



Cleaning & care

Keep your hard floors sparkling with these tips

FOR MOST HARD FLOORS, a quick weekly vacuum to pick up dust and dirt, followed by a damp mop, is all that's required. Each type of flooring will benefit from a few specific care tricks.

Timber & bamboo: Make sure your mop is only slightly damp, not wet, and never use a steam mop. "Try a timber floor cleaner to avoid damaging the surface seal," recommends Robyn Barnes from Boral Timber.

"Household detergents or wax products can be abrasive and make the floor slippery." To limit unnecessary scratches, place protective padding on the bottom of table and chair legs. High heels will also make their mark on lustrous wooden floors, so consider leaving shoes at the front door.

Stone: Sandy Yeates of Bellstone recommends applying a sealer in high traffic areas, like kitchens and entertaining areas, to serve as a barrier against spills and stains. "After two initial applications, your floors should not require resealing for ten to 15 years," he says.

Concrete: Mop with a non-foaming detergent after vacuuming. "Concrete is easy to clean and today's sealers make it immune to most chemicals," says Julie Adamo of Boral Concrete. Also try placing floor mats at entry points to keep dirt at bay.

Tiles: Steer clear of abrasive cleaners or scourers that may cause surface damage. Instead, use a PH-neutral cleaner or try a steam mop to eliminate chemicals altogether. Kate Lane of Amber Tiles suggests drying tiles with a towel or dry mop after cleaning to increase shine and prevent water spots.

Ensure no soapy residue is left over as it may stain.

1. Control suction power to suit different surfaces at the flick of a switch with the 'Hard Floor Specialist' **vacuum cleaner**, \$529, Miele.
2. The 'DC39' **vacuum cleaner** automatically senses floor type, eliminating the need to change vacuum heads, \$749, Dyson.
3. For a speed clean, the Kenwood **steam mop** produces steam within 30 seconds, \$179, Harvey Norman.
4. Vacuum and steam mop simultaneously with the 'Kompessor Steam VK982IUHS' **vacuum cleaner**, \$799, LG.
5. The high-pressure Euroflex 'Domestic' **steam mop** is equipped with handy attachments for hard-to-reach spots, \$399, Harvey Norman.
6. With in-built antibacterial protection, Bissell's 'Healthy Home' **steam mop** stays clean without additional chemicals, \$259, Harvey Norman.

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