

# Floor Covering Media

Your Gateway to the Floor Covering Industry

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## Floorcare tips



Taking care of hardwood or laminate floors can be challenging given the everyday conditions of a family and pets. Generally, there are two types of residential wood flooring: real wood (solid or engineered) and laminate that is man-made to look like wood. Don't know what you have exactly? No worries.

When it comes to cleaning wood floors (solid, engineered or laminate), the only thing you need to figure out is whether or not your floors have a finish. You don't really need to know the type of finish, just whether the floors have been treated to make them resistant to standing water, which is the enemy of all wood and wood-like floors.



**Drop-Of-Water test:** To find out if your flooring is finished, drop a single drop of water on the floor. If it beads and just sits there, the flooring has been finished. If the drop soaks in and disappears, leaving a dark spot, the wood is not finished. What follows is for finished solid or engineered wood and laminate flooring only. Unfinished hardwood cannot be mopped, since the floors will be damaged. If your floor is unfinished, or if it's an old wood floor and some of the finish has started to wear away, then don't use any moisture or product. Just dust mop it with a flat-head mop.

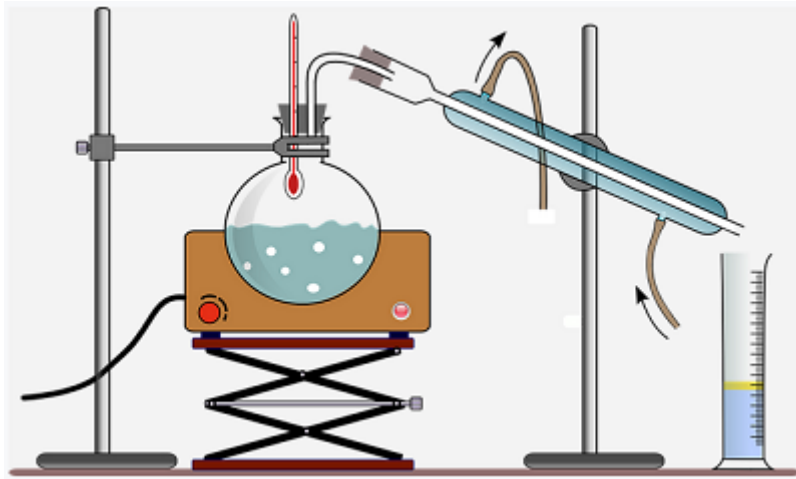


**Wood floor cleaners:** When it comes to wood and laminate cleaners, you can spend a fortune on commercial products. Or you can make your own for pennies. The key to making your own is similar to the commitment of a physician: First, do no harm. The trick is making a product that will clean well without harming the finish, even when used repeatedly over many years. **No vinegar:** White vinegar is a fabulous cleaning product because it cuts through

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dirt well. But it is highly acidic and, used repeatedly over time, can attack the finish, making your floors look dull. Vinegar can also soften the finish, making it feel gummy or sticky. So, let's just agree that when it comes to cleaning wood or laminate floors, no vinegar. Alcohol can be an effective cleaning product (70% to 90%) specifically denatured alcohol, gin or -believe it or not- vodka. It has a (nearly) neutral pH (neither acidic nor alkaline), which makes alcohol an ideal ingredient in a homemade cleaner. It cleans, protects and preserves beautifully finished wood and laminate floors.



**Distilled water:** Use distilled water in your floor cleaner (available in any supermarket) to eliminate streaking, hard watermarks and mineral buildup.



**Dishwashing liquid:** A small amount of it (don't use so much it requires rinsing) will break the surface tension of the water, which makes the cleaner more effective. What about homemade wood and laminate floor cleaner? It's 1 part alcohol to 4 parts distilled water plus a few drops blue Dawn dishwashing liquid. That's: 1 part alcohol; 4 parts distilled water and 2 or 3 drops Blue Dawn. Example: 1/4 cup alcohol, 1 cup distilled water, 2 drops Blue Dawn.

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Mix this up in a spray bottle each time you clean the floors. If you make it ahead of time, be sure to label it well and keep it out of the reach of children. Cleaning instructions: Sweep or vacuum the floor. Spray the cleaner in a small area. Scrub well with a cloth or sponge. And immediately wipe the area dry with a microfiber cloth. The secret is to spray, scrub and wipe dry immediately. If you do not want to do this on your hands and knees, I recommend using a microfiber spray mop, which works well on both wood and laminate floors.



Taking good care of your wood and laminate floors will not only keep your home looking great; you'll be protecting your home's value, which is likely one of the biggest investments you will ever make.





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