



Tips for Cleaning Floors

Regardless of the kind of floor you have, regular cleaning is the key to keeping it in good condition. This usually means cleaning on a weekly basis and prompt attention to any stains and spills. Unlike carpets, most hard surfaces are relatively easy to clean and maintain – here are a few tips to help you:

Hardwood Floors

As hardwood floors can be very expensive to install, keeping it clean and in good condition is extremely important to preserving its value, as well as prolonging its longevity and its natural beauty. Because hardwood is sensitive to abrasives which scratch the wood's surface, leading to a dull appearance, the key thing is to keep the floors clear of grit and debris. This can be done by regular vacuuming, such as on a weekly basis, and occasional dust mopping or sweeping during the week.

Any spills **MUST** be tackled immediately as liquid left to pool on the wood can seep through into the joints and seams and lead to irreparable damage. Thus, after you have cleaned up a spill, always go over the area again with a dry cloth. If you have to clean the floors with a damp cloth due to heavier soiling, use the minimum amount of water possible and always go over the area again with a dry cloth to remove excess water and leave dry.

Tile Floors

Tiles are one of the easiest things to keep clean – all they require is a weekly vacuum or sweep, followed by damp mopping using hot water and mild household detergent. If they are very heavily soiled, you may need to repeat the damp mopping several times – the hot water will loosen most of the dirt and any oily residue left will be lifted off by the detergent. For persistent grime and stains, you can use a synthetic scouring pad or even a soft brush to try and loosen the dirt but do not use harsh abrasives, such as steel wool, as these will scratch the tile surface. Remember to always rinse the tiles again with clean water as any detergent left on the surface will simply trap more dirt and grime. If mould or mildew is seen, especially in the grout, it should be removed promptly to prevent it becoming ingrained. Do this using a



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solution of equal parts water and ammonia (remember to keep the area well-ventilated and do not mix with any chlorine products).

Laminate and Vinyl Floors

One of the main reasons these two types of flooring are so popular is due to their ease of cleaning and maintenance. Both require nothing more than a regular vacuum using a soft-brush attachment and an occasional wipe with a damp mop or soft cloth to keep them looking beautiful and in good condition. Remember, though, to avoid using soap-based detergents or harsh chemical cleaners on laminate as this can damage the floor's finish, leading to clouding and discolouration – simply using hot water is best. For vinyl, commercial floor cleaners can be used to maintain its original shine and a stripping solution can be used twice a year to remove any accumulated oils and soap residues. While both materials are often touted as “stain-proof”, it is still a good idea to tackle any spills or stains as soon as possible, to prevent any permanent discolouration. Finally, avoid using harsh abrasives such as steel wool, sandpaper or scouring pads.

With the wealth of choice in the market today, you can purchase many different commercial products designed to clean and maintain specific types of flooring – however, in many cases, a simple, regular routine is all you need to keep your floors looking their best.

