



**OZARK HARDWOOD FLOORING, INC.**



## EASY HARDWOOD FLOOR CARE

Hardwood flooring is versatile. It's practical as well. Hardwood floors are easy to clean, are virtually maintenance free, and will last a lifetime. There are a few things you can do to ensure your floors stay as beautiful as the day they were installed. By practicing preventative maintenance, your hardwood floors will retain their luster and depth.

### **PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE IS THE KEY**

Use dirt trapping, walk off mats at all exterior doors to help prevent dirt, grit and sand from getting inside your home. Throw rugs or small sections of carpet just inside the entrances are also helpful.

Certain chemicals in wood can oxidize in strong light, causing the wood to change color. It can weather and age them. To avoid an uneven appearance, occasionally move your area rugs and drape or shade large west facing windows. Rugs should not be placed for about 3-4 days to give the floor a good curing time. Put fabric or felt faced glides on the legs of your furniture. They allow furniture to be moved easily without scuffing the floor. Clean the glides regularly since grit can become embedded in them. Ball type castors may cause damage. Gray, non-marking rubber castors are the best. Avoid any type of plastic castor. Children's push toys with plastic wheels can scuff the finish. Keep pet nails trimmed regularly. Potted plants should be carefully watched for leaks in the bottom. Sometimes water can condense on the side of the pot and soak the floor. Wipe up food and other spills immediately, using a dampened (not wet) cloth if necessary. Then wipe dry with another cloth or a paper towel. Keep high heel shoes in good repair. Heels that have worn down or lost their protective cap will dent any floor including concrete. An average spike heel will exert 2000 psi on the floor.

Vacuum regularly, as often as you vacuum your carpets. A brush attachment works wonders. Sweep or use a dust mop as needed. When general cleaning is required, the best thing to use is either the Bona Hardwood Floor Cleaner that we provide or Shalkee's Basic H2 also works great. If you do not have these cleaners, use 1 part white vinegar and 4 parts water. Put this mixture in a spray bottle and spray/damp mop. Do not soak the mop, just use it lightly damp. Never use Pledge or any wax based furniture polish. This will make the floor very slippery. Do not use paste wax. Do not use Murphy's Oil Soap as this will dull the finish. Remember, you are cleaning the urethane finish, not the wood. If the cleaner will streak glass, it will streak/dull the finish on the floor. Always spot clean any spills with a lightly damp cloth or paper towel. When the finish starts to wear in high traffic areas (area looks very dull and noticeably different than the rest of the floor) the floor may need a recoat. Most floors can be recoated 2-3 times before a complete re-strip is needed.

### **VERY IMPORTANT — SHRINKING AND CUPPING**

A small amount of separation between boards (especially in the winter) is normal and is not considered a defect. This can be minimized in the winter months by adding humidity. 45% humidity is ideal.

**Any cupping however is cause for immediate alarm, and is ALWAYS a sign of moisture, either between the hardwood and the sub floor or under the sub floor.** Cupping is normally seen between April and November, but can show up at anytime from water leaks or excess moisture.

The moisture that causes cupping is usually not moisture you can see, but is just "moisture vapor" or excess humidity. I have seen moisture coming from leaks in plumbing sources, (dishwasher, icemaker, toilet) bad drainage, no gutters or poor gutter drainage, leaks around windows and doors, roof leaks hidden inside the stud walls, faulty drainage from air conditioner units, ground water sources, lack of adequate crawlspace ventilation or a combination of all the above. Commonly, moisture under a crawlspace is present during early construction, and after the crawlspace is covered, the moisture cannot escape. The cupping is caused by the hardwood (which is hygroscopic — which means a material that can absorb moisture) gaining moisture and swelling slightly. Since the edges of each board are tight against each other, they have nowhere to go but UP, thus edges are pushed higher than the middle of the boards and you have a cupped floor.

**Remedy:** Check for any possible moisture sources, and fix these problems immediately. Gutters are very important on the upper side of the house as water will drain off the roof and right underneath if not directed away. Plastic or a **crawlspace liner** on the ground in the crawlspace will help this problem. If you do not have adequate ventilation in the crawlspace, you may need to close and seal your crawlspace vents and run a de-humidifier in the crawlspace in the summer months. **Cupping is not a defect of the flooring or the installation,** but is caused by a moisture problem in and under the house and under the floor.

We will not be responsible for damage if any cupping occurs, and cupping is not covered by any warranty, as this is a defect of the home and not the floor. Almost always, if the floor cups slightly it will lay back down if the moisture is decreased. The home may need to go thru a Winter heating season before any decisions are made as to the final outcome. If a cupped floor with moisture is re-sanded before the moisture is back to normal, the floor will crown in the other direction when it finally dries out. Don't panic, I have seen some very cupped floors lay down. This is a very common problem. **If it is moist or musty smelling in your crawlspace or basement, or if your floor joists have mold/mildew on them, you may have excess moisture which will eventually cause more problems with your home than just the floor.**

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