

6 Quick-Fix Ways to easily extend the life of your floors and furnishings by up to 6 years

After purchasing your home, the investment you will make in your floors and furnishings will be the next most significant investment you make.

This guide will help you get the most from your floors and furnishings and can extend the life of your fine floors and furnishing by up to 6 years and even beyond.

Extending the life of your floors and furnishings starts before you own the items in question.

Start by carefully planning what floor coverings and furnishings will suit your home and lifestyle best.

Choose your fabrics and floor coverings carefully.

Since Art of Clean started in 2005, we have seen many homeowners asking us to restore fabrics and furnishings that are sadly chosen with no consideration for the way they will get used and if they would suit the requirements.

We all trust the guidance the salesperson gives us when we choose our floor covering or that lovely sofa.

Here are some points to consider, and fabrics that may not clean that easily.

1. Floor and fibre types
2. Fabric and flooring types – Things you must know
3. Additional steps to protect your floors
4. Cleaning products
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A. Floor and Fibre Types

The good, the bad and the ugly – things that some flooring and soft furnishing care retailers should tell you, but they do not.

A. Wood floors and wood floor types

Oak is the King of the forest and always a good place to start when choosing a new wood floor. Always consider a 2-component finish if you have the opportunity. Oak responds well to colour stains. Discuss the options with a floor sanding professional for the best solution.

Beech, Maple, Ash and Walnut are great alternatives to oak, but here are some things you need to know: Maple is best finished with lacquer as oils can give it a patchy appearance. Colour staining is not always a great option on these floors. Walnut is best darker, and giving it a light appearance will unlikely deliver a great result.

Pine is often found in older properties. In some cases, it restores well if it is the correct type of pine. Modern soft white pine is not an outstanding final floor covering and is usually intended as a subfloor. Pitch Pine or similar will respond well to oil or lacquer finishes. Oil finishes will enhance the orange look in pine floors, and some people do not like that look.

Consider a lacquer finish to tone down the orange look. A product like Pallmann Pall x Pure can be a great product to achieve this.

Exotic Timbers usually show deep dark coloured wood floors are usually the indicator of exotic timbers. Exotic timber can, in most cases, contain oils and can also be very dense. In most cases, pre-testing of lacquers or oils will be required before the whole floor can be re-finished. Watch out for flooring contractors who skip testing your floor.

Engineered wood floors VS solid wood floors.

All wood has a wear layer – This is the total depth of the block if it is a square edge block floor or the depth of the wood layer above the tongue and groove for T&G blocks or planks. You cannot usually sand further down than this depth. Consider how many years you wish to get from a floor. With a 3mm wear layer of a tongue and groove plank floor, you can probably get one or maybe two sands from the floor. On a 6 mm wear layer, you can sand up to 4 times or even more.

The above information explains why it is essential to get the right firm to sand and finish your floor in the best and most gentle way possible.

Avoid installing wood floors in:



Busy kitchens – If you install a wood floor in a kitchen, consider a robust aftercare plan and a commercial-grade, 2 component protective coating.

Bathrooms - If you install a wood floor in a bathroom – think again and if you MUST, then consider a robust aftercare plan and a commercial-grade 2 component protective coating. Look at Luxury vinyl tiles as an alternative to wood floors. Check www.artofflooring.co.uk

B. LVT (Luxury Vinyl Tile) and floor types

LVT comes in many shapes, sizes, and brands.

Click together LVT and glue down LVT. In areas where there may likely be a high volume of water like a bathroom, click-together LVT may not be as suitable as a glue-down version due to water that can still get in between the grooves and even under the tile.

Dressing or no dressing:

LVT can significantly benefit from having a dressing applied to give it a protective coating. It will act as a sacrificial coating to absorb the scuffs and light scratches to strip the coat later away and apply a fresh dress coat. In lower use areas, you may opt not to get a dressing applied. Some people choose to apply a dressing a few years later to give the floor a refreshed look though if the scratches are deep, you will not hide them with a dressing.

Wear layer thickness:

Choose your LVT carefully as some have a thicker coat, also known as a wear layer, and some have a much thinner wear layer. The thicker the coat, the more likely you have better protection to your floor though it also depends on the quality of the LVT and the manufacturing process.



Avoid installing LVT floors in:



LVT can be highly versatile, and we cannot think of a place to avoid LVT in, though the following can be good to know:

LVT can be a bit noisier underfoot and a touch cooler. Extreme temperatures or constant direct sunlight is not suitable for any floor and so too not for LVT.

C. Carpet and soft furnishings

Carpets tufted, woven, cut pile, loop pile, velvet twist – upholstery cotton velvet, chenille, draylon, alkentata... there are endless options.

Things to consider when it comes to Carpet:

Is the carpet suitable for stairs?

Always invest a bit more in underlay and a little less in the carpet than the other way around. This gives the new carpet a great supporting layer and prevents it from wearing out prematurely.

Wool VS Synthetic:

Wool is more sustainable and stands upright longer due to the natural spring or crimp in the fibres. Watch out for long pile polypropylene carpets on busy floors. It will soon look less attractive.

Things to consider when it comes to upholstery:

Watch out for cotton velvet or rayon as it can easily mark with moisture. Dry vacuuming will keep fabrics in good shape for a long time. If it is a moisture-sensitive fabric it will greatly benefit from having a fabric protector applied.

Consider a throw to protect the sofa.

Watch out for dye transfer from garments like jeans onto light coloured sofa fabrics.

Buttons on trousers and other garments can damage your sofa fabric.



Avoid installing carpet floors in:



Though it is not the norm any longer and for hygienic reasons, carpets in the bathroom or toilet are not a good idea. Carpet in the kitchen is also not a great idea though this can be achieved if you consider Flotex Carpet for the kitchen or the bathroom, especially to achieve a softer floor for safety reasons.

To protect or not to protect:

Fabric protector is sadly totally oversold in some cases and not even considered in other cases.

Consider the following before getting floors or fabrics protected:

- Fabric Protector (sometimes referred to as Scotch Guard) can be a good choice in the following situations.
- High-use carpets and soft furnishings.
- Sensitive fabrics like rayon, viscose or silk and others.
- Fabric protectors on non-absorbent fibres like Polypropylene offer reduced protection though they can still protect against oily spills.
- For best results, it is wise to re-apply fabric protector after every other clean and more often on high use floor or furnishing.

D. Stone and tile floors

Stone floors and man-made tiled floors easily get confused and do not always get the appropriate treatment to suit the floor type.

Like with other hard floor types avoid dry soil as it will wear the floor out much faster.

Things to consider when it comes to tile and stone floors:

- Avoid acidic cleaners or acidic spills – calcium-rich floors like marble, limestone and travertine will etch when exposed to an acid. This can include Lemon juice, coffee, wine, and some toilet cleaners.
- Use an appropriate stone floor cleaner.
- Make sure you use a clean mop and bucket – though this sounds obvious it is sadly the case that worn-out mop heads are to blame for a badly maintained floor.



2. Fabric and Flooring Types – Things you must know.

A. Soft furnishings, rugs, and carpets

Rayon or Viscose can be extremely sensitive to moisture and can easily distort. Cleaning this type of fabric can be very challenging, and it is very likely the fabric will not look the same after cleaning, especially if it gets left to re-soil before the item gets cleaned. Avoid this type of fabric in high use areas. Avoid wet cleaning unless carried out by a professional. Note that stain removal from these types of fibres can be very limiting in results.

Silk – Just like Rayon and Viscose – Silk is a delicate fabric though it is extremely strong. Avoid using silk fabrics or flooring in busy living areas. Avoid wet cleaning unless carried out by a professional.

Plant fibre fabrics - sisal – sisal or similar fabric types can not be wet cleaned as it can cause shrinkage or watermarking. Consider this carefully before installing this flooring and get advice from your flooring retailer.

If you still feel unsure, please call us to discuss your options on 01223 863632.

3. Additional Steps to Protect Your Floors

A. Furniture legs damaging floors

Consider the strain of furniture legs on flooring when the furniture gets moved. Install felt pad protectors on furniture legs resting on hard floors like wood, tile, stone, and LVT (Vinyl).



Plastic sliders can be installed under furniture legs that rest on carpet or other soft floors. Find some here: www.artofclean.co.uk/shop

B. Walk off mats

Grit and dry soil tracked in from outside will wear your floor out very fast. We advise a larger clean and secure walk-off mat at all entrances to your home.

4. Cleaning Products

Use suitable cleaning products from a reputable manufacturer. Good cleaning products may sometimes cost a little more, but they will be kind on your floor. Always test in an inconspicuous area before you use a product for the first time.

We advise the following cleaning products:

A. Wood floors

Pallmann is our go-to brand – Pallmann Natural Clean is a great cleaner - www.artofclean.co.uk/shop



Other wood floor cleaners that are also great options include Bona, Treatex and Junkers.

B. Luxury vinyl tile

A great Cleaning product is <https://drschutz.co.uk/>
Find Art of Clean's neutral floor cleaner here - www.artofclean.co.uk/shop



C. Stone and tile floors

Find Art of Clean's neutral floor cleaner here - www.artofclean.co.uk/shop

D. Carpets, rugs, and upholstery

Neutral spot cleaners or spot cleaners that self-neutralise is always a good choice.

Avoid spot cleaners containing bleach or an "oxi" in their name or on the bottle – This can indicate it is bleach or contains bleach.

This is a good product for everyday stain removal - www.artofclean.co.uk/shop



TOP TIP: Always follow dilution rates as on the product packaging. Under dilution may make the product too strong, and this may harm the finish on your floor. Under dilution may leave a dirty floor behind. Streaky floors after cleaning or footprints appearing soon after cleaning may indicate over dilution of the cleaning product.

5. Different Types of Cleaning

A. Dry soil removal

Removing dry soil can significantly reduce sandy soil's aggressive nature, cutting and wearing away your lovely floors and furnishings. Have a good-size walk off matt at every door (inside and out) if you have a gravel drive/path. The sandy soil will get tracked in and wear any floor out prematurely. Dry soil removal includes – vacuuming carpets, rugs, and upholstery regularly. Sweep/dust mop your hard floors often. The best vacuum cleaner for carpets is an upright vacuum cleaner with a beater bar. The best way to vacuum your upholstery would be by using a Power-brush head attachment to your vacuum cleaner. Avoid vacuuming the fringes of your rugs using an upright vacuum – The best way to vacuum your rugs would be to turn them upside down on a hard floor and vacuum the back first with a good upright vacuum cleaner with a beater bar. Turn the rug over on to a clean floor area and vacuum the front of the rug – always avoid vacuuming the fringe.

B. Maintenance clean

This means you address light soiling or marks soon after they happen. An example would be a coffee spill on your carpet. Leaving this for an extended period will make it very hard, if not impossible, to remove later. Watch out for old, dirty, worn-out mop heads when carrying out cleaning to vinyl, tile, stone, or wood floors. Dirty mop heads can spread dirt around, and worn-out mop heads are not effective in delivering a tremendous clean floor.

C. Deep clean

Once your floor and furnishings get to a stage of showing higher levels of soiling, a deep clean will be required. Having a regular deep clean routine will help to extend the life of your floors and furnishings significantly.



6. Pet and Insect Damage



A. Pets on wood floors

Choose an oil finish if possible as it allows more grip from the pet paws on the floor. In some cases, this may not be possible – speak to your floor restoration pro for guidance.

Pet accidents on rugs laying on wood floors – keep an eye out for pets going to the loo on the rug and the wet rug laying on the wood floor. We have seen many lovely wood floors with bad black marks after the homeowner did not move the rug for a long while, only to discover urine marks that cannot be totally removed.

B. Insects and wood floors

Watch out for woodworm.

Old pine floors will many times show old woodworm tunnels. In many cases, these are now inactive. You will see tiny heaps of dust, and below it, a small hole in the floor – that is active woodworm, and your floors will need urgent professional treatment. Remember – old woodworm damage may look even worse after sanding as it exposes more of the tunnels.

C. Pets on carpets and soft furnishings

Watch out for loop pile carpets if you have pets. Claws can easily get trapped in the loops, and it can cause damage to the carpet. Consider a cut pile carpet instead. Pet accidents on carpets need treatment soon after it happens otherwise, it may discolour the carpet. Soak up as much as you can and dilute down by using water and 5% white vinegar. Post treat with a sanitiser spray. Call a professional if you are not sure.

D. Insects, carpets, and soft furnishings



Watch out for carpet moth.

Synthetic carpets could be an option if you had issues with insects in the past. Move furniture and vacuum often. Identify moths early by using moth traps.

Do not store rugs in a dirty state. Take rugs from storage every 3 – 6 months, give them a good vacuum and place them back in storage. Have moth repellent applied if possible.