

# A SIMPLE GUIDE TO CLEANING MAINTAINING & PROTECTING YOUR TIMBER & LAMINATE FLOORS



FREE TIPS AND ADVICE  
ON THE BEST WAYS TO  
KEEP YOUR HARD FLOOR  
SURFACES IN BEAUTIFUL  
CONDITION



By Chris Green

## Cleaning & Maintaining Your Finished Timber Floors

Installing timber floors can be a great investment to add value to any home whether you have new floor boards laid, have old ones restored or whether you have Laminate Flooring. It helps to add warmth, character and personality to any room but it can cost a lot of money.

That's why looking after the timber flooring in your home is extremely important. By ensuring that your timber floor is properly cared for, it will look as good as possible for as long as possible.



Accidents happen all of the time whether you drop some sauce or other food onto the floor, or if you spill some water on it and forget to mop it up.

Things easily happen and without sorting it out, it can eventually turn into a problem for your wooden floors.

### Regular Maintenance is Essential

Many floor owners have unrealistic expectations about the life and durability of timber floor coatings. Some expect the coatings to never wear or mark, and to be impervious to spillages and moisture, let alone it ever needing maintenance.

In this guide we aim to create realistic expectations by explaining how timber floors are a long term investment that will last a very long time, **IF and only if**, regular cleaning and maintenance is carried out and the floors are protected from moisture and abrasion.

Routine maintenance includes sweeping, vacuuming or dust mopping to remove dirt and grit which if left will accumulate and act as an abrasive, especially as it is traipsed throughout the home. This schedule should also include the occasional light damp mopping with the floor manufacturer's recommended cleaner.

Good quality mats placed inside and outside all entrance doors are the next best solution to prevent spreading abrasive dirt and grit through the house. Area mats placed in high traffic areas such as at the kitchen sink or hallways greatly assist in the reduction of wear in these areas.

Ensure the finish is completely cured before placing mats or rugs. Move them periodically as ultraviolet light can change the colour of exposed timber giving the floor an uneven appearance.

If shoes are worn inside, they should be kept in good order to prevent denting of the timber floorboards, and dogs claws should be kept trimmed for the same reason.

## Avoid Wearing High Heels

Did you know that a woman weighing 57kgs wearing high heels exerts a force of over 2,000 psi on a timber floor. Amazingly this is 20 times greater than the pressure exerted by an elephant on the same floor of only 50-100 psi. Exposed nailheads on chair legs or damaged stillettos can destroy timber flooring.



The other big problem with timber floors is damage around and underneath dining tables. It's a heavily used area and the constant scraping of chairs in and out can quickly degrade the finish.

Fit good quality [felt floor protectors](#) to stop damage on timber floors. The best solution, outside of felt, is a product called "[Slipstick Foot](#)". These are premium quality floor protectors that can be attached to furniture and will not come off.

## Timber Floors & Water Are Not A Good Combination

It's essential that timber flooring is cleaned using a minimum of water. Use a damp mop only, never a wet mop, and mop with the grain of the timber not across it.

Don't allow water to stand on the floor and wipe up spills or leaks immediately:

Use a damp cloth for sticky spills if necessary, but be sure to wipe the floor dry afterwards.



Too much water can result in moisture penetrating the finish which could lead to delamination or the cupping of the floor boards.

## No Steam Mops!

Don't use steam mops on your timber floors despite what the salesman or TV ads have told you. They force steam, (moisture), into small incisions, breaks or cracks that appear in the surface of your floor and could cause the floor coating to peel and delaminate.

All finishes degrade over time by the process of oxidation - this process is accelerated dramatically by heat.

## Cleaning Products To Use

Never, ever use common household products like all-purpose household cleaner, window cleaner, steel wool pads, aerosol furniture polish, wax or similar products to clean your floor.

Some are too abrasive and will scratch the surface, others will make your floor dangerously slippery and could leave a film of silicon or wax in the timber, which will interfere with any future recoating of your floor.

A lot of people might think Methylated Spirits or Kerosene are alright to use. **THEY ARE NOT!** Any type of petroleum distillate will degrade the floors coating over time and eventually cause it to look irreversibly dull and drab.

It is best to use a [good quality floor cleaner](#) and floor polish, making sure you are following their directions for use. There are several excellent quality products available on the market specifically designed for timber floors.

If you are unable to get a hold a timber floor specific cleaning product then as an alternative, use some warm water with a little mild, neutral PH detergent added, this works reasonably well.

Again make sure you squeeze the mop out properly and damp mop only. It's a good idea to buff the floor with a soft cloth afterwards to ensure no water is left on the timber.

### **Avoid Direct Sunlight**

Timber, like many natural materials, will change colour on exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation. Even an old floor that is re-sanded will expose new timber fibres to direct sunlight and will begin the colour change process.

The amount of colour change is dependent upon the amount of direct and indirect sunlight exposure the timber floor gets and the response of different species of timber is variable.

This colour change can be the most dramatic in the first 6 months after it is sanded and finished.

It's also highly recommended that rugs be moved periodically during this time to avoid leaving areas of uneven colour.

There are many modern homes with huge expanses of unprotected glass allowing intense afternoon sun to beat down directly onto the finished timber floor surface.

The incredible heat generated can literally cook the surface of the timber floor speeding up the process of oxidation, this is a major reason besides dirt and grit that all floor finishes and coatings degrade. It also increases the chance of the floorboards cupping.

Timber floorboards cup for only one reason - that is from gaining or losing moisture faster on one side than the other. The heat exposure on the timber surface dries out moisture from the top of the floor boards making them drier than the bottom.

The boards cup away from the area of highest moisture with the top edges curling upwards towards the board centre.





## Handy Tip

To avoid unwanted colour change and the possibility of the floorboards cupping, as well as the accelerated degradation of the timber finish, it is best to filter the sunlight that shines directly onto your timber floors with blinds, drapes or window tinting.

## Periodically Recoat

Your hardwood floor should be recoated when the original finish shows signs of wear, but before it has worn down to bare wood. Once worn to bare wood, the floor will stain easily and may require complete re-sanding.

The recoating process only requires the floor to be cleaned down and then abraded, after which another coat of finish is applied. It is a much simpler and less costly process than re-sanding.

If you are unsure of the condition of your floor contact a timber flooring professional for inspection and advice.



## Move Your Rugs!

Don't place rugs on the floor for at least 2 weeks after the final coat is applied. Then place mats at all exterior door entrances, preferably inside and out. Place area mats in front of the sink and rugs down hallways and other heavy traffic areas.

### ! Important Tip!

Be aware that some rubber backed rugs, foam backed rugs and non-slip pads contain additives that may discolour the floor.

Periodically move your rugs around to avoid irregular dis-colouration patches from direct and indirect light exposure.

## Regular Inspection

And finally inspect your floors regularly for any signs of damage or wear and take the appropriate action. This step alone can save you a lot of heartache and money.

Early intervention in most cases means minor problems are fixed without the expense and disruption or re-sanding the entire floor.

## How To Clean Bamboo Flooring

### From Light Cleaning To Heavy Scuff and Stain Removal

Cleaning Bamboo Flooring is relatively easy, as this material is naturally quite hard, and is more resistant to water damage than similar hardwood floors.

However there are regular maintenance tasks that have to be performed periodically if you want to keep the bamboo looking its best.

The following tips are general guidelines. However, you should always follow any manufacturer provided instructions when caring for a Bamboo Floor.



You should also be familiar with the warranty, if any, that was provided with the floor so that you do not take actions that can void it.

### Dust, Dirt, and Grit: Regular Cleaning Procedures

The main culprit in the deterioration of a Bamboo Floor is going to be tiny particles of dirt and sand that are carried into the room on people's shoes.

When these tiny particles are walked on, they can dig down into the finish of the floor causing dents, divots, or even scratches, giving the bamboo a faded look.

This can be prevented by regularly mopping, sweeping, or vacuuming the floor. In some cases you may need to do this on a daily basis, depending on how much traffic the room gets.

- Do not use a vacuum that has a beater bar to clean a Bamboo Floor.
- Never use hard bristled brooms on your Bamboo Floor.
- Never immerse the floor in water. Only a damp, almost dry mop should be used.

### Heavy Bamboo Floor Cleaning

While most hardwood floor cleaners can be used on a Bamboo Floor, you want to make sure that anything you use is non-alkaline, non-abrasive, and is not a floor wax. You should also avoid using oil soap or scouring powder.

If you are unsure of what cleaning product to use you should consult with the flooring retailer that you purchased the material from.

Bamboo is slightly more resistant to water damage than regular hardwood floors; however it is still susceptible to warping if excessive moisture is present.

When using a cleaning agent that needs to be mixed with water follow the directions carefully.

Avoid using steel wool when cleaning a Bamboo Floor. A sponge or clean rag can be dipped in the solution then wrung dry, so that the material is only slightly damp. Make sure that the cleanser is applied to all parts of the floor evenly. Do not allow it to pool or puddle. When you are done a dry towel can be used to wipe up any excess moisture that may be present.

### **Natural Bamboo Cleaning Solution**

You may not know this, but an effective, all natural Bamboo Floor Cleaning Agent might already be sitting in your home. If you mix ¼ of a cup of white vinegar, into a litre of water, you will create a solution that will allow you to safely clean the surface of your Bamboo Floors. This cleanser should be applied as directed above, using a damp sponge or rag, wrung dry before application.

### **Cleaning Scuff Marks**

Scuff marks most often appear when the rubber heel of a shoe drags across the surface of your floor. The best way to handle this is to pour a little bit of wood floor cleaner onto a rag, and gently rub it into the bamboo planks where the scuff mark appeared.

### **More Preventative Maintenance Tips For Bamboo & Timber Flooring**

- ❗ A woman in high heeled shoes can do a lot of damage to a Bamboo Floor and timber floor. If you have to wear high heels, make sure that they are in good repair and that there is padding on the tip of the heel.
- ❗ Having a policy of asking people to remove their shoes when they enter the room will help to prevent scuff marks and scratches in the floor, and will cut down on the amount of small particle debris carried through the room. It will also add to the cultural atmosphere that is evoked by this flooring material.
- ❗ Keeping your pets nails trimmed is another way to help cut down on scratches in the floors surface. This is especially true with larger dogs as they can cause relatively deep gouges in the wood.
- ❗ Heavy furniture should never be dragged across a Bamboo Floor or any timber floor for that matter. You should also put thick fabric or felt furniture pads under the legs of heavy pieces, so that they do not sink into the floor and cause divots. If the furnishing has castors they should either be removed or replaced with felt backed castors.
- ❗ Sunlight can discolour certain types of bamboo. This is especially true when a concentrated beam of sunshine comes in through a window and hits a specific place on the floor each day. You can cut down on discolouration through the use of shades or blinds.
- ❗ In wet environments, place rugs or mats in front of high moisture areas such as in front of sinks or bath stalls. Make sure that these rugs do not have rubber backing, as that will suffocate the bamboo, making it unable to breathe, causing it to discolour.
- ❗ The colour of a Bamboo Floor can fade slightly over time. By periodically rotating your furniture you can ensure that this fading happens evenly across the entire surface of the Bamboo Floor.

## How to Clean and Care for Laminate Floors

Laminate floors are popular because they are hard to damage and easy to clean and care for.

Here we show you how to care for them in the right way:

1. First, carefully and thoroughly read the warranty and care instructions provided by the floor's manufacturer. Follow these instructions, or ask your office cleaning service to follow them, as accurately as possible, and consult them if there is a problem.
2. Ask the manufacturer for post-installation cleaning instructions, because you may not be able to mop the floor for the first 48 hours after it has been installed, or there may be special care instructions depending on the brand of the floor.
3. Laminate Floors should not be wiped with a wet mop because water may leak behind the baseboards and under the floor creating puddles and damaging them. To clean them, use a vacuum and a damp mop.
4. **Important:** You should **never apply a Wax or Acrylic Floor Finishes** to Laminate Floors.
5. If there is a stain, use only the stain removal products recommended by the manufacturer. You will discover that many articles or publications suggest the use of acetone for cigarette burns and nail polish spills, and mineral spirits for grease and tar.
6. Get doormats for the garage and outdoors doorways. These will catch grit that may slowly scratch the floor's surface.
7. Put [floor protectors](#) on the feet of furniture to avoid scratching the floor.
8. When moving a big piece of furniture or a heavy appliance across a Laminate Floor, use dollies, otherwise, you may scratch it with minute stones that are trapped under the furniture's feet or under the wheels.

A lot of the precautions you must take to protect your Laminate Floor when working with sharp or heavy objects are based on common sense.

For example, if you are going to install a ceiling fan or are going to use a drill, place a thick cloth or piece of carpet under the area to protect the floor, because you can damage it if you drop something by accident.





## 12 tips on the Protection & Maintenance of Laminate Floors

1. Never steam clean your Laminate Floor.
2. Reduce your amount of routine Laminate Floor cleaning by placing doormats in front of entrances to prevent dirt and gravel from getting traipsed in.
3. Keep Stiletto Heels off your Laminate Flooring to avoid damage.
4. When mopping, don't apply water directly to the floor, just dampen the mop itself.
5. Avoid flooding your Laminate Floors with water or cleaning products.
6. When cleaning Laminate Floors, never use harsh or abrasive cleaners, steel wool, scouring powder, or soap-based detergents. [Recommended.](#)
7. Never wax, lacquer, or polish your Laminate Floor.
8. Laminate Flooring should never be refinished or sanded.
9. Add [glides](#) or [floor protectors](#) to the feet and corners of heavy furniture.
10. When [moving furniture](#), lift it, don't drag it.
11. Wipe up all liquid spills immediately.
12. Consider placing runners or area rugs in particularly high traffic areas. Take care to avoid backings that will damage your Laminate Floor. If possible, consult the manufacturer's guide or a sales associate to find out if the rug or runner is compatible.

## How To Stop Your Furniture From Damaging Timber, Tile or Laminate Floors

### Why do I need Floor Protectors?

Furniture is by far the most common cause of damage to hard floor surfaces. Most furniture will generally have ineffective or no form of floor protector attached to it, so when it's moved scratches, gouges and other expensive damage can occur.

Fitting good quality floor protectors will dramatically help to stop these problems.

Which floor protectors are right for me?

Choosing the right floor protectors can be worked out by asking yourself the following questions:

1. Do I want a long term or short term solution.
2. Do I want premium or budget.
3. What type of furniture do I have and what's it used for.

In order for you to answer the first 2 questions you'll need to know the difference and I'll explain below.

There are a couple of choices on the market that we have reviewed and each have their upsides and downsides.

**Felt Floor Protectors are your short term and budget solution.**

[Slipstick Foot Floor Protectors](#) are your long term and premium solution

[Felt Floor Protectors](#) are designed to be used under chairs, tables and most furniture pieces to protect timber, vinyl and tile floor surfaces.

**Felt floor protectors are:**

- Self Adhesive.
- Heavy Duty Felt.

**Upside of Felt Floor Protectors:**

- Protect floors
- Slide easily & makes furniture easier to move
- Reduces noise
- Suitable for most types of furniture
- Easy to fit
- Can be used on most floors

**Downside of Felt Floor Protectors:**

- Can peel off easily
- Need to be checked regularly for wear
- Can flatten out when carrying heavy weight
- Need to be cleaned on a regular basis to avoid lint and dirt build up which becomes very abrasive
- Short lifespan.
- Can come off unexpectedly

## **Slipstick Foot Floor Protectors**

If you are looking for, long term floor protection products, that won't come off, and last a long time, than you cannot go past a product called, "Slipstick Foot".

They have a comprehensive range of "furniture sliders" for chairs and barstools, a range of "furniture grippers" to stop your furniture moving and a range of "castor cups", as well as "furniture movers".

All designed around durability and multiple uses for most types of furniture.

## **Upside of Slipstick Foot Floor Protectors**

- Never peel off attached with a super strong adhesive and screw.
- Very stable! Large and small castor cups fit securely under wheels and castors.
- Easy to keep clean. Just wipe with a damp cloth.
- Each foot can hold up to 250kg
- Large variety of floor protectors that slide and grip as well as castor cups and more.
- Specially formulated O'ring will protect all floor coatings.
- Easy to follow fitting instructions are on the back of every Slipstick foot packet.
- Long lifespan.
- Slipstick feet are backed by a 5-year Free Replacement Warranty (Commercial Warranty 1-year).

## **Downside of Slipstick Floor Protectors**

- More expensive than felts
- Slightly harder to fit than felt

Now that we have identified the difference between each type of floor protector the easiest way to go from here is to answer the following:

### **What type of furniture do I have and what it is used for?**

#### **Is the furniture stationary and only moved occasionally? Example: TV Cabinet, Wall Unit.**

In this case you could use either felt or the Slipstick Foot Furniture Grippers. The grippers would be excellent for putting under a coffee table or a dining table where it could get bumped or any item that could cause damage if it was accidentally moved.

The felt would be perfect under a Wall Unit where it would never get moved or bumped.

### **Is the furniture being moved all the time? Example: Dining Chairs, Barstools.**

In this case the Slipstick Sliders or the felt could be used, so you would need to decide whether you are willing to risk the possibility of the felt peeling off or eliminating that risk and use the Slipstick Foot Slider that is permanently attached and won't peel off.

### **Is the furniture on castors? Example Piano, Bed Ensemble.**

In this case you only have one choice and that is the Slipstick Foot for Castors. The reason being there is no way of attaching felt under a castor wheel.

Whether you decide to use the Felt Floor Protectors or the Slipstick Foot Premium Floor Protectors or a combination you still have one last thing to do.

You'll now need to create a list of all the furniture items you have and what pieces will need protectors.

Next workout whether you will need sliders, grippers or felt and measure the size of the legs that the protectors will need to be fitted too and take that information with you to your nearest retailer to ensure you get the right ones.

**If there's something you still have questions about checkout the Frequently Asked Questions Section for more answers.**

## **FAQs**

Q. What types of floor can they be used on?

A. All Hard surfaced Floors, Including Hardwood, Parquetry, Tile, Slate and Laminates.

Q. Do the Slipstick feet have a warranty?

A. Slipstick feet are backed by a 5-year Free Replacement Warranty (Commercial Warranty 1-year). Any Slipstick product that fails due to premature wear, fault materials or manufacture defect will be replaced free of charge.

Q. Will Slipstick Feet work on carpet?

A. Yes. They will protect carpet, however the Slipstick foot was mainly designed to protect hard floor surfaces.

Q. Is the Slipstick foot suitable for all types of furniture?

A. The screw on Slipstick feet are not suitable for furniture with metal or plastic legs.

Q. Are they easy to fit?

A. Yes. The Slipstick foot products, supplied with screws, require a simple pre-drilling before attachment. The rest of the range are simply placed underneath the furniture leg or wheel.

Q. How do I know what size Slipstick foot to fit onto my furniture?

<http://furniturecareproducts.com.au>

A. Just measure the width of the leg you are fitting the foot to and ensure that the Slipstick Foot is as close to that width as possible.

Q. My furniture has square legs will a round Slipstick foot work?

A. Yes, a round Slipstick foot will work on a square leg, just keep the Slipstick Foot size smaller than the leg.

Q. If I fit Slipstick feet to my dining chairs, will I have to lift the chair to move it ?

A. No, as the smaller sized Slipstick feet are designed to Slide Freely utilizing a firm rubber and will reduce marking and scuffing of clean floor surfaces.

Q. Do I have to fit the Slipstick Large Castor Cups on every leg of my bed ensemble?

A. No. One [Slipstick Large Castor Cup](#) under each corner of an ensemble is sufficient to stop the bed moving.

Q. Will Slipstick Castor Cups carry the weight of a piano?

A. Yes, Slipstick Castor Cups are designed to take up 250 kg (500lb) on each foot.

## Removing Scratches and Dents on Hardwood Floors

The last thing owners of hardwood floors want to see are scratches and dents in their beautiful floors. However, scratches and dents in your hardwood floors are often hard to avoid. With even the most carefully protected floors, scratches and dents are bound to happen from time to time.

Depending on the severity of the scratch or dent, you have some options available to you in terms of how you can properly fix the damage to your hardwood floors. When it comes to fixing scratches in hardwood floors, you are usually dealing with a light scratch or one that is deeper and goes into the actual wood. For depressions in hardwood floors, these are usually dents made in the wood. With the proper materials, neither of these is difficult to remove.

Scratches are generally removed by filling in the scratch or sanding the wood floor down to remove the scratch. To remove light scratches, you'll need some almond oil or an [almond stick](#) and a ["0000" Superfine steel wool pad](#). Rub with the grain along the length of the scratch; rubbing against the grain can cause more scratches that you will have to fix later on.

Once you can no longer see the scratch and the wood is smooth, follow by rubbing with a clean soft cloth.

There are also [wood repair kits](#) that you can purchase that contain touch up marker pens and wax sticks in multiple stains and finish colours. If you don't want to purchase a [complete repair kit](#), you can also purchase individual [touch up markers](#) in the shade you need to match the stain or finish on the floor.



Some scratches, though, are more difficult to deal with and require some additional work. In this case you would need to call in a professional floor repairer.

**Links to recommended products:**

[Felt Floor Protectors](#)

[Slipstick Foot Premium Floor Protectors](#)

[Floor Cleaner](#)

[Repair & Touch Up Products](#)

**About the Author**

Chris Green the owner of Furniture Care Products has been involved in the furniture industry since 1980 in a number of areas including 20 years Furniture Transport & Logistics, 20 years in selling furniture care and floor care products as well as upholstery cleaning, fabric protection application and leather cleaning.

During his time in the furniture transport business he discovered that customers were having a hard time getting the right advice the right care products to look after their new furniture.

In 1998 Chris started Superior Furniture Care and built the business by sourcing a range of premium quality timber furniture care and repair products. Over time the range expanded to leather care, fabric care, floor protection and floor care products.

In 2013 the business was split into two separate businesses. Aussie Furniture Care for the product range and Superior Furniture Care for the fabric protection, upholstery cleaning & leather cleaning services.

With his knowledge and experience Chris has been able to build up a range of top quality products that he has personally used and tested. No products are added to the range unless they adhere to a strict criteria.

All products must do what they say they will do, they must be safe, environmentally friendly and must produce excellent results for customers.

Every product in all ranges come with a 100% Money Back Guarantee

[Furniture Care Products](#) was started back in 2005 and since then Chris has also written 6 ebooks available for Free download on the site as well as numerous how to videos which are also available to view on this site.

<http://furniturecareproducts.com.au>