



# Preparing your floors for winter

Winter is here and as we prepare ourselves appropriately for the dry and harsh weather, we should do the same for our hardwood floors. So as we turn up the heat in our homes this season it's important to remember that the air will become too dry if it's not balanced with humidification.

When air is too dry it can present health issues for people. Similarly, wood is also negatively affected by very dry conditions. Engineered hardwood floors with multi-layer marine birch support handle the stress of variability in humidity much better than solid wood flooring and can be up to nine times more dimen-

sionally stable. However, hardwood is still a natural substance and adapts to its surrounding environment. When relative humidity is very low, wood compensates by giving off moisture, which causes contraction and gapping in the floor. Maintaining a constant humidity level between 40 percent and 60 percent with a humidifier may be necessary to create an environment that is healthy for you and at the same time helps the performance and appearance of your floor.

The winter season will also bring with it snow, salt and dirt, some of wood's worst enemies. Placing door mats outside and rugs inside at every entrance of the house to prevent the

accumulation of salt, sand or abrasive dust and regularly sweeping or vacuuming the floor, ideally with an antistatic mop or broom, are the easiest ways to prevent damage. For periodic thorough cleaning to remove salt stains, it is advised to use a wood flooring detergent applied with a well wrung out cloth or mop. You should not wet mop the floor since excess water could have a negative result with any wood flooring. Following these maintenance tips will help keep your hardwood floors looking great for many years.

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