to the raw timber, then it would be time to consider sanding and polishing your timber flooring, or at a bare minimum replace the severely damaged floorboards. Failure to do so will cause the affected floorboards to stain more easily. **This is why we highly recommend all customers purchase at least a spare box of the engineered timber flooring that they have purchased, in case any future repairs to floorboards are required.** Harmony Timber Floors Pty Ltd 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 a similar engineered timber floor. Depending on the severity of the wear and tear to the timber flooring, the recoating process may only require 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. It is important to note that engineered timber flooring with a top wear layer thinner than 2mm, more than likely, cannot be sanded and polished. Before even considering a sand and polish, please call Harmony Timber Floors Pty Ltd on 1300 725 257 to confirm whether or not your flooring can be sanded and polished.

## **WIREBRUSHED ENGINEERED TIMBER FLOORING**

**Engineered timber floors with a wirebrushed finish require 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 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 microfibre mop. Wet the microfibre mop head and ring it out. **The microfibre mop head must be damp, not wet. Keep checking the microfibre mop head to ensure it is clean in order to avoid pushing dirt 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.

## **ROBOT VACUUMS**

Using robot vacuums with mop functions on timber flooring risks damaging the timber flooring through excessive moisture and potential scratches. Too much water can seep into joins, causing warping, cupping, or dulling the finish, while stiff brushes or embedded grit in pads can scratch the surface. As a result robot vacuums are not advised for timber flooring and could compromise the warranty on the timber floors that have been installed.

**Moisture Sensitivity:** Timber floors can be damaged by excessive moisture, which can cause warping or cupping if water seeps into the timber floors joins. As the amount of water getting discharged is not controlled by virtue of human observation, there is always a risk involved when employing the mopping function.

**Scratch Hazards:** Timber flooring is susceptible to scratches, and some robot vacuum features like hard wheels or trapped debris can cause visible damage.

**Dulling the Finish:** Frequent mopping with improper cleaners or too much water can remove or dull the protective finish on timber floors over time.

**Navigation Issues:** Robot sensors can be confused, leading them to get stuck or continuously bump against objects potentially causing damage to the edges of the timber flooring.

**Cleaning Limitations:** They are best used for surface-level cleaning and cannot replace periodic, deep, manual cleaning with proper materials.

**These Care and Maintenance Instructions are part of 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 at [www.harmonytimberfloors.com](http://www.harmonytimberfloors.com) or calls us on 1300 725 257. Please also visit the Australasian Timber Flooring Association website [www.atfa.com.au](http://www.atfa.com.au) for further information on how to care and maintain your engineered timber flooring.**