

Care & Maintenance Guide for Oiled Wood Flooring

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1. Introduction

There's something beautifully natural about oiled wood flooring. It has a softness to it, a gentle sheen rather than a shine, and it really allows the character of the wood to come through.

One of the reasons so many people fall in love with this finish is how authentic it feels underfoot. However, unlike lacquered floors, oiled wood does need a little more care to keep it looking its best.

The good news is, once you understand how it works, it becomes part of your normal routine rather than a chore. This guide will walk you through everything you need to know in a simple, practical way.

2. Understanding Oiled Wood Flooring

Before diving into cleaning, it helps to understand what makes oiled flooring different.

An oil finish doesn't sit on top of the wood like a seal. Instead, it soaks into the surface, enhancing the natural grain while still allowing the wood to breathe.

This means:

- It looks more natural
- Small marks are less obvious

- It can be repaired more easily

However, it also means the surface is slightly more open, so regular maintenance is key.

3. Everyday Care

Day-to-day care is simpler than you might expect.

A quick sweep or vacuum is often all that's needed to keep dust and dirt under control. Tiny particles can act like sandpaper over time, so keeping the surface clear makes a real difference.

If you're anything like most households, a quick once-over in the evening tends to keep things feeling fresh without much effort.

4. Weekly Cleaning Routine

For a deeper clean, a weekly routine works well.

Use a **slightly damp mop**, not a wet one. This is really important. Too much water is one of the biggest causes of damage to wood flooring.

A gentle wood floor cleaner designed for oiled finishes is ideal. It will clean without stripping away the protective oils.

Always work in small sections and allow the floor to dry naturally.

5. What to Use (and What to Avoid)

Choosing the right products makes all the difference.

What to use:

- pH-neutral wood floor cleaners
- Microfibre mops
- Soft brushes or vacuum heads

What to avoid:

- Harsh chemicals
- Steam cleaners
- Excess water
- Bleach or ammonia-based products

It might be tempting to reach for strong cleaners, especially in busy homes, but gentler products will protect the finish in the long run.

6. Dealing with Spills & Stains

Spills are simply part of everyday life, especially in kitchens and living spaces.

The key is to deal with them quickly.

Blot the spill with a soft cloth rather than wiping it around. This prevents it from spreading and soaking into the wood.

For tougher marks, a specialist wood cleaner can help. The advantage of oiled flooring is that minor stains can often be treated locally without affecting the entire floor.

7. Protecting Your Floor from Damage

A few small changes can go a long way in protecting your flooring.

- Use felt pads under furniture
- Add rugs in high traffic areas
- Remove shoes at the door if possible
- Keep pet nails trimmed

It's these everyday habits that keep a floor looking beautiful over time.

8. Seasonal Changes & What to Expect

Wood naturally reacts to its environment, and oiled floors are no exception.

You may notice slight expansion in warmer months and contraction during colder periods. This is completely normal.

Keeping your home at a consistent temperature and humidity level helps minimise movement.

9. Refreshing the Oil Finish

One of the loveliest things about oiled flooring is that it can be refreshed rather than replaced.

Over time, the surface may begin to look a little dry, especially in busy areas. This is simply a sign that it needs re-oiling.

A maintenance oil can be applied to restore the finish and bring back that soft, natural look.

This is usually needed:

- Every 6–12 months in high traffic areas
- Less often in quieter rooms

10. Deep Cleaning & Restoration

Every now and then, your floor may need a deeper clean.

This involves using a specialist cleaner to remove built-up dirt before applying a fresh coat of oil.

The beauty of this process is that it revives the floor without the need for sanding in most cases.

It's a simple way to extend the life of your flooring and keep it looking its best.

11. High Traffic Areas

Hallways, kitchens, and living spaces naturally see more wear.

You might notice these areas looking slightly duller over time. This is completely normal and easy to manage with more frequent maintenance.

A quick refresh of oil in these spots can make a noticeable difference.

12. Pets, Children & Real Life

Let's be honest — floors are there to be lived on.

Whether it's muddy paws, dropped toys, or the occasional spill, oiled wood flooring is surprisingly forgiving.

Small scratches and marks often blend into the natural grain, which is part of its charm. And unlike some finishes, it can be touched up without redoing the entire floor.

13. Underfloor Heating Considerations

If your flooring is used with underfloor heating, a little extra care is helpful.

Keep temperature changes gradual and avoid sudden increases in heat. This helps prevent the wood from drying out too quickly.

Maintaining a steady environment will keep both your floor and your home comfortable.

14. Common Mistakes to Avoid

A few simple things to steer clear of:

- Using too much water
- Skipping regular cleaning
- Using the wrong cleaning products
- Ignoring signs that the floor needs re-oiling

Catching these early keeps maintenance simple and stress-free.

15. Troubleshooting

Floor looks dull:

It may just need a fresh coat of maintenance oil.

Light scratches:

Often improved with a gentle re-oil in that area.

Stains:

Treat locally with the correct cleaner and reapply oil if needed.

16. Final Thoughts

Oiled wood flooring is all about natural beauty and character. It's not meant to look perfectly uniform, and that's part of what makes it so appealing.

With a little regular care and the occasional refresh, it will continue to age beautifully, developing even more charm over time.

It's one of those finishes that truly rewards a bit of attention, without ever feeling high maintenance.

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