

SCIENTIFIC PAPER

When moisture is a critical factor

Proper cleaning and care of wooden and laminate flooring

Wooden and laminate flooring is popular because it is visually appealing and with proper care lasts for a long time. But what is important for maintenance, intermediate and deep cleaning? In respect of both floor coverings moisture can quickly cause damage: even sealed wood is not protected forever because in winter dry air leads to a loss of moisture, which causes cracks in the sealing. Today the moisture-sensitive edges of laminate are often water-repellent. But during the installation the wooden boards are cut so that the edges are exposed again and water can penetrate. Why dust-trapping wiping in combination with selective wet wiping is often adequate on a daily basis, what scrubber driers can do and when cleaning is popular – some cleaning and care information.

What do I have before me?

Recognising the floor covering and treating it properly.

Anyone who maintains wooden and laminate flooring correctly must first of all know what he is faced with. Laminate is made from melamine resin, photo wallpaper, fibreboard and a balancing layer. The photo wallpaper creates the desired look by connecting photos of original wood in an infinite loop. That is why laminate can be easily differentiated from wood by picking out a distinctive area. If this area appears several times in the room, it is laminate because this is not the case with a natural material. Another distinction is the search for areas where the layout and appearance are not consistent. If it is laminate, then cleaning with wipe care is suitable to keep the shine.

There are different versions of wooden flooring. Intact sealed floors are less moisture-sensitive, but have to be resealed regularly for care and maintenance – usually the job of a floor layer. Unsealed wooden floors come in an oiled and waxed form. Depending on the version, the floor must be oiled or waxed again at certain intervals to maintain the

Press Contact

Linda Schrödter
Press Officer
Alfred Kärcher SE & Co. KG
Alfred-Kärcher-Str. 28–40
71364 Winnenden

T +49 (0) 71 95 14-3918
F +49 (0) 71 95 14-2193
linda.schroedter@de.kaercher.com

SCIENTIFIC PAPER

protective effect. The type of floor can be found in the cleaning and care instructions or manual in order to avoid damage due to incorrect treatment.

Maintenance cleaning for wood and laminate:

Avoid moisture and adopt a clever approach.

Manual work is required if there are, for example, restricted or heavily furnished areas. For the maintenance cleaning the first step involves removing loose dirt such as hair, dust and sand. Grains of sand are a particular enemy of every wooden floor as a sandpaper effect is created when passed over. **Dust-trapping wiping** can be done with cloths or mops soaked in adhesive so that even the finest particles are removed. If the floor is extremely dirty a vacuum cleaner with parquet nozzle can also be used. In the second step adhesive dirt such as drink stains, etc., can be removed by **selective wet mopping** with a drained cleaning cloth. The respective area should then be dried.

For **large areas scrubber driers** achieve excellent results if existing dirt films are to be removed or their development should be avoided. It is important that the machine has a roller scrubber head and the **one-step method** is applied. This means applying the cleaning fleet, scrubbing and vacuuming the loosened dirt are carried out in a single operation. Stagnant water or puddles must be avoided at all costs. The selection of the suction lip material (anti-streak lip) and the correct setting of the squeegee parallel to the floor are important for larger scrubber driers. This setting is already fixed for compact machines. They are suitable for smaller to medium-sized areas if the suction is attached directly behind the roller.

The working speed, the quantity of the cleaning fleet, the speed of the roller brushes and the dosing of the cleaning agent depend on the degree of contamination. A surfactant-free cleaning agent should be used as surfactants favour the penetration of water in the floor covering. If required, the water volume should be reduced when performing a turning manoeuvre. For **roller scrubber heads with double roller system** the cleaning fleet can be used very economically as the contra-

SCIENTIFIC PAPER

rotating brushes work the fleet reciprocally. In contrast to models with disc brushes, no water gets out through centrifugal forces. The ground is dry right after and walkable.

When deep cleaning is required:

What must be kept in mind.

Anyone who consistently carries out maintenance cleaning using the right method preserves the long life of laminate floors or the character of wooden floors over the long term – and extends the intervals between deep cleaning. Deep cleaning is still required when care components are to be removed from a wipe care or discolouration (grey veil) is to be removed. In this case the spaces must be prepared accordingly, i.e. emptied and loose dirt cleared off the floors. Ideally a **scrubber drier with roller scrubber head, double roller system and red or beige pad rollers** is used. Depending on the degree of contamination and the quality of the floor covering, an alkaline universal basic cleaner or a surfactant-free cleaning agent is recommended, which is dosed in relation to the degree of dirt. The one-step method must also be applied here in order to reliably avoid stagnant water. Adapted to the condition of the floor one track can be passed over several times in order to restore the structure to its original condition.

Wet basic cleaning with single-disc machine technology in combination with a wet and dry vacuum cleaner is not recommended. The moisture stays on the floor too long and causes damage. Scrubber driers with disc scrubber head are also not suitable because the necessary torque is missing for the deep cleaning. A wall of water also arises at the edge of the pad due to the centrifugal force, which may also cause damage.

Following successful deep cleaning the floor is rinsed with clean water using the one-step method. Soft white roller brushes are used here. When the drying time is observed, the wooden areas can be waxed or oiled depending on the design. Then the area is worked with the roller scrubber machine with white polishing brushes or horsehair brushes or beige polishing pads in order to create a beautiful shine.

SCIENTIFIC PAPER

Intermediate cleaning for now and again:

For a brilliant shine.

Both wood and laminate floors rarely need deep cleaning with good maintenance cleaning. Whoever ensures a more well-kept look from time to time, i.e. want to remove heel marks or restore the shine, can use an appropriate chemical agent, e.g. polymers that are soluble in water. A sufficient amount is sprayed onto the floor covering. Then one moves over the area with a cleaning machine using appropriate pads in circular movements or in even strokes until the desired result is achieved. After the care agent has dried residues are polished with a dry pad. Any abrasion is easy to remove with dust-trapping wiping.

This brief overview shows that continuous cleaning and care can preserve the joy in both floor coverings over the long term – and that's precisely what is needed.



After dust-trapping wiping a wide mop can be used for the selective wet cleaning of wooden and laminate flooring.

SCIENTIFIC PAPER



Compact scrubber driers with suction directly behind the roller are suitable for larger areas.



Compact double roller machines with suction directly after the roller are used for the intensive cleaning of wooden flooring.

SCIENTIFIC PAPER



Once the floor is cleaned it can be polished with a suitable polishing pad.