

HOME IMPROVEMENT

Proper care of floor covering is important

Once you have parted with hard earned dollars for a new floor covering, it is wise to take the time to learn how to care for it properly.

Floors need to be cleaned regularly to remove dirt tracked in from outdoors, fallen crumbs of food and all the other things that find their way onto them. Without regular cleaning the accumulated dirt provides extra abrasion which, combined with normal foot traffic, will scratch and mark the floor.

According to Johnson Wax polishing the floor will leave a layer of protection that will absorb normal traffic wear. The floor beneath is protected and, as a result, the service of the flooring will last longer. Adding a layer of polish will also help even out the floor's surface. A shine is created, light is reflected and colours appear brighter.

Choosing the right cleaning product for your floor is important. A cleaner that is for cleaning only is most often diluted in water. It removes dirt and soil and quite often dries clear, so rinsing is not needed. A few leave a dull film and must be rinsed. This product does not shine or protect the floor.

The cleaner that combines cleaning agents with polish for shine and protection usually dries shiny. Some products require buffing.

Polishes protect and add or restore shine. They are applied to clean floors which have been rinsed and dried. The result is a shine. Polishes must be removed and reapplied periodically.

Johnson Wax suggests blotting up spills as soon as they occur. Blotting is preferred to rubbing dry which may leave a dull spot, especially on polished floors.

Loose dirt should be removed with a broom, lightweight vacuum or dust mop.

Johnson Wax suggest many variables your personal expectations as to the type and amount of care and time for floor care needed, what type of equipment you have and many environmental factors such as sand and strong sunlight.

If you choose no-wax vinyl, care must still be taken. This flooring has part of the shine built into the wear layer and light reflection is caused by the dimpled or embossed surface. Rinsing is important for this floor as many cleaners will leave a cloudy film which will hide the shine and temporarily dull the surface. Any build up of grit and dirt can leave scratches which will permanently dull the finish. Should this happen, polishing will be needed.

According to Johnson Wax, a no wax vinyl floor will last about 10 years. Depending on the care given, this figure can be extended or reduced.

Conventional vinyl can provide up to 20 years of use depending on the care given. This type of floor resists stains, alkali, grease and mildew. Most cleaners are suitable provided they do not contain. Regular cleaning and polishing extends the wear of this floor.

Wood and cork floors are considered porous and are made of absorbent materials. Therefore, a permanent protective coating or sealer is needed. Many types of finishes are available such as floor sealers that penetrate or top coats such as varnish, shellac, lacquer or a polyurethane finish. Warping or staining can occur if water, or alkaline cleaners, such as soap or detergent, are used. These should be avoided, especially if the sealer is worn.

Johnson Wax suggests using a solvent to clean without water. New polish should be applied two to six times a year. Regular dusting with a mop or vacuum will remove most dirt and dust. To renew the shine in traffic areas either buff again or apply more polish.

Problems encountered with floors may include yellowing of white or light coloured vinyl floors. Sand and soil may be accumulated between layers of polish and may be temporary. Permanent changes may be because of a chemical change in the flooring, constant exposure to sunlight or being covered by a heavy object that does not allow any light in.

Candle wax, chewing gum or tar can be removed. This becomes easier if the offending material is hard and brittle. Ice cubes placed in a plastic bag and held on the offending spot will accomplish this. Using a plastic spatula or credit card the material can then be scraped away. A cloth or pad of fine steel wool soaked with a household solvent will remove any further residue. The spot can then be dried and repolished if necessary.

Asphalt and rubber can be removed with a fine steel wool pad soaked in a detergent solution. Scratches and small worn areas on wooden floors can be hidden with a small amount of paste wax applied with very fine steel wool. This should be rubbed on gently until the colour is blended. It should be applied in the direction of the wood grain. After removing the excess wax, polish with a clean dry cloth.

According to Johnson Wax, wax alone will work well on light to medium coloured floors. If your floor is darker, purchase burnt sienna or raw umber, which are artist's oil pigments. They can be found at a paint, art supply or hardware stores. Mix them with wax for the desired shade. If the

colour becomes too dark you can wipe the floor with a cloth dampened with a household dry cleaning fluid until you reach the desired shade.

If your wood floor has dark spots that have been caused by soapy cleaning solutions, ammonia or urine, you can try to remove them

with mineral spirits. Afterwoods apply white vinegar to the offending spot and leave for up to four minutes. Wipe dry with a clean cloth and repeat if necessary. Oxalic acid can be used if the vinegar does not work. Use one tablespoon oxalic acid crystals in one cup of water on the spot and allow to

stand for up to three minutes or until the spot is no longer there. Extra wiping with a damp cloth that you will have to reseat before rewaxing.

If your floors become too slippery after waxing you may not have buffed them enough. This problem can be remedied by rebuffering.

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Store stocks many lines

Compared to a big city hardware store the local Penetang Dominion Hardware Store may be very small but according to owner Bill Diesveld, he carries a lot of lines.

Bill, along with his wife Nancy, have owned this store for the past two years and have made it into a family business. Bill is a long-time resident of the area and Nancy was originally from this area.

The hardware store that they bought has been in Penetang for about 50 years, and Bill says they have one of the best friendly, efficient and knowledgeable staffs around. Chances are that if you come in with a problem with one of your projects, one of the staff will be able to give you advice. One or the other is familiar with electrical,

plumbing or painting problems. Their expert advice may solve your problem in minutes.

The Penetang Dominion Hardware store repairs windows and screens and has a selection of cut glass. There is paint for your decorating needs, housewares and a very good selection of small appliances.

Diesveld feels they carry a bigger selection of hand and power tools than most other hardware stores. Only top lines are sold such as Makita and Black and Decker.

Because this store is small, if you don't find what you are looking for displayed on the shelves, chances are the item you need is stocked in the back. All you need to do is ask.