

# Flooring

## FLOORING: OVERVIEW

The flooring in your new home is made of materials selected for their beauty and functionality. Proper care and regular maintenance are key in maintaining the appearance and maximizing the useful life of your flooring. Common sense guidelines apply to all flooring types, some of which are listed below. Additional recommendations are explained for each flooring type in the pages that follow.



### General Guidelines

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- **Use Doormats**

Place doormats outside all exterior doors, as dirt and other substances tracked in from outside are the primary sources of wear.

- **Clean Up Spills Immediately**

Blot up liquid with a clean, absorbent, white cloth or sponge. Remove solids with a blunt knife or scraper.

- **Protect Your Floor**

Use protective pads or pieces of plywood under heavy appliances when moving them across flooring. If appliances such as refrigerators are mounted on casters, be sure the casters are large enough to adequately spread the weight to avoid distressing the flooring.

- **Refer to the Manufacturer's Guidelines**

Please note that the following maintenance recommendations do not attempt to address all possible maintenance needs. Consult specific flooring manufacturers for guidelines regarding recommended floor care products and comprehensive stain removal instructions.

## CARPETING

Carpeting wears out from foot traffic that tramples dirt and sand particles deep into the pile. Choose a vacuum with strong suction and maintain it properly (changing the bag or emptying the vacuum canister) to maximize its effectiveness in removing small, heavy grains. Dirt can discolor even carefully maintained carpet. Such apparent loss of color should not be mistaken for permanent discoloration or fading. Professional cleaning can sometimes restore the original color.

### Important Information

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- **Stain Removal Tips.** Refer to the manufacturer's recommendations about treating specific types of spills or stains. General purpose carpet spotter products may be used as part of spill and stain cleaning, but should be blotted up, rinsed and thoroughly blotted up again.
- **Floor Mats.** Use inside and outside entrance mats to reduce the amount of dirt that enters your home.
- **Water Damage.** If flooding or large spills cause any part of your carpeting to be saturated with water or other liquid, the carpeting should be professionally and fully dried within 12 hours. Otherwise, it should be evaluated by a professional, who will usually recommend that the damaged carpeting be removed as quickly as possible, to prevent the growth of mold and bacteria.
- **Professional Cleaning.** Professional carpet cleaning is often the best way to restore the appearance of carpeting. However, please note that professional cleaning companies use a variety of cleaning methods, some of which are hard on the carpet and should be done as infrequently as possible.
- **Areas Exposed to Moisture.** We recommend that you do not install carpeting in a kitchen, bathroom, laundry room, or any other area that is regularly exposed to moisture. Carpeting can serve as a breeding ground for mold and bacteria, as well as dirt and particulates that can contribute to allergy problems.

### Quick Tip: Treating Common Conditions

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*Crushing:* Vacuum regularly.

*Burns:* Clip burnt ends or replace carpet.

*Fading:* Protect from sunlight.

*Shedding:* Balls of fluff gradually disappear with regular vacuuming.

*General Spills and Stains:* First, blot liquids with a dry, white, absorbent cloth. Do not scrub. Second, blot with a cleaning solution, working from the edges toward the center of the spill. Rinse with clean water and blot until dry.

*Semi-solid stains:* Gently scrape with a rounded spoon and vacuum up. Do not add moisture.

*Ripples:* Carpet that is worn or needs to be re-stretched may develop ripples or ridges. When normal stretching occurs during the life of the carpet, re-stretch it to eliminate excessive wear.

Recommended Maintenance Tasks	Frequency
Vacuum frequently traveled areas and near outdoor entrances. Carpet cannot be vacuumed too often. A clean carpet is a long wearing carpet.	Daily or as needed
Thoroughly vacuum all areas, even those rooms which receive very little traffic, to remove dust deposited from the air.	Weekly
Professionally clean carpeting that is too soiled to respond to routine maintenance.	Annually or as needed

### Effects of Deferred Maintenance

Poor appearance and premature replacement costs may result from deferred carpet maintenance.

## CERAMIC TILE FLOORS

Ceramic tile floors are an attractive, functional, and long-lasting choice for your home.

### Cleaning Tips

Clean regularly with a vacuum, broom, or wet mop. Remove dirt daily to prevent build-up and the potential for staining. Neutral pH cleaners are recommended and available from tile supply stores. Do not use harsh abrasive cleaners, metal scrubbers, acids or acid based cleaners, as these can deteriorate the grout and finish.



**Note:** Tile grout is not typically sealed as part of the new construction, as it is necessary for grout to cure (at least a month is recommended) before sealing. Surface sealers protect against everyday wear and tear. Once the tile has cured, a professional should seal the grout joints. Sealers and waxes can save on routine cleaning.

Recommended Maintenance Tasks	Frequency
Sweep or vacuum on a regular basis to reduce grit, which can scratch and dull the floor's finish.	Daily in areas of heavy use
Clean flooring with a damp mop or a mild detergent. Wax or sealers are not necessary. Buff floors lightly to improve the shine to a high gloss.	Weekly
Inspect and, if necessary, regrout, or caulk the area between the tiles and the baseboard. Check around door thresholds, tubs, and toilets. Sealing these areas are important to prevent the water intrusion.	Annually
Seal the tile. If needed, re-finish with non-skid wax.	Annually
Examine the perimeter and high traffic areas for hollow-sounding or loose tiles, as well as cracking.	Annually

### Effects of Deferred Maintenance

Poor appearance of the flooring, degradation of grout or joints, and even water intrusion and damage can result from deferred maintenance.

## ENGINEERED HARDWOOD FLOORING

Engineered hardwood flooring has the beauty and durability of solid hardwood, but is stronger and resists warping better than solid hardwood flooring. It is constructed of multiple plies of unfinished hardwood layered and bonded to one another, with a finished wood veneer on top. Engineered hardwood flooring *is* real wood, and should be treated as such. Engineered hardwood flooring is typically pre-finished, and while it can be refinished, experts recommend that it only be refinished once in its lifetime, as the thin top layer can only be sanded down one time without sanding it too thin.

### Important Information

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- **Characteristics of a Natural Product.** Wood (parquet or planks) is a natural product, and may vary slightly in grain and color. Also, during normal seasonal cycles, changes in humidity may result in expansion and contraction of the materials. This may result in small separations between planks or parquet during dryer seasons, and is to be expected.
- **Protect from Moisture.** Promptly remove water and other liquids from the surface to prevent water from penetrating and harming the flooring. Never wet mop your wood floor.
- **Professional Service.** Contact a local flooring distributor to remove heavy stains or for refinishing.
- **Minimize Wear.** Use area rugs in areas of heavy traffic to prevent excessive wear. Avoid using rubber-backed rugs. Do not drag furniture or other heavy objects across the floor without a pad. Place protector pads under all furniture legs.

### Cleaning Tips

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In general, cleaning is limited to sweeping with a soft bristle broom, cleaning with a vacuum cleaner soft floor attachment, and periodically cleaning with professional wood floor cleaning products. Remove dirt at joints, between boards, and at doorway thresholds or transitions to other flooring materials. Do not use ammonia or dust cleaners on wood flooring. Wipe up spills immediately!

Engineered hardwood flooring should not be wet-mopped. It is especially susceptible to damage from water from long-term sources such as leaks and exterior doors with poor weather protection.



**Caution:** Always consult the manufacturer's recommendations or a wood flooring supplier/installer to determine the appropriate floor care products. Improper maintenance may void your warranty.

Recommended Maintenance Tasks	Frequency
Sweep or vacuum to remove loose dirt. Remove stains as needed.	Daily to weekly, depending on use
Clean with professional wood floor cleaning products.	Per manufacturer's recommendations

### Effects of Deferred Maintenance

Incomplete maintenance can result in damage or stains, reducing the value these floors add to the home.

## LAMINATE FLOORS

Laminate flooring combines the beauty of hardwood with the ease of a manufactured floor. Laminate flooring is composed of composite, machine-made planks, with a faux hardwood laminate surface.

Laminate is rugged and spill resistant, but it is not indestructible. Laminate flooring is made for simple, no-wax maintenance; however, there are some recommendations to keep your flooring at its best.

### Important Information

- **Protect from Moisture.** Promptly remove water and other liquids from the surface to prevent water from penetrating edges. Never wet mop your laminate floor with soap and water.
- **Dents, Cuts, and Gouges.** Laminate is designed to resist dents, cuts and gouges that could result through normal wear. However, laminate is not indestructible and small scratches or denting may occur over time. Most manufacturer's have touch up methods available, including putty, wax crayons or pencils to fill in minor scratches or dents.
- **Use Mats.** Place non-staining mats outside entrances to reduce wear and tear resulting from tracked in dirt and sand.
- **Moving Large Items.** Protect the flooring with plywood when moving heavy objects across the floor. Rolling casters can damage laminate flooring.

### Cleaning Tips

Clean regularly by sweeping or vacuuming. Wipe up spills immediately to prevent staining. Clean spills with lukewarm water and ammonia when necessary. Vacuum and damp-mop regularly.

#### Recommended Cleaning Products

Wash the flooring with a manufacturer-recommended cleaning product. Never use abrasive cleaners, soaps, paste waxes, or solvents on laminate flooring, as they dull the finish.

Recommended Maintenance Tasks	Frequency
Dust, vacuum, or damp mop.	Daily to Weekly
Inspect seams and edges to ensure they are securely adhered.	Periodically, with routine cleaning

**Effects of Deferred Maintenance**

Poor appearance of the flooring, degradation of grout or joints, and even water intrusion and damage can result from deferred maintenance.

## NATURAL STONE FLOORS

Granite, limestone, marble, and travertine are durable natural stones but may be scratched, chipped, and stained with misuse.

### Important Information

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- **Use Mats and Rugs.** Use non-slip mats or area rugs inside and outside entries to reduce wear resulting from tracked in sand and dirt, which can scratch the stone.
- **Repair as Needed.** Repair chips, scratches, and stains using the manufacturer-recommended techniques, or consult a professional.
- **Acidic Liquids.** Some types of natural stone are vulnerable to damage from acidic liquids, such as citrus juices, tomato juice, and vinegar. Sealers will help protect the surfaces.
- **Hints for Sealers.** It is strongly recommended that you seal your stone in order to prevent staining. There are specific cleaning agents and sealers for natural stone that are available through tile and stone stores.

### Cleaning Tips

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Blot up spills immediately. Sweep with a soft broom, brush, or dust mop as a part of everyday maintenance. Damp mop smooth surfaces two to three times per week after sweeping or vacuuming, in addition to more thorough wet cleaning per the manufacturer's recommendations. Soaps without detergents and pH balanced cleansers are generally good choices; always rinse thoroughly with clear water.

#### Recommended Cleaning Products

For routine cleaning, vegetable-based natural soaps are a good choice. Stains can typically be cleaned with a detergent. Be sure to select a detergent that is appropriate for the type of stone. Consult the manufacturer or a stone retailer for specific product recommendations.



**Caution:** Avoid abrasive cleansers or products that contain lemon, vinegar, or other acids. Do not use steel wool, polish, or liquids containing acid or vinegar on the surface.

#### Treating Stubborn Stains

Stubborn stains typically require professional care. Acidic cleaners are not recommended for routine care, but may be used to remove grout haze, mineral deposits, or rust acid, and should only be used by a professional. Acidic cleaners will eventually erode the grout and make cleaning more difficult.

Recommended Maintenance Tasks	Frequency
Sweep, vacuum, and mop the surfaces. Clean more thoroughly with an appropriate cleaning product as needed. Lightly brush the grout joints to loosen debris.	2–3 times per week/ Daily in high traffic areas
Inspect perimeter and high traffic areas for hollow-sounding or cracked tiles. Inspect around door thresholds, tubs, and toilets. If necessary, regrout or caulk the area between the tiles and the baseboard.	Annually
Reseal the stone.	Every 1–2 years or as needed
Repair chips, scratches, and stains using the manufacturer-recommended techniques, or consult a professional.	As needed

### Effects of Deferred Maintenance

Poor appearance of the flooring, degradation of grout or joints, and even water intrusion and damage can result from deferred maintenance.