

Making the most of your wood floors

Wood floors can add a unique warmth and elegance to any room in your home, but they need to be tough as well as attractive if they're to serve you well for many years. When you consider what your floors go through every day, you'll see why durability is an essential quality. Think of it — floors are walked on, jumped on, have furniture and toys dragged over them. They take spills, burns, gouges, ground-in dirt and grit, and yet still manage to add something special to a room.

"Hardwood floors" can be oak, maple, birch or beech, although softwoods like pine

and fir are often used. The most common types of flooring include thin strip flooring, plank flooring, which is thicker and can be bored and plugged to simulate an old "wood-en-pegged" look, and parquet or block flooring, made of short strips of wood glued into square or rectangular shapes.

Some companies custom-design beautiful but expensive flooring inlaid with brass and exotic woods, or make sections that are scoured with wooden blocks and chains to give the popular "distressed" look. You can also buy standard hardwood flooring in ready-to-lay packages.

If the floors in your house are in good shape, you can keep them looking that way with a minimum of maintenance. Sweep them daily to get rid of dirt and grit before it gets ground into the finish. Wipe up any spills immediately, and try to keep sharp objects, like shoe heels, away from the floor.

With a urethane or polyurethane finish, your floor will need only an occasional cleaning with a slightly damp mop to remove accumulated dirt. A wax floor in good shape can be cleaned and waxed with one coat of floor-cleaning wax, then polished or buffed to keep

the surface smooth and dirt resistant. Small scratches can be fixed with wax putty sticks or even a child's wax crayon in the right shade.

Let's say you've just discovered that the reason the previous tenant laid wall-to-wall carpeting was the awful state of the floors. You may consider sanding and refinishing them to remove unsightly scratches, stains and ground-in dirt.

Be warned — it's a messy and time-consuming job. You have to be absolutely thorough about vacuuming up all the tiny particles of sawdust. They can ruin a floor's finish if they become trapped between coats of varnish.

If you lack the experience or confidence to do the job yourself, or if a particularly large floor needs refinishing, it might be worthwhile hiring professionals to do the job. They can also take care of badly damaged sections that might need to be removed and replaced.

Once the floor is sanded, keep in mind the kind of service you expect from it when it comes to choosing a finish. All varnishes, particularly the urethanes and polyurethanes, form a hard, durable surface that gives wood a glossy glow and resists most spots and stains.

A high-gloss varnish resists wears best, and may be more suitable for hallways and kitchens, for example, than a softer, more satiny finish.

If you decide on a wax finish for your floor, apply two or three thin coats — thick coats will become tacky and hard to buff. You can clean off an old, built-up finish by removing the wax with turpentine, naphtha or mineral spirits and finishing with thin new coats. Equipment-rental stores have floor-buffing machines for a top quality finish, and a thorough waxing every four months to a year will

be all the maintenance needed.

For the floor that's in really poor shape and too expensive to replace right away, opaque paint comes in a myriad of colors and can cover a multitude of sins. It provides a good base for stencilling, or colors can be mixed and matched for dramatic designs and special effects that work particularly well in chil-

dren's rooms. A varnish will add durability to a finish that has a warmth all of its own.

This article is provided by local Realtors and the Ontario Real Estate Association (OREA) for the benefit of consumers in the real estate market.

What's up with ceilings

Ceilings may be the high point of every room, but often the finishes they end up with are something of a decorating low point.

If you tend to think of ceilings as flat, level things it's because they usually are. They're cheaper to build that way.

But the number of ways you can dress up your ceiling are growing. From stained glass suspended ceilings to an attractive molded mineral-fibre tile with the look of, molded plaster blocks, the choices are many.

Starscapes on bedroom and dining room ceilings disappear in the daytime, but glow in the dark. You can have constellations done in perfect detail, and they may be a good alternative to night lights for children.

Lightweight cornices and centrepieces imitate classic plaster styles to add an elegance to lofty ceilings.

In the kitchen you can order custom-made stained glass suspended ceilings, that can transform a kitchen or bar area with a bright, modern look. Wrought iron pot racks and old-fashioned clothes hangers with pulleys can age a kitchen immediately.

Tin ceilings were once a cheap substitute for costly, carved plaster. Original tin ceilings are antiques now and greatly prized. They weren't tin at all, but thin sheets of steel or copper, stamped in squares with a repeated design. Overlapping edges were nailed to furring strips or right on to the ceiling.

A new or refurbished tin ceiling should be sealed with clear polyurethane or acrylic varnish. It should be dusted, washed if it's in the kitchen, but needs little other maintenance.

Ready made rolls of twiggging can fit between vaulted cottage beams to enhance the rustic feel, or could give a country look

to a city porch.

If you have a stucco ceiling you'd like to smooth out, there are products designed to take off the material — but only if it hasn't been painted. Ingredients in the stucco are reactivated and it can be scraped off.

You can usually tell if a finish is unpainted because it will flake when touched. A painted finish stays in place. If your stucco ceiling is painted and you really want to be rid of it, you may have to rip it out and re-drywall.

Stucco removal is a messy job, best done in a room that's been emptied of furniture, or at least well covered with plastic.

You can rely on paint to change the look of your rooms. A white ceiling does reflect light better, and a room will appear bigger if there's similar colour, texture and pattern throughout.

If you think your ceiling is too high, a deeper tone will appear to reduce the height. You can set your own eye level by painting the ceiling right down to picture-rail height.

You can create the opposite effect by enhancing the soar of a vaulted ceiling with a long sweep of striped curtain fabric, or hang a huge painting or wall sculpture on a feature wall.

You'll find ideas for dressing up or playing down your ceiling at building supply, lighting and kitchen stores. Do-it-yourself books and magazines at libraries and in stores offer detailed instructions for installing everything from wood panelling to variable-height ceilings.

This article is provided by local Realtors and the Ontario Real Estate Association (OREA) for the benefit of consumers in the real estate market.

Kerr

Realty Management Ltd.

192 Queen Street
Milton, Ont., L9T 1K2

81 MILLSIDE DR.



NEW LISTING \$141,900

2 bdms. plus den, Escarpment view, balcony, 2 parking spaces

NEW LISTING \$129,900

2 bdms. 2 balconies facing North West.

NEW PRICE \$141,900

3 bdms. North East view, 1 large balcony

**All need new owners
You could be one of them**

OPEN HOUSE

Saturday Jan. 13th • 2 - 4 pm

Sunday Jan. 14th • 2 - 4 pm

If you wish to view these properties prior to the Open Houses, please call:

Call Jim or Lorraine Kerr

876-0407

WINTER ACTIVE



SYLVIA BURSEY
Broker/Owner

**Countrywide
Campbellville**

Realty Inc.

Specializing in
Rural Properties

854-2294



REDUCED \$30,000

Nothing on the market to compare the value offered in this country estate. Situated on 2 acres in prestigious Ennisclane Woods, the elegant 3,000 sq. ft. home features large sep. formal rooms, the combined family rm. with F.P. and walkout to deck, breakfast rm. with wood stove and dream kitchen with built-in appliances offers spacious family living. There are 4 large bedrooms, master has full ensuite with Jacuzzi, main floor den or office, full partially finished basement plus unfinished loft above garage. There are many other features and extras. Asking only \$369,000. Call Sylvia.

BUSINESS FOR SALE

The Lumberyard Opera Tea Room in Campbellville, a popular eatery with locals as well as tourists. Seats 32 with room for expansion, includes all furniture and equipment, good lease.

POWER OF SALE

Building lot 150 x 449, prime Campbellville location. Asking only \$105,000. Call Sylvia.

**Fire
WON'T
WAIT!
Plan Your ESCAPE**

Develop a home fire escape plan now and practice it regularly.

Make sure that every family member knows two ways out of every room.

