

CARE OF FLOORS AND WOODWORK

Extension Home Management Specialists

Unfinished wood absorbs more dirt than finished wood. Also grease will spot it badly. All wood surfaces in the house should be finished. If it is necessary to clean unfinished surfaces, this should be done by scrubbing with a mild soap and water, using a small quantity of water and working on a small area at one time. Rinse with clean water and wipe dry. Avoid strong soaps, alkalies, and the use of too much water.

FLOOR CARE

All floor finishes wear longer with proper care. This means good equipment as well as good methods. A soft brush is preferable to a corn broom for sweeping finished floors. Satisfactory floor care equipment may be made or purchased.

Oiled Floors:

Sweep with soft floor brush. Dust with a treated dust mop. Periodic cleaning consists of wiping with a mop wrung out of clean warm water or a suds made with mild soap. Wipe dry. The oil removed by mopping may be replaced by rubbing with a wool cloth moistened with boiled linseed oil, or floor oil.

Waxed Floors:

Sweep with floor brush. Dust with a soft floor mop, dry or treated with wax. Avoid oiled mops on waxed floors. A waxed floor may occasionally be wiped with a mop wrung out of clear tepid water.

To clean water spots: Rub in circles with turpentine and a flannel cloth. Rewax the spot if necessary.

Varnished Floors:

Sweep with a soft brush. Dust with a treated mop. If necessary wipe up with a clean cloth, wrung out of a light soap suds made with neutral soap. Wax may be used to improve the appearance of badly worn varnished floor.

Mixture for occasional cleaning: When a spot is heavily soiled, a mixture of equal parts of boiled linseed oil, turpentine, and vinegar may be effective. The vinegar cuts the grease, the oil polishes and turpentine dries the mixture.

To Make Treated Floor Mops:

Secure a covered tin receptacle large enough to hold the mop. To make an oiled mop, brush the inside with equal parts of boiled linseed oil and turpentine. Place mop in can, cover tightly, and allow to remain over night. Kerosene may be substituted for the oil and turpentine if necessary. To make treated mop for waxed floors use liquid wax in place of the oil and turpentine.

Floor mops may be purchased or satisfactory ones made by cutting the top of socks into vertical strips and fastening to a handle or sewing to fit into an ordinary mop handle, the corners of which should be covered to prevent the floor becoming scratched.

All treated mops should be washed as they become soiled and then be retreated.

CAUTIONS

Oil, turpentine, and many other materials used in floor finishing and care are inflammable. There is a decided fire hazard from throwing cloths used in floor care into piles or placing near inflammable material. Place in a metal container and keep where there is a circulation of air. On the same score it is suggested that gasoline should not be used as a household cleaning agent.

LINOLEUM

Linoleum is of two kinds, inlaid, in which the pattern extends through the material to the back, and printed, on which a surface pattern is finished with varnish or lacquer. A smooth under floor is essential to satisfactory wear. Any linoleum is best laid over a felt base and cemented to the floor. The inlaid linoleum is higher in price but the additional material and labor costs of protecting the printed type renders it as costly over a period of time.

Care of Printed Linoleum:

Printed linoleum should be given a coat of clear lacquer or clear floor varnish as soon as laid. Lacquer wears well and is more transparent than varnish. This coat should not be allowed to wear off. Spots may be touched up as they show evidence of wear. Daily care of printed linoleum is the same as that given varnished floors. See above.

Care of Inlaid Linoleum:

Inlaid linoleum should be washed carefully with tepid water and pure soap. As soon as dry, before tracked, wax with a standard floor wax, liquid or paste. Apply wax sparingly and rub in thoroughly. Care for as directed under waxed floors. Avoid large quantities of water and any strong or laundry soap on linoleum. These are injurious to both wearing quality and appearance.

Use of Wax in Floor Care:

A thin coat of wax wears better than a heavy coat. Care should be taken to apply wax sparingly and to polish it carefully with a weighted brush. A floor properly waxed will not show tracks or be slippery.

Renovation of Printed Linoleum:

In cases where the body of the linoleum is good but the design is worn off painting may be an economy. Have the rug clean and free from grease. Select an attractive color of floor enamel and paint one coat, or if necessary two coats. Using paint of another color or tone put on a stipple or spatter finish. This adds to the attractiveness and the ease of caring for the rug. Finish with a coat of lacquer or varnish, and care for as suggested above.

CARE OF WOODWORK

Strong soaps, scouring powders, and alkaline cleaning compounds are injurious to the finishes used upon woodwork. Woodwork may have a varnished, waxed, or painted finish.

Varnished Woodwork:

Dust frequently with a dustless dust cloth. For periodic cleaning use the following mixture:

1 quart hot water	3 tablespoons boiled linseed oil
	1 tablespoon turpentine

Wash the woodwork with soft cloth wrung out of the above mixture kept warm by setting over hot water (do not heat on stove as turpentine is inflammable). Polish the woodwork dry with a second cloth. Discard the mixture as it becomes soiled and mix a fresh supply.

This method is also used in cleaning oiled woodwork.

Painted Woodwork:

Woodwork should be finished with semi-gloss paint. Any treatment removing or roughening the hard, glossy surface causes it to collect dirt more rapidly and become harder to clean. Dust frequently. When necessary rub with a cloth wrung out of hot water. Wipe dry. For badly soiled spots use a little whiting on the wet cloth. Wipe well with cloth wrung from clean, warm water and wipe dry.

Dustless Dust Cloths:

These may be made from pieces of soft silk, cheesecloth, and other very soft cottons, or from chamois. Place 2 tablespoons of paraffin oil, lemon oil, boiled linseed oil, or kerosene in a quart jar or covered container and turn it about until the oil is evenly spread over the entire interior surface. Pour out any surplus. Place cloth in jar or can, close tightly, and leave over night before using. For waxed surfaces use liquid wax in place of oil.

Dustless dusters may also be made by wringing the cloth out of a mixture consisting of a tablespoon of oil in 1 quart warm water. Allow to become dry before using. These cloths may be washed and re-oiled as necessary.

Weighted Polishers:

- (1) A brick folded in burlap and clamped into a mop handle at the upper edge of the brick.
- (2) A heavy block of wood with carpet or heavy wool material tacked over the bottom, and preferably adjusted on a handle.
- (3) A sturdy box built with an inside size to hold exactly two bricks. Bottom is covered with carpeting. Adjustable handle is made by placing a pipe clamp at center of each side, fitting piece of pipe or broom-handle between these across the box. The long handle is then fastened to the center of this by means of bolts and two metal strips. This allows the handle to be turned in all four directions.

TO PATCH A WORN FLOOR

1. Sandpaper the spot overlapping the old finish. Use number one sandpaper over a block of wood and sand with the graining of the floor.
2. Go over the spot with one thin coat of filler or stain or whatever treatment was used first in the original finish of the floor. Allow to dry thoroughly.

3. Thin the first coat of finish slightly and brush well into the wood. Let dry.
4. Apply a second coat of material as it comes from the can. When dry rub hard with a tightly-rolled piece of burlap, following the grain of the wood.
5. Apply a final coat overlapping the old finish about 10 inches.
6. Make a tight roll of soft clean cloth. Wipe the brush on the roll and rub the floor connecting the spots. Add more paint or varnish to the roll as needed. This gives the whole floor a fresh new look and connects the patches. Waxing the floor may give a similar result. Avoid using too much wax.