



CARE AND REPAIR GUIDE

The Hardwood Floor Owner's Manual

The manual your floor never came with: the care routine, what never to use, seasonal gaps, fixing everyday damage, and when a recoat saves you a full refinish.

8 chapters

Damage triage guide

Printable care card

Care log spreadsheet



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What's inside

A hardwood floor can last for generations. Whether yours does depends mostly on everyday habits, and on recoating at the right time.

01 Know your floor

Solid or engineered, prefinished or site-finished, and which finish you have

02 The care routine

What to do daily, weekly, monthly and yearly, and the products that ruin finishes

03 Protecting your floor

Felt pads, rugs, mats, chairs, pets, sunlight and moving day

04 Seasons and humidity

Winter gaps, summer swelling, cupping and crowning, and the humidity to aim for

05 Damage triage

Scratches, dents, white and dark marks, pet stains, squeaks and loose boards

06 Recoat or refinish?

How to tell, how often, and how many sandings your floor has left

07 Planning a refinish

Stain color, sheen, finish types, the process and the first three weeks

08 Records that pay off

The floor record, recoat schedule and what to hand the next owner

T Printables

Do and don't card · Year-round care calendar · Damage triage chart · Humidity log · Stain sample sheet · Floor record

About this guide

This guide was written by Vision Flooring LLC, a flooring company in Everett, Washington, led by owner Alex Babko. We have 20+ years of experience and 3,800+ clients behind us. Hardwood refinishing and installation, LVP, laminate, baseboards and floor repair after water damage are our everyday work, and this guide is what we explain to homeowners at their kitchen tables, written down so you can keep it.

Everything about cleaning and caring for a finished wood floor in this guide matches the care instructions we give our own customers after every job. Where a manufacturer's instructions for your specific floor or finish say something different, follow theirs.



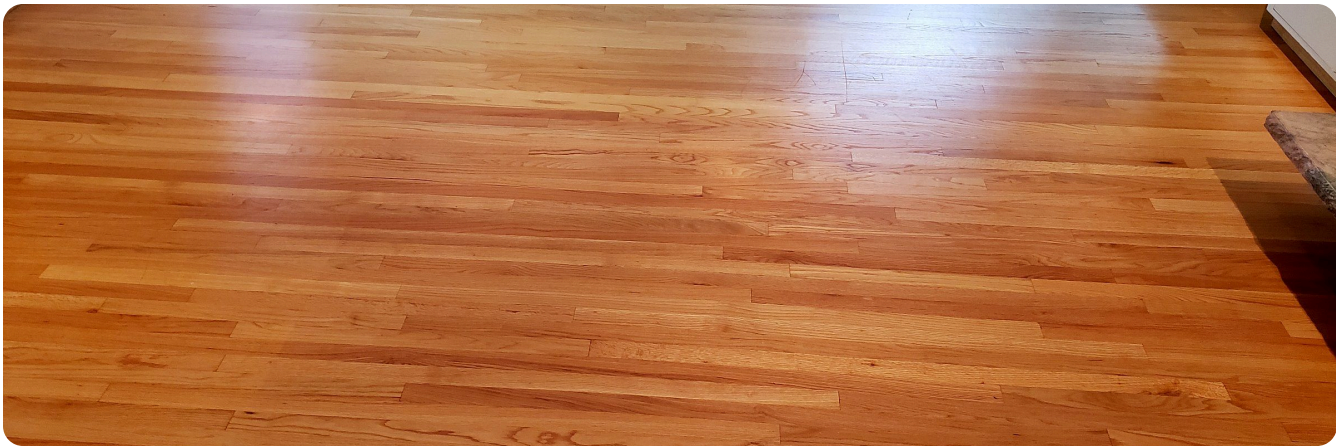
General information, not a substitute for your instructions

Every home, floor and product is different. Your flooring and product manufacturers' instructions, your local building codes and your insurance policy always come first; where they differ from this guide, follow them. Work safely and call a licensed professional for anything you are not sure about.

How to use it

- Read it once start to finish (about an hour), then keep it handy. Every chapter has **"The short version"**: its key points in a few lines.
- Boxes marked **Pacific Northwest note** matter most in damp climates like ours; they are good practice anywhere.
- The worksheets at the back are made to print on letter paper. The spreadsheet that comes with this guide does the math for you.

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CHAPTER

02

The care routine

Grit acts like sandpaper underfoot, and water always finds its way down to the wood. Almost all of a floor's wear comes from those two. Keep them off, use the right cleaner, and your finish lasts years longer.

THE SHORT VERSION

- Dust mop or vacuum weekly; clean with a wood floor cleaner such as Bona Floor Cleaner and a microfiber mop.
- Never wax, oil-soap or polish a finished floor; it blocks the next recoat.
- No wet mops; steam mops only if they leave no puddle, following the manufacturer.
- Wipe spills and pet accidents right away.

The routine

HOW OFTEN	WHAT TO DO	WHY
As needed	Wipe up spills, pet accidents and wet footprints right away, with a dry or barely damp cloth.	Water and pet urine damage the finish, then the wood.
Weekly (more in busy areas)	Vacuum on the hard-floor setting (no spinning beater bar), or dust mop with microfiber.	Grit and dirt create micro scratches that dull the finish.
Every week or two	Clean with a cleaner made for finished wood floors, sprayed lightly and wiped with a microfiber mop.	Removes film and grime without leaving residue.

HOW OFTEN	WHAT TO DO	WHY
Monthly	Check felt pads and mats; shake out entry mats.	Worn pads and dirty mats bring grit back in.
Each season	Check indoor humidity (Chapter 4). Rotate rugs and furniture a little.	Prevents gaps, cupping and uneven color from sunlight.
Yearly	Walk the house in daylight: look for dull traffic lanes and worn spots.	Shows when a recoat is coming up.
Every 5 to 7 years	Screen and recoat (site-finished floors).	Renews the protective layer before the wood itself wears.

What to clean with

Use

- ✓ **A cleaner made for finished wood floors.** We recommend **Bona Floor Cleaner** (the cleaner, not the Bona polish).
- ✓ **A microfiber dust mop** and a **microfiber spray mop** that puts down only a little liquid.
- ✓ A vacuum with a **hard-floor setting** and soft wheels.
- ✓ For oil or hardwax-oil floors: the maintenance products the finish manufacturer specifies.

Never use

- ✗ **Wax or oil soap** on a polyurethane or Swedish finish: they leave a film that attracts dirt and stops a future recoat from sticking.
- ✗ **Floor polishes and “restorers”** that add a shiny layer: same problem.
- ✗ **Wet mops and buckets:** water always finds the seams.
- ✗ **Homemade mixes** such as vinegar or ammonia, and all-purpose or abrasive cleaners: they can dull the finish over time.
- ✗ A **spinning beater bar** on the vacuum.



Steam mops

A steam mop is acceptable **only if it leaves no puddle of water behind**; most don't get hot enough to ruin a floor. Always follow your flooring and steam mop manufacturers' guidelines: improper use can melt or damage floors. If in doubt, a microfiber spray mop is the safer choice.

Spills and accidents

- **Water and drinks:** blot right away. Standing water left for hours can turn the finish white or reach the wood.
- **Food:** clean it up too, even if it looks harmless. Animal products such as meat, eggs and milk can encourage bacteria that slowly attack the finish.

- **Pet urine:** clean it up quickly and completely. Its acid can etch through the finish and stain the wood underneath; old urine stains are often dark, deep and permanent, and need board replacement.
- **Sticky or greasy spots:** a little wood floor cleaner on a cloth; let it sit a moment, then wipe. Never scrape with metal.



Pacific Northwest note: the wet season

From fall to spring, wet shoes, umbrellas and wet dogs carry water and grit straight onto the floor. Put washable mats with a watertight backing inside every door, add a boot tray, and keep an old towel by the door for paws. It does more for your floor than any cleaner.

Do and don't: hardwood floor care

PRINTABLE • CUT IN HALF

Two copies of the same card: one for the fridge, one for the cleaning cupboard.

Do

- ✓ Dust mop or vacuum weekly (hard-floor setting)
- ✓ Clean with a wood floor cleaner, e.g. Bona Floor Cleaner
- ✓ Microfiber spray mop: a little liquid only
- ✓ Wipe spills and pet accidents right away
- ✓ Felt pads under every furniture leg
- ✓ Mats with watertight backing at every door
- ✓ Lift furniture, never drag it
- ✓ Keep humidity about 30–50%

Recoat every 5–7 years • Questions: Vision Flooring, 425–218–4234

Don't

- ✗ Wax, oil soap or floor polish
- ✗ Wet mops or buckets of water
- ✗ Vinegar, ammonia or all-purpose cleaners
- ✗ Steam mops that leave puddles
- ✗ Beater-bar vacuums
- ✗ Rubber or plastic-backed rugs on new finish
- ✗ Filling winter gaps
- ✗ Hard plastic chair casters

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END OF THE FREE SAMPLE

The Hardwood Floor Owner's Manual

You just read a few pages. The complete version has everything below, with every worksheet and the spreadsheet.

- ✓ Know your floor: tell solid from engineered and which finish you have, with simple at-home checks
- ✓ The care routine by day, week, month and year, and the cleaners and gadgets that ruin finishes
- ✓ Seasons and humidity: winter gaps, summer cupping and what is normal in a damp climate
- ✓ Damage triage: scratches, dents, white and black water marks, pet stains, squeaks and loose boards
- ✓ Recoat or refinish? The decision guide, plus how many sandings your floor has left
- ✓ Planning a refinish: stain colors, sheens, finish types and the first three weeks after
- ✓ Printables: care calendar, do and don't card for the fridge, humidity log and floor record

Get the full guide →

visionflooringllc.com/hardwood-floor-owners-manual · Instant download · PDF guide + care log spreadsheet

Questions first? Text 425-218-4234; a real person answers.