

The
Hardwood
Owner's Manual

How to clean, protect, and extend the life
of your hardwood floors — for decades.

VOLUME

I

PAGES

Seventeen

You made a *great investment.*

Brazilian hardwood is one of the most durable and beautiful flooring materials in the world.

But only when maintained correctly. The wrong cleaner, a season of ignored humidity swings, or one overlooked scratch can age your floor by a decade.

This guide gives you everything you need to keep your floor looking the way it did on installation day.

The Akafloor Team

The Akafloor Team · Newark, NJ

What you *will learn.*

- 01 **Know your floor**
Solid versus engineered · Species guide

- 02 **The cleaning routine**
Daily, weekly, monthly · What never to use

- 03 **Protection & prevention**
Humidity · Furniture · Sunlight

- 04 **Minor repairs at home**
Scratches · Stains · Radiant heat

- 05 **Refinishing & renewal**
When to refinish · When to replace

Solid or *engineered?*

The answer changes your entire care routine. Most floor damage begins with one question never asked.

TYPE ONE

Solid *hardwood*

A single piece of wood, top to bottom. It expands and contracts with seasonal humidity. Can be sanded and refinished five to eight times across its life.

Best for nail-down installations over wood subfloor. Avoid in basements or directly over concrete.

TYPE TWO

Engineered *hardwood*

A real wood veneer bonded to multiple stable layers below. Handles humidity and temperature variation better than solid. Typically refinishes once or twice.

Best for concrete slabs, radiant heat systems, basements, and any space with seasonal humidity changes.

IF YOU'RE NOT SURE WHICH YOU HAVE

Lift a vent cover and look at the side of an exposed plank. If you see layered construction, it's engineered. If the grain runs uniformly top to bottom, it's solid.

Six species, *six personalities.*

Each Brazilian species has its own density, oils, and ageing behaviour. Know yours.

01 Brazilian Cherry

HARDNESS 2,350 JANKA

One of the hardest commercial floors. Resists dents naturally. Reddens and deepens with UV — this is the signature ageing pattern.

02 Brazilian Walnut

HARDNESS 3,684 JANKA · ALSO IPÉ

Extremely dense, highly scratch-resistant. Use a barely damp mop only. Avoid silicone-based products.

03 Tigerwood

HARDNESS 1,850 JANKA

Distinctive striped grain. Avoid excess water — it raises the grain. Daily dust mopping in high-traffic zones.

04 Brazilian Oak

HARDNESS 3,684 JANKA · ENGINEERED

The most forgiving with humidity swings. Suitable for kitchens, basements, and over concrete subfloors.

05 Brazilian Teak

HARDNESS 3,540 JANKA · CUMARU

Natural oil content makes it resilient. Silicone cleaners seal the pores — never use them.

06 Golden Teak

HARDNESS 1,450 JANKA

Warm amber tone, ages gracefully. Protect from direct afternoon UV — prolonged exposure intensifies colour shift.

Ten minutes *a week.*

The right routine is short, specific, and entirely unfussy.

EVERY DAY

Dry microfiber dust mop.

Removes the fine grit that acts like sandpaper under foot traffic — the leading cause of premature scratching. Two minutes, no more.

EVERY WEEK

Damp mop with Bona Hardwood Floor Cleaner.

Wring the mop nearly dry. The floor should be visibly dry within sixty seconds of mopping. Standing moisture is the enemy.

EVERY MONTH

Inspect the finish in natural light.

Look for dull patches, micro-scratches, or worn zones near doorways. Catching wear early prevents costly full refinishing.

Five things *that destroy floors.*

Avoid these, and you have already done eighty per cent of the work.

01 **Steam mops**

Steam penetrates the finish and swells the wood fibres underneath. The damage is permanent.

02 **Vinegar and ammonia-based cleaners**

They strip and cloud the finish over time, including many 'natural' DIY formulas.

03 **Oil soaps such as Murphy's or Pine-Sol**

They leave residue that builds up, dulls the floor, and attracts more dirt over time.

04 **Wet mopping or standing water**

Brazilian hardwood is dense, but prolonged moisture seeps into seams and causes warping.

05 **Bleach and abrasive scrubbers**

Bleach strips colour instantly. Abrasive pads leave a haze of micro-scratches across the entire surface.

Humidity is *the first enemy.*

Wood expands when humidity rises and contracts when it falls. Over time, extreme swings cause cupping, gapping, and squeaking that no cleaner can fix.



- TARGET** Maintain indoor humidity between 35 and 55 per cent, year-round. A digital hygrometer (\$20–25) is the cheapest insurance your floor has.
- WINTER** Forced-air heat can drop humidity below 20 per cent. A humidifier keeps it above 35 from November through March.
- SUMMER** Air conditioning manages humidity well. When away for extended periods, keep AC running rather than off entirely.
- QUICK TEST** Gaps opening in winter mean humidity is too low. Raised or cupped planks mean too high.

Most scratches come from *furniture.*

Not from walking. From what sits, slides, and presses.

01 Felt pads

Under every chair, table, and sofa leg. Replace every six to twelve months — trapped grit turns old felt into an abrasive.

02 Area rugs

Use rugs in hallways, kitchen entries, and in front of sofas. The pad must be hardwood-safe — rubber-backed rugs trap moisture and discolour the finish.

03 Moving furniture

Never drag. Lift and place, or use sliders designed for hardwood. A single drag can mark the floor end to end.

04 High heels

Stiletto heels concentrate up to 8,000 pounds per square inch — enough to dent even the hardest Brazilian species.

05 Pet nails

Keep them trimmed. Large dogs with long nails cause cumulative surface scratching that drives premature refinishing.

Sunlight changes *your floor.*

Brazilian Cherry, Tigerwood, and Golden Teak deepen with UV exposure. This is natural – and often beautiful. The problem is uneven exposure, which leaves visible colour lines wherever rugs or furniture block the light.

Rotate area rugs

Move them every six to twelve months so the entire floor patinates evenly. Prevents the hard colour-line that appears when a rug is finally removed.

UV-filtering window film

Apply to windows receiving direct afternoon sun. \$30–60 per window. Significantly reduces colour shift without blocking light.

Plan for the patina

A Brazilian Cherry floor installed today will look richer and more amber in five years. Furnish with the aged colour in mind, not the install-day colour.

Note on Ipê

Brazilian Walnut lightens slightly under UV rather than darkening. This is also normal and stabilises within one to two years.

Surface scratches are fixable in *fifteen minutes.*

LEVEL · LIGHT

Surface scratch — doesn't catch your fingernail

Clean the area with a damp cloth and let dry. Apply a hardwood touch-up marker in the closest match (\$10). Buff gently with a soft cloth.

LEVEL · MODERATE

Light scratch — slightly catches your fingernail

Use a hardwood scratch repair kit with blending pencils and wax fill stick. Fill, blend, then apply a thin coat of hardwood polish to seal.

LEVEL · DEEP

Visible gouge — noticeably catches your fingernail

Stop. This requires a professional. DIY repairs on deep damage almost always make it more visible. Call a refinishing specialist for assessment.

Stain protocol.

Act fast.

The rule: blot, never rub. Rubbing drives the stain deeper.

01 Water or liquid

Blot dry immediately. Let the area dry fully. If a white haze remains, buff lightly with Bona cleaner on a soft cloth.

02 Oil or grease

Apply a small amount of dish soap on a barely damp cloth. Work from outside the stain inward. Rinse, then dry immediately.

03 Wine or coffee

Blot, do not rub. Clean with hardwood floor cleaner on a soft cloth. A touch-up marker handles any faint remaining tone.

04 Wet paint

Wipe immediately with a damp cloth. For dried latex paint, soften with a damp cloth and remove with a plastic — not metal — scraper.

05 Pet accidents

Blot and clean immediately. Use an enzyme-based pet cleaner. Prolonged exposure stains permanently and can swell the wood.

06 Candle wax

Let it harden first (use an ice pack to speed this). Gently scrape with a plastic scraper. Remove residue with hardwood cleaner.

Radiant heat *and slab installs.*

If your Brazilian Oak engineered floor was installed over radiant heat or a concrete slab, a few additional rules keep it performing as it should.

Surface temperature

Keep the radiant floor surface below 80°F (27°C). Higher temperatures cause accelerated contraction and can open seam gaps permanently.

Gradual warm-up

At the start of heating season, raise the radiant temperature gradually over one to two weeks. A sudden 60°F to 75°F jump can shock the wood.

Humidity stays essential

Radiant heat dries air faster than forced-air systems. A humidifier is non-negotiable. Maintain 40–50% minimum during winter.

Never rugs over vents

Heat buildup under a rug on radiant flooring causes localised cupping that does not reverse. Keep vents and warm zones uncovered.

Slab moisture

Cupping that worsens in warm months may indicate a slab moisture-barrier issue. Have it assessed by a professional rather than treating the symptom.

Your floor can *last a century.*

With proper care, Brazilian hardwood needs refinishing every seven to fifteen years. Brazilian Cherry and Walnut can go longer still – they are among the hardest woods on earth.

Refinishing removes the worn finish layer (and sometimes a thin layer of wood) to reveal fresh material beneath. Done correctly, it returns the floor to install-day condition.

Signs it is time to refinish.

- Finish appears dull or worn even immediately after cleaning
- Water no longer beads on the surface – it soaks in
- Grey or black water staining visible inside the wood grain
- Overall colour uneven from years of partial UV exposure
- New squeaking or movement (subfloor-related)

SOLID HARDWOOD

5–8×

Lifetime refinishes

ENGINEERED

1–2×

Depending on veneer depth

The cheat sheet.

One page, everything.

ALWAYS DO

- Dry microfibre mop daily
- Damp mop weekly with Bona
- Felt pads under all furniture
- Humidity at 35–55%
- Area rugs in high-traffic zones
- Blot spills immediately
- UV film on sunny windows
- Rotate rugs twice a year
- Inspect finish monthly
- Trim pet nails regularly

NEVER DO

- Steam mop – ever
- Vinegar or ammonia cleaners
- Oil soap (Murphy's, Pine-Sol)
- Wet mop or standing water
- Drag furniture across floor
- Rubber-backed rugs
- Ignore humidity in winter
- Bleach or abrasive scrubbers
- Silicone products on Teak
- DIY on deep gouges

Print this page and keep it with your cleaning supplies.

The only things *you need.*

A complete care kit, top to bottom, runs about \$80–120. Buy once, use for years.

EVERYDAY CLEANER

- 01 **Bona Hardwood Floor Cleaner**
pH-neutral, finish-safe. The industry standard, widely available.

DUST MOP

- 02 **Bona Microfibre Dusting Pad**
Picks up grit without scratching. Washable. Keep two on rotation.

SCRATCH REPAIR

- 03 **Minwax marker + Rejuvenate kit**
Covers light to medium scratches in most Brazilian tones.

HUMIDITY MONITOR

- 04 **Govee or ThermoPro hygrometer**
One per hardwood room. The cheapest insurance your floor has.

ANNUAL POLISH

- 05 **Bona Hardwood Floor Polish**
Restores sheen and adds a protective layer. Use once or twice a year.

PET STAINS

- 06 **Rocco & Roxie Enzyme Cleaner**
Safe for hardwood finishes. Breaks down organic matter without bleaching.

If you ever need more *floor* — we have it.

Same Brazilian species. Newark warehouse.

Delivery in 24 to 72 hours.

Quotes returned in twenty minutes.

TO REACH US

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