

# HINTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

## Helpful Hints: Preventing Damage To Hardwood Floors

(NAPSA)—Today's busy homes take a lot of wear and tear—and floors often bear the brunt of the abuse. As with many home repairs, a little preventative care can go a long way to improve the performance of products used in your house. The experts at Bruce hardwood floors, the nation's largest hardwood flooring manufacturer, recommend these helpful hints to keep your hardwood floors looking great for the life of your home.

- Never clean a hardwood floor with water or cleaners mixed with water, like oil soaps. These cleaners may dull the finish and permanently damage the floor.

- Place doormats outside to keep dirt and moisture from being tracked into the house. Inside, use area rugs to further prevent grit from being tracked onto your hardwood floor. To keep rugs from slipping, use an approved porous rug mat from a reputable manufacturer. Don't use rubber, foam or plastic mats; they may discolor the floor.

- Normal exposure to sunlight will bring about changes in the shading of any hardwood floor as it ages. Move area rugs occasionally to avoid the appearance of "discolored" patches.

- To prevent scratches, sweep or vacuum your floor often to remove loose dirt or grit.

- Wipe up spills as soon as possible, before they get sticky or dry. Remove dried spills with a cloth or scrub pad dampened with a no-wax floor cleaner for urethane floors or wax stripper for wax floors.

- Use manufacturer recommended floor protectors on the feet



of furniture to avoid scratches. Barrel-type caster wheels or wide flat glides are best. Other types of casters may scratch or dent. Consider replacing casters on your furniture if necessary.

- When moving heavy furniture or appliances, place a thin hardboard or thin plywood under each leg and slide the furniture carefully.

- Try to keep a humidity level between 45 percent and 55 percent for optimal comfort and performance from your floor. In dry climates or in homes with wood stoves or electric heat, use a humidifier to prevent shrinkage of the wood. In damp conditions, use an air conditioner or a dehumidifier, or periodically turn the heat on during the summer months.

- Don't worry about sanding and refinishing if you do get a minor scratch on the floor. In most cases, buffing your floor with a soft nylon pad will remove minor scratches and abrasions. If wear is more severe, the finish can usually be recoated without the sand and finish mess.



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*Editor's Note: This article is the seventh in a series.*