

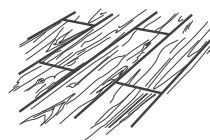
Floors

The best practice for maintaining a clean floor is to wipe up spills as they happen, sweep daily, and damp mop weekly or as needed. For spills that leave a stain, refer to the Stain Guide. Most floor waxes and wax strippers contain VOCs and other hazardous chemicals. These products should be replaced with commercial nontoxic versions, or with simple, homemade solutions (see Recipes, page 140).

Get rid of the Dustbuster and rediscover your broom. As a daily task, sweeping can provide a valuable quiet moment as well as the satisfaction of a job well done. Sweeping will also remove abrasive soil that can scratch the floor. Begin in a corner and work your way around the room's perimeter, making sure to get the baseboards. Continue sweeping toward the center, and then pick up the dust and dirt with a dustpan. (If you use a vacuum cleaner, your path should be the same.)

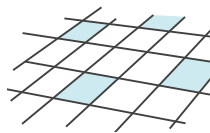
Damp mopping should be done weekly or whenever dirt or stains build up. Always sweep before damp mopping. For most floors, you can use the basic floor cleaner described in the Recipes chapter or a non-

toxic store-bought cleaner; or try a solution of a quarter cup castile soap in two gallons of warm water. If the floor is greasy, add a quarter cup vinegar. Fully soak the mop in the bucket of cleaning solution and wring it out over the sink. Mop from one end of the room to the other, without mopping yourself into a corner. Wring and resoak the mop as necessary — a dirty floor demands much more cleaning solution. If your no-wax floor looks dull, it may be soap buildup — try mopping with a solution of a half cup white vinegar in two gallons of water.



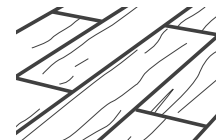
SEALED HARDWOOD FLOORS

Wood floors with polyurethane or other finishes are very low-maintenance. Don't wax these floors; just sweep and damp mop, going with the grain of the wood. Polish with a dry terry cloth if you desire a high shine.



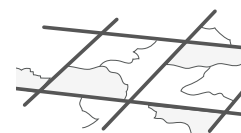
CERAMIC TILE

Don't use soap on tile floors. Instead, mop with a solution of half distilled white vinegar and half water or a nontoxic commercial floor cleaner recommended for this purpose. If it seems dull, polish with a dry terry cloth — there is no need to use any polish if you've mopped. Be especially vigilant about sweeping tile floors in the summer, when sand and dirt can get tracked in and scratch them.



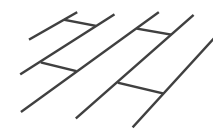
UNSEALED WOOD FLOORS

Sweep, then apply raw linseed or jojoba oil bimonthly with a mop reserved exclusively for this purpose. Let the oil sink in, then dry mop. Try to keep water away from unsealed wood.




STONE

Don't use soap here, either. Try a solution of two tablespoons washing soda in two pints water.



PAINTED WOOD FLOORS

After sweeping, damp mop weekly with highly diluted dish soap or the homemade floor cleaner described in Recipes, page 140. Don't use a cleanser containing pine oil on painted floors; it can damage the paint.

 Putting a small, rubber-backed rug in areas prone to spills and spots, like in front of the sink and stove, can save time spent cleaning floors. Launder along with your kitchen towels.