

real wood
Real Life

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE NATIONAL
WOOD FLOORING ASSOCIATION



The
HOMEOWNER'S HANDBOOK
to Real Wood Floors

Photo by Jaroslaw Ceborski



EVERY WOOD FLOOR HAS A STORY. WHAT WILL YOURS BE?

Home is where real life happens. From the day you move in until you hand over the keys, you need a real surface that can handle your family's big and small moments. Learn why wood is the only flooring that can truly last for the life of your home.

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A full-page photograph of a bride and groom dancing in a living room. The groom, with a beard, wears a navy blue suit and brown shoes. The bride wears a white lace gown. They are on a light-colored wood plank floor. In the background, there is a light-colored sectional sofa with gold and blue pillows, a large shaggy rug, and a piano. The text "SAY 'I DO' TO THE FLOOR OF YOUR DREAMS" is overlaid in the top right corner.

SAY "I DO" TO
THE FLOOR OF
YOUR DREAMS



2/3

Two-thirds of homeowners
say they want hardwood floors
in their dream home.



Wood floors add natural beauty and timeless style to any décor. Whether your home is traditional or contemporary, brand new or centuries old, wood floors offer endless design possibilities and make it easy to fit your home's needs and personal style.

REAL WOOD. REAL LIFE.

To help you identify the real thing, the National Wood Flooring Association (NWFA) recently developed a formal definition of wood flooring, along with a corresponding “Real Wood. Real Life.” logo for its members to use with real wood products. The definition states that wood flooring contains real wood as the top-most, wearable surface of the floor. That includes solid and engineered wood flooring, as well as composite engineered wood flooring, which has real wood on the wearable surface.

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Flooring Association

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SPECIES SELECTION

Choosing the right species of wood flooring is a matter of your lifestyle, budget, and personal preference. More than 50 domestic and imported species of wood flooring are available to achieve a unique look. As a general rule, light woods make a room appear more open and airy, medium woods make a room feel warm and cozy, and dark woods make a room feel stately and refined. View the options at [woodfloors.org/species-gallery](https://www.woodfloors.org/species-gallery).

TOY CARS, ACTION FIGURES...

WITH WOOD FLOORS, IT'S NO BIG DEAL.



Each species of hardwood has a different level of hardness. Some common domestic species like walnut, cherry, and birch are less hard in comparison to other common domestic species like maple, hickory, and oak.

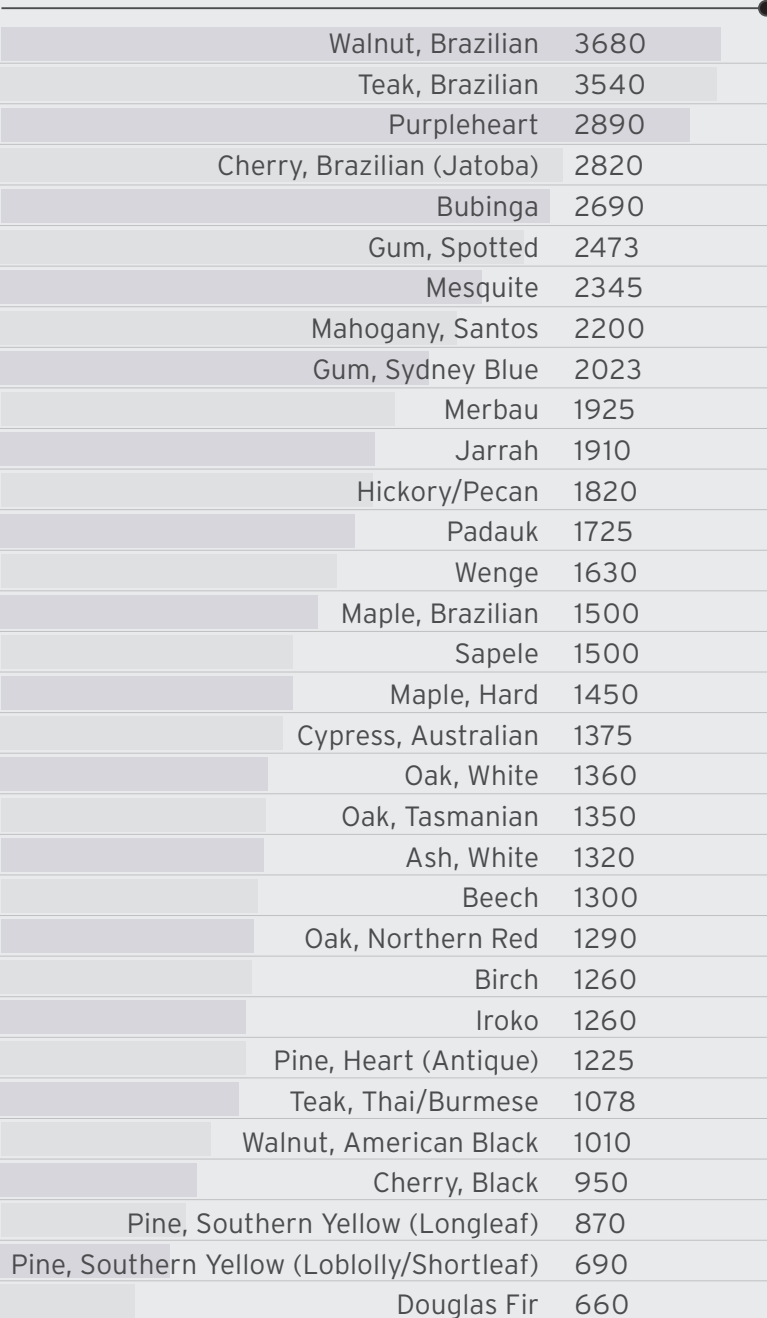
The hardness of solid wood is measured according to a system called the Janka Scale. The Janka Scale gives a good indication of how well a wood species can be expected to withstand dents and dings. The scale is determined by the amount of pound-force required to push a .444-inch diameter steel ball halfway into the wood.

Ratings for both domestic and imported species are included in the scale; however, none of these values apply to engineered wood flooring. While Janka values give a general sense of how hard solid wood is, other factors also contribute to the durability of wood as well. This can include things like how the wood is cut and the finish that is applied to the wood.



HARDNESS (JANKA) SCALE

HARDEST



Walnut, Brazilian	3680
Teak, Brazilian	3540
Purpleheart	2890
Cherry, Brazilian (Jatoba)	2820
Bubinga	2690
Gum, Spotted	2473
Mesquite	2345
Mahogany, Santos	2200
Gum, Sydney Blue	2023
Merbau	1925
Jarrah	1910
Hickory/Pecan	1820
Padauk	1725
Wenge	1630
Maple, Brazilian	1500
Sapele	1500
Maple, Hard	1450
Cypress, Australian	1375
Oak, White	1360
Oak, Tasmanian	1350
Ash, White	1320
Beech	1300
Oak, Northern Red	1290
Birch	1260
Iroko	1260
Pine, Heart (Antique)	1225
Teak, Thai/Burmese	1078
Walnut, American Black	1010
Cherry, Black	950
Pine, Southern Yellow (Longleaf)	870
Pine, Southern Yellow (Loblolly/Shortleaf)	690
Douglas Fir	660

CHOOSE A STYLE



SITE-FINISHED OR FACTORY-FINISHED?

A site finish is applied at the home, in the room where the flooring is being installed. This offers the most customization, but requires drying time during which you will not be able to walk on the floor.

With factory-finished wood floors, the finish is applied at the factory, long before it reaches your home. While it offers the least customization, you will be able to walk on the floors immediately after installation.



SOLID OR ENGINEERED?

Solid wood flooring is made of one piece of wood from top to bottom and can be used in any room that is on or above ground. One of the many benefits of solid wood flooring is it can be sanded and refinished many times.

Engineered wood floors are made using multiple layers, but include a top layer made of high-quality wood. Because engineered wood floors expand and contract less than solid wood flooring, they are ideal for any level, including basement installations. While this type of flooring usually can be sanded and refinished, it cannot always be done as many times as solid wood flooring.



BigStockPhoto ©

GLOSSY OR MATTE?

The sheen of your wood floor is a matter of personal preference. Gloss finishes offer the most shine and reflect the most light. Semi-gloss finishes offer some shine and reflect some light. Satin finishes offer low shine and reflect minimal light. Matte finishes offer the least shine and reflect the least light —natural oils have similar characteristics. The less sheen, the less you will notice small scratches and other normal wear.



Photo by Naomi Hebert

STRIP, PLANK, PARQUET, OR END GRAIN?

Hardwood floors are manufactured in four styles: strip, plank, parquet and end grain. Each style is available in a variety of species, colors, and widths, so choosing the right one is a matter of preference. Strip flooring is less than 3" wide and often makes a room appear larger. Plank flooring is 3" or wider and often creates a more casual look. Parquet flooring varies in size and generates a geometric, non-linear look. End grain flooring has a unique visual element as the wood's grain is visible and upward facing. Check out these options at woodfloors.org/types.





WOOD FLOORING CHECKLIST

TYPE: ☐ Solid ☐ Engineered

STYLE: ☐ Strip ☐ Plank

COLOR: ☐ Light ☐ Medium
☐ Dark ☐ Brilliant

ORIGIN: ☐ Domestic ☐ Imported

SPECIES: _____

FINISH METHOD:

☐ Jobsite ☐ Factory-finished

FINISH TYPE:

☐ Natural Oil ☐ Oil-based ☐ Solvent-based
☐ Water-based ☐ Wax

SHEEN: ☐ Gloss ☐ Semi-Gloss
☐ Satin ☐ Matte

NOTES: _____



A HEALTHY CHOICE

You probably think a lot about whether the food you eat is safe. But how safe is the flooring surface in your home? Wood floors improve indoor air quality. They don't harbor allergens, microorganisms, or harmful pesticides that can be tracked in from outdoors. Mold, dust, and animal dander are minimal as well, which makes wood floors a healthy option for your little one's first steps and beyond.





PAWS AND CLAWS?

NO PROBLEM!



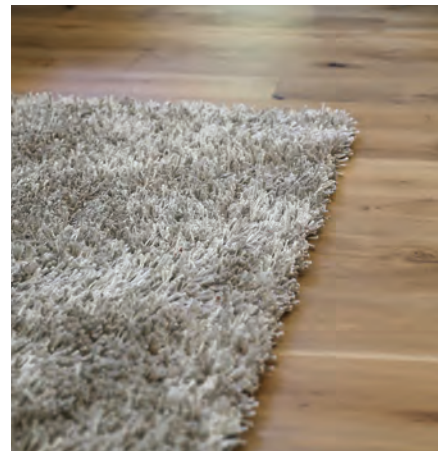
Today's wood floors are designed to withstand the traffic of busy families, including man's best friend. Wood floors are extremely durable and can look beautiful for decades.

If you have pets in the home, placing breathable rugs at all doors will minimize dirt and debris from being tracked inside and help protect your floor from scratches. Trim pets' nails regularly, while understanding that scratches can happen. Some say scratches add charm and character to a floor and the story of its life. These are usually in the floor finish surface only and easy to repair.



Maintenance Tip #1

Wipe up spills immediately with a slightly dampened cloth.



Maintenance Tip #2

Use breathable throw rugs at doorways to help prevent debris from being tracked in and scratching the floor.



WHEN LIFE GETS MESSY

YOU NEED A FLOOR THAT'S EASY TO CLEAN

With kids around, it can seem as though floors are a magnet for spilled food and drinks. Rest assured, wood floor maintenance is quick and easy. Routine cleaning involves sweeping, dust mopping, or vacuuming using the bare floor setting to remove dust and dirt. Clean spills immediately with a dry or slightly damp cloth. Don't use wet mops or steam mops, which can damage the finish and the wood over long periods of time.



Maintenance Tip #3

Sweep with a soft bristle broom or dry microfiber mop. A wet mop and steam mop are not recommended because water and steam can damage the finish and the wood.



Maintenance Tip #4

Follow a regular cleaning schedule to ensure a better performance of the floor. Sweep or dust mop as needed, vacuum weekly using the bare floor setting, and clean with the appropriate wood floor cleaner monthly.

Maintenance Tip #5

Use a humidifier throughout the winter months to minimize gaps between the floor boards.



Maintenance Tip #6

Ask a wood flooring professional for a recommended maintenance schedule. Schedules vary depending on use, finish wear and tear, and lifestyle.



AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION

To avoid scratches, put floor protector pads on the bottoms of the legs of any furniture that comes in direct contact with your floors. Avoid walking on floors with sports cleats or high-heeled shoes. But even if despite your best efforts, the floor becomes a toy car racetrack or dance floor, issues can usually be repaired.

When the floor begins to look a little dull, only use products recommended by your contractor, flooring manufacturer, or finish manufacturer. Using the wrong type of cleaning product could damage the finish and possibly the wood.

Wood is a natural product that responds to its environment. During winter months when heating systems are running, wood floors will shrink, resulting in gaps between floor boards. When humidity is higher in the summer, wood floors swell. This is a normal reaction that occurs from season to season, but it can be minimized by keeping your home between 60-80 degrees Fahrenheit and 30-50 percent humidity all year.



Maintenance Tip #7

Ask a professional if your wood floor could use a new coat of finish. Most scratches in wood flooring will occur in the finish, not the wood itself. A professional may be able to lightly abrade the finish and apply a new coat to restore the floor.

MAINTAINING YOUR LUSTER

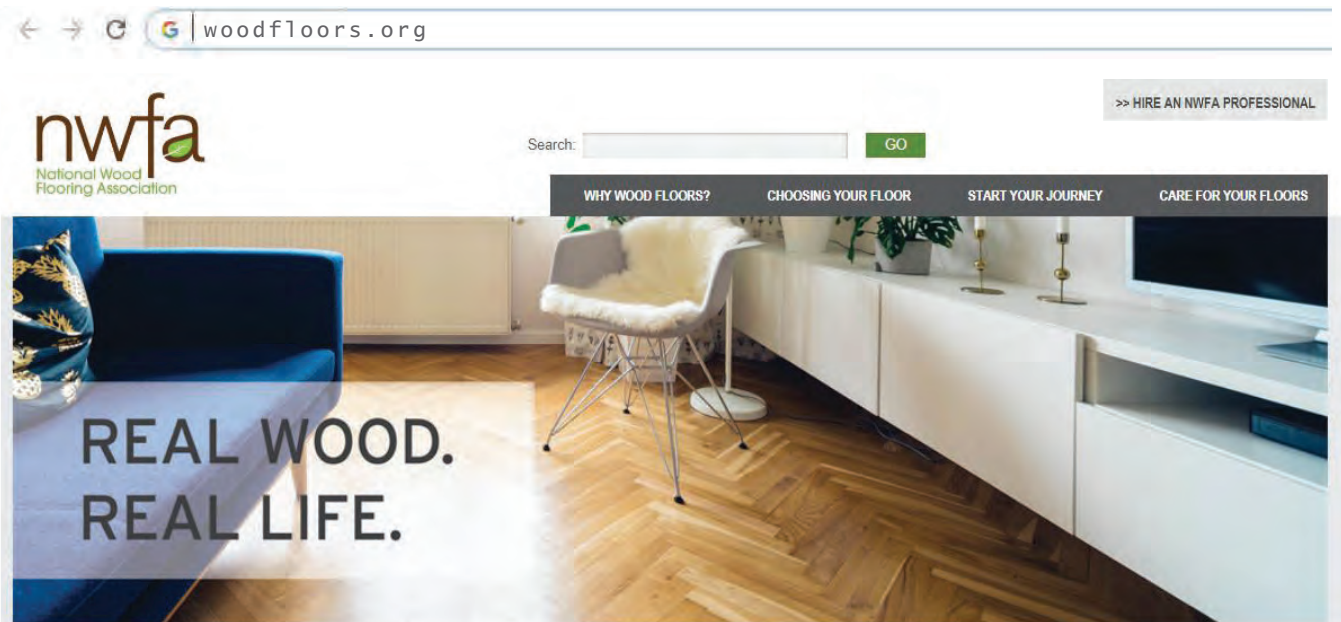
Over time, when your wood floors start to look a little dull, they can be renewed through recoating. This involves applying new finish to renew luster. To keep wood floors looking and performing well for generations, periodic recoating of your floors is all that's necessary. Individual maintenance schedules will vary depending on finish, wear and tear, and lifestyle.

Maintenance Tip #8

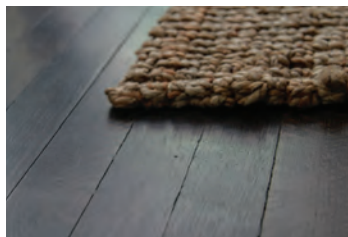
Consider new finish options to give an updated look and style. There are wood floors in excess of 300 years old that are still in service today, but have gone through numerous style changes.



NEED MORE DETAILS ABOUT WOOD FLOORS?



WHY WOOD FLOORS



CHOOSE YOUR FLOOR



CARE FOR YOUR FLOOR

visit woodfloors.org

FIND INFORMATION ABOUT:

- Durability
- Health Benefits
- Environmental Benefits
- Added Home Value
- Types of Flooring
- Types of Finish
- Understanding the Buying Process
- Maintenance
- Problem Prevention
- Refinishing Your Floors
- Who is the NWFA?
- Why Hire an NWFA Professional?

SUSTAINABLE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Wood floors are the most environmentally friendly flooring option available.





Trees are a renewable resource that can be regrown time and time again. The hardwood forests that provide flooring products are growing more than twice as fast as they are being harvested.

Because wood floors can last for many generations, they require fewer raw materials – and produce less landfill waste – than other flooring options.

Wood also stores carbon during its service life and can ultimately be recycled for other uses or burned as fuel.

Did You Know?

If refinishing is not an option, you can recycle your floors and install a new product knowing that the annual growth of hardwood trees is greater than the average removal.



MAKEOVERS ARE EASY WITH A PRO

It's easy to transform the look of your wood floors by sanding and refinishing them. You'll want a wood flooring professional who has the knowledge and skills to do the job right. The NWFA is dedicated to educating wood flooring professionals in the installation, sanding, finishing, inspection, and sale of wood flooring products.

Find one in your area at

woodfloors.org/find-a-professional



Photos courtesy of Joni and Joe Rocco

LOOK FOR NWFA LOGOS OF CERTIFICATION



HIRE WITH ASSURANCE



Maintenance Tip #9

To prolong the life of your floor, put your trust in an NWFA Certified Professional. These individuals set themselves apart from their competition by attending training and earning certifications through the NWFA. Certification validates industry knowledge and expertise, and recognizes individuals as experts in their field.

SOLD! YOU'LL BE FLOORED AT THE VALUE.



When the time comes to buy a bigger home, or to downsize, homes with wood floors sell faster and for more money than homes without them. Real estate agents indicate that identical homes with wood floors can sell for up to 10 percent more. When maintained properly, wood floors can last generations, providing a great long-term value.



80%

Eighty percent of homeowners believe that wood floors add the most value to their home.



READY TO FIND YOUR FLOOR?

— FOLLOW THIS STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE! —

- 01 Determine where in your house you'd like to have wood flooring.
- 02 Establish a general budget range and desired timing for the project.
- 03 Find a professional to help with selecting/ordering product and installation.
- 04 Choose the type of flooring, design requirements, and colors that are necessary for your project.
- 05 Plan a time to have the work completed.
- 06 Discuss maintenance requirements with your flooring professional.
- 07 Enjoy your beautiful new wood floors.

ADDITIONAL TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Explore design
possibilities with
wood floors



[PINTEREST.COM/NWFA_HFM](https://www.pinterest.com/NWFA_HFM)

NATIONAL WOOD FLOORING ASSOCIATION

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