

# Care and Maintenance

To take full advantage of your warranty and preserve the original appearance of your floors, you must follow these instructions carefully. The normal care and maintenance of pre-finished floors is quick and easy. It can be done in two simple steps.

1. The best way to protect hardwood floors is to vacuum them regularly. Vacuum your floors as often as needed to remove traces of dust and dirt likely to scratch them.

2. Spray our L'Essentiel cleaner on a cloth-covered duster. Wipe one section of the floor using continuous side-to-side movements, horizontally along the length of the boards. Move to another section and repeat with the same side-to-side movement. If the cloth gets dirty, use a replacement cloth. Wash soiled covers as needed. Your floors should be cleaned this way at least once a month.

**Caution.** Never use any waxes, household cleaners or any oil-based soap to clean your floors. These products can tarnish or damage the finish, leave a greasy film, make floors slippery and hard to clean. Cleaning pre-finished floors with a mixture of water and vinegar can also oxidize the varnish. We do not recommend using steam dusters.

**Wood and Water.** Wood fibres expand as they absorb water and this can damage the wood and varnish of your floors. If water seeps into the floor, it will alter the colour and dimensions of the floor. Mold may also occur. Hallways and kitchens are both areas where wood is likely to come into contact with water. Special care should therefore be used when hardwood flooring is installed in these areas. Any contact whatsoever with water should be avoided. We do not recommend installing hardwood floors in bathrooms.

## Recommendations

To avoid scratching the finish, dust or vacuum your floors regularly and remove any dirt.

If you spill water, any type of liquid or detergent wipe the floors dry promptly to make sure none of it seeps into the wood fibres.

Wood is a product of nature and constantly reacts to temperature variations. Wood expands by absorbing excess humidity in the air and contracts if the humidity level in the air is too low. If the humidity inside the boards is greater than normal, they may buckle slightly. Gaps between boards can appear if there is not enough moisture inside them. Generally, wood returns to its original shape when conditions return to normal. Ideally, the internal humidity level of the wood should be between 6% and 9%. To help wood maintain its proper shape, we recommend maintaining the temperature inside your home at 20° C (70° F).

Be particularly careful with some types of running shoes and with stiletto heels, especially if the heels are old and damaged. Water and sand can certainly wreak havoc on your floors, but high heels can do severe damage to hardwood floors and other floor coverings.

Avoid using rolling chairs directly on the surface of the finish. Use protective carpeting or Plexiglas mats.

Your pets' claws should be cut regularly to reduce the number and depth claw scratches can make.

Install mats in front of every entrance, inside and outside. This will prevent sand and dirt from accumulating on the floor and will absorb water and snow.

To protect your floors from being damaged if you drop any food or cutlery or if water or detergent is splashed, place a mat in front of the

kitchen sink, the dishwasher and any work station. Avoid carpets with rubber undersides or those made of heavy material as they can trap air and humidity and tend to accumulate dirt and dust.

Place felt cushions under all furniture. This will make them easier to move and reduce the likelihood of your floors being scratched. Check the cushions once in a while to make sure they are clean and well in place.

Replace plastic wheels with large rubber or polyurethane wheels.

Protect your floors adequately when moving furniture. Take a piece of carpet (with the underside facing up) and place a plywood panel smaller than the piece of furniture on top of it. Place the furniture on the plywood and pull the furniture around.

Place saucers under potted plants to avoid any accidental water spills. Choose glazed ceramic pots instead of porous ones, which tend to let water seep through.

Maintain the relative humidity level of your home between 40% and 55%.

Protect your floors from direct sunlight and other sources of intense light. Floors exposed to light rays may change colour. This is a perfectly normal and natural phenomenon. The lighter the wood, the greater the colour change will be.

To make these colour changes less noticeable, move throw rugs and furniture around once in a while.

**Note:** These colour changes are not due to a yellowing finish. These are natural changes in the shade of the wood.

## How to Repair Minor Board Damages

To make small marks and holes less noticeable, fill the cavities with wood putty. Wipe the excess with a clean cloth immediately and apply a thin coat of urethane varnish. Let it dry for about an hour.

## How to Replace a Board

Choose a replacement board which is a bit longer than the one to be replaced. It should match the adjacent boards perfectly. Using a circular saw or spindle, cut alongside the length of the board's face, approximately 1/2 an inch away from the sides. Make a diagonal cut inside this same cut, from one corner to the next. Take out the middle part of the board with wood scissors. Remove any nails or staples and take away the borders, being careful not to damage any other boards. Remove any construction paper, wood flooring adhesive or residue. Measure the replacement board and cut the tongue part of it. Remove the bottom groove located on the sides and edges of the board. Insert the board and test its measurements. Apply the flooring adhesive to the sub floor. Re-install. Position the board properly with a rubber mallet and wood block.

## Caution

If you install hardwood flooring over in floor heating, avoid increasing or lowering the temperature of the system by more than 2.8 °C (5 °F) per day when you turn the system on and off.