

# Hints For The Home



## Fabulous Flooring: Top Tips From The Pros

(NAPSA)—Properly caring for a floor can help keep it looking good for years to come—and help you get more enjoyment out of your home. Plus, real estate agents say well-kept floors can impress potential buyers, possibly helping to sell a home should it go on the market.

The good news is that simple things can protect floors, such as placing doormats or area rugs at each entryway to collect dirt and grit that might otherwise be tracked in.

Additionally, be sure to protect your floor by covering furniture and table legs with protectors to guard against damage when you rearrange a room. It also helps to hang window coverings that block the sun's intense midday rays. These rays can cause a floor to fade or dry out. And remember to avoid using unapproved cleaners on floors. Doing so could void manufacturer warranties.

Try these additional tips from experts at the World Floor Covering Association (WFCA). The group's Web site at [wfca.org](http://wfca.org) includes advice on caring for different types of flooring, as well as buying guides and a section that lets you send in questions to be answered by a flooring expert.

### Hardwood Floors

Hardwood floors are low maintenance, requiring little more than regular sweeping and the occasional mopping with a cleaner to handle spills, stains and scuff marks.

Also, remember that water buildup can cause wood to swell and may cause your floor to crack or splinter. Never use excessive



Photo courtesy of Shaw, Inc.

### Keeping hardwood floors well swept can help prevent scratches and scuffs.

water when you mop and consider using a dehumidifier. Additionally:

- If your floor has a urethane finish, do not wax it and only use a cleaner that won't leave a film or residue.

- If you have marks or scrapes on a waxed wood floor, try buffing them out using fine steel wool. Then apply a small amount of floor wax to even off the surface.

- Do not use ammonia cleaners or oil soaps on a wood floor, as they will dull the finish.

### Area Rugs And Carpets

Regular care will keep area rugs and carpets looking great. Clean them on a regular basis with a manufacturer's recommended solution and treat spills quickly by blotting with white paper towels or cloths. If stains don't come up, call the manufacturer. Also:

- Expose all parts of your area rugs to foot traffic to help ensure that the pile wears evenly. Rotating rugs 180 degrees every few months should help. Rotating also

helps ensure that if your floor changes color after long-term exposure to the sun's rays, it will do so evenly.

- A good carpet cushion can prevent carpet from matting and crushing. It makes vacuuming easier, by providing ventilation between the carpet and the floor.

- If you have a pull in your rug or carpet, carefully snip the yarn so it is flush with the floor.

### Vinyl Floors

You can maintain vinyl floors by sweeping or vacuuming regularly. When you do mop, use clean, warm water and a gentle, manufacturer-approved soap. Never use abrasive cleaners, paste waxes or solvents. In addition:

- Avoid using rubber-backed mats or rugs on vinyl floors. They can damage and potentially discolor it over a period of time.

- If your floor has an open seam, cut or gouge, cover them immediately and contact a vinyl floor professional to handle repairs.

### Ceramic Flooring

Ceramic tile floors should be damp-mopped regularly using the manufacturer's recommended grout and tile cleaners. For heavier soil, you can spot clean the floor with a sponge or clean cloth using the recommended cleaners. Remember:

- Never use bleach or ammonia-based cleaners on ceramic tile. These products can discolor grout if used too often.

- Ceramic tile and grout will stain if spills are left to sit too long. Try to clean up spills as quickly as possible.

For more information, visit [www.wfca.org](http://www.wfca.org).