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How to Clean Luxury Vinyl Plank Flooring

Once you've installed your luxury vinyl plank floors, you'll want to keep them looking fresh and clean, but you might be wondering how you should go about doing this. While luxury vinyl floors are easy to maintain, it's also important to understand how to properly clean them to preserve their durability. Whether you're looking for advice on how to handle regular cleanings or what to do if you notice scuff marks, this guide will walk you through the important information on how to clean luxury vinyl plank flooring.

Using Vinegar to Clean Luxury Vinyl

While vinegar is a common ingredient in many homemade floor cleaners, it shouldn't be used on certain household surfaces because it can cause damage. Fortunately, luxury vinyl flooring isn't one of those surfaces. In fact, apple cider vinegar makes an excellent vinyl floor cleaner. The acidity in the vinegar can remove grime and dirt without leaving behind buildup and residue like soap can. Just make sure you don't use full-strength vinegar to clean your floors. It can dull the finish, and you have no way of polishing vinyl flooring to bring back the shine.

To make homemade floor cleaner using vinegar, simply mix a cup of apple cider vinegar with a gallon of water. You can then use a damp mop to clean your floor. Be sure to frequently rinse your mop with hot water while you're cleaning. If you're looking to disinfect and clean your floors at the same time, you can use white vinegar instead.

If your floors are especially grimy, add a few drops of liquid dishwashing soap to your vinegar-water mixture before you mop them. Then go back over your floors a second time with just the water and vinegar. Lastly, if you're looking to add a little shine to your floors, a few drops of baby oil in the water and vinegar cleaning solution will do the trick.

Keep Cleaners pH Neutral

It's important to note that you don't want to clean your luxury vinyl flooring with bleach, ammonia, or any high-pH detergents. These cleaners are corrosive and can damage your floors. Instead, you need to look for pH-neutral cleaners. In fact, one of the best cleaners for your vinyl floors is a simple solution of an ounce of mild dishwashing soap in a gallon of plain water.

Since standing water can damage or stain vinyl flooring, it's important to use a microfiber mop as opposed to a string mop when you're cleaning. You also want to thoroughly wring your mop of any excess water before using it. If you're using dishwashing soap in your cleaning solution, don't forget to go over your floors with clean water when you're done to give them a good rinse. The final step in the cleaning process is to dry your floors with a clean rag or towel.

If you have a stain on your vinyl flooring, you can try to rub it out using isopropyl alcohol, a water and baking soda paste, or 3 percent hydrogen peroxide.



Does Vinyl Need Wax?

Luxury vinyl flooring doesn't require the application of any type of wax. However, it can benefit from an acrylic finish, and it's important to understand the difference between the two. Floor wax is typically derived from carnauba wax, which makes it a more solid substance. It also requires a special buffing tool to apply it to the floor. Picture a custodian applying wax to a floor in a school or hospital using a large buffing machine to make the floor appear clean and shiny, and you'll understand how floor wax works.

On the other hand, an acrylic finish is a liquid-based substance that's applied with a mop and bucket. Manufacturers often recommend using an acrylic finish on areas where scuffing or scratching are likely to occur. Although an acrylic finish isn't a requirement, it can add shine and provide a protective barrier when applied correctly. This can also help add to the longevity of your floor.

If you decide to use an acrylic finish on your luxury vinyl plank flooring, it's important to remember that you don't want to polish it with a high-speed burnisher. This is because high-speed buffing can penetrate the wear layer of your floor and possibly even cause the layers to separate over time, which will destroy your floor. Instead, you want to slowly buff the acrylic finish on your luxury vinyl flooring to make it shine.

How to Fix Scratches and Scuffs

The best way to prevent scratches or scuffs from ending up on your luxury vinyl floors to begin with is to sweep or vacuum your floors every day to remove any dirt or debris that could cause damage. However, if you do notice a scratch or scuff on your floor, you can try several options to remove it.

If it's a small mark, some light buffing might do the trick. You can also try a spot repair kit to remove the mark. If you have a slightly larger scuff or scratch, consider applying a vinyl floor sealer after you wash your floor to hide the mark. One trick that many people swear by is to spear a tennis ball on the end of a stick and rub it over the scuff to make it disappear. You can also try applying some jojoba oil or WD-40 lubricant on a towel and rubbing it over the scuff until it goes away.

For severe damage, such as a deep scratch, cut, gouge, or dent, you'll likely need to replace the plank. Likewise, if you have a deep scuff mark because something wore away the protective wear layer — it's usually better to replace the damaged piece.

You love your luxury vinyl plank flooring, and you want to keep it looking beautiful for years to come. Keep these helpful cleaning tips in mind, and you'll know exactly how to clean your vinyl flooring so it continues to look great.