How to REFINISH Your Hardwood FLOORS
hardwood floors provide years of beauty, warmth and elegance for your home. The Minwax® line of quality wood finishing and maintenance products will help you restore and maintain the richness of your hardwood floors, revitalizing their appearance and adding to the value of your home.

Minwax® Wood Finish™ and Minwax® Super Fast-Drying Polyurethane for Floors are designed to give your floors superior durability and a beautiful finish. Quality Minwax® products, combined with the instructions in this booklet and the directions provided with your sanding equipment, will help you achieve excellent floor finishing results!

Steps for Floor Finishing:
1. Determine the type of floor finishing project
2. Assemble materials
3. Prepare the room and floor
4. Sand floor
5. Stain floor (optional)
6. Topcoat floor
**Step 1**

**Determine the Type of Floor Finishing Project:**

The condition of the floor will determine the exact steps that you will need to follow and the materials that you will need to assemble.

- Is the floor finish completely worn down to bare wood in high-traffic areas? Is the floor finish cracking or peeling? Is the floor stained or gouged? Do you want to change the color of your floor? If you answered yes to any of these questions, follow directions for “floors that need a complete refinishing”.

- Is the floor a previously finished floor showing signs of wear, but is not chipping, peeling or showing worn areas? If you answered yes, follow directions for “sand and recoat”.

- Is this new, unfinished flooring? If you answered yes, follow the directions for “new wood floors”.

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**Things to Think About Before You Start:**

If your floors are cupped, bowed, or severely damaged, contact a flooring professional to address these issues before you start your project.

Any wax or build-up on your floor must be removed. If your floor has been waxed, use mineral spirits to remove the wax before you sand.

Tip! To identify a wax finish, put a few drops of water on your floor and let them sit for ten minutes. Wipe up the water. If the water left a white spot, you have wax on your floor.

If your floor is a factory pre-finished floor, read the floor manufacturer’s instructions or contact the manufacturer before refinishing.

If you have a parquet floor, consult a flooring professional before sanding.
Step 2

Assemble Materials:

Depending upon the type of floor finishing project that you are doing, you will need the following materials:

### ALL PROJECTS
- Minwax® Super-Fast Drying Polyurethane for Floors
- Lambswool applicator pad, natural bristle brush
- Paint tray
- Metal can filled with water (for disposal of rags)
- Stirring sticks
- Floor sander
- Sanding pad and sandpaper in the grits recommended with your sander
- Electric palm/hand sander
- Hand scraper (for corners, etc.)
- Clean, lint-free cloths
- Dust masks
- Safety glasses
- Hammer, nails and nailset
- Drop cloths, tape
- Pencil
- Wet/dry vacuum cleaner (optional)

### FLOORS THAT NEED A COMPLETE REFINISHING
- Minwax® Stainable Wood Filler (for filling minor nicks and nail holes in the wood)
- Minwax® Pre-Stain Wood Conditioner (use only if staining the floor, and only if your floor is pine or another soft wood)
- Minwax® Wood Finish™ (staining is optional; use only if you wish to change the floor’s color)

### SAND AND RECOAT
- No additional materials are required

### NEW WOOD FLOORS
- Minwax® Stainable Wood Filler (for filling minor nicks and nail holes in the wood)
- Minwax® Pre-Stain Wood Conditioner (use only if staining the floor, and only if your floor is pine or another soft wood)
- Minwax® Wood Finish™ (staining is optional; use only if you wish to change the floor’s color)

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Step 3

Prepare the Room & Floor

**The Room:**

- Remove all objects from the room, including furniture, drapes, pictures, vent covers, etc.
- Cover any permanent objects that you do not want to get dusty (chandeliers, shelving, etc.) Make sure that any light fixtures you cover are off!
- Snugly cover door openings with drop cloths to minimize the spread of dust (remove these covers after sanding, before staining or topcoating).
- Place a mat or cloth outside the entrance to the room so you can wipe your feet as you leave.
- Carefully remove the quarter round molding from the base molding, then remove the base molding.

Tip! Number each piece of molding on its back, using pencil, and put the same number on the wall where you removed it. This way, you can put the pieces back in place more easily once the floor is done.
Tip! When operating the sander, be sure to wear your dust mask and safety glasses.

Caution! Follow the sanding directions provided with your sander carefully. Improper use of a sander can damage your wood floor.

• Always sand in the direction of the wood grain.
• Start the sander, then lower it onto the floor. Keep the sander moving, and overlap your passes.
• Each type of project requires slightly different sanding steps, and the use of different grits of sandpaper. The information that follows regarding sanding and sandpaper grits serves as a general guideline. Refer to the information that comes with your sander, and follow the grits recommended by its manufacturer.
• Follow the sanding directions for your floor type, below:

Floors that need a complete refinishing:
Sand floor to bare wood to remove existing stain and finish, starting with coarse to medium grit and finishing with fine grit sandpaper.
• Begin with 40 grit sandpaper, or use the grit recommended for your sander.
• Sand the floor for a second time, using 60 grit sandpaper, and following the same techniques as you just used for 40 grit.

The Floor:
• Use a nailset to ensure all nail heads are recessed into the floor.
• Replace or repair any damaged boards.
• Clean the floor using a gentle cleaner that does not leave residue, like Minwax® Hardwood Floor Cleaner. Allow the floor to dry thoroughly.

Step 4

Sand the Floor
• Your neighborhood hardware store, home center or equipment rental center are good resources for renting sanding equipment, and can give you advice and directions on how to sand your particular floor. Before using the sanding equipment, read the operating manual and make sure you observe noted safety precautions.

Turn off air conditioning/heat to prevent dust from circulating throughout the house.
• Cover all vents.
• Open all windows (for ventilation).
• Keep children and pets from entering the room.
• Read all warnings and safety precautions on labels before using products and equipment.
New Wood Floors:
• Sand floor using 100 grit sandpaper. If stain is to be applied, final sanding should be done using no higher than 100 grit. If floors are not going to be stained, then final sanding should be no higher than 120 grit. Work sander as described in “Floors that need a complete refinishing.”

• Wipe or vacuum up all dust on baseboards, windows, sills, doors, door frames and other surfaces. Clean from the highest surface to the lowest, in that order.

• Thoroughly wipe the floor with a clean cloth dampened with mineral spirits and allow to dry.

Sand and Recoat:
• Sand floor lightly using 120 grit sandpaper, working the sander as described in “Floors that need a complete refinishing.”

• Wipe or vacuum up all dust on baseboards, windows, sills, doors, door frames and other surfaces. Clean from the highest surface to the lowest, in that order.

• Thoroughly wipe the floor with a clean cloth dampened with mineral spirits and allow to dry.
• Remember to move in the direction of the wood grain while sanding. Move back and forth with the grain until the entire floor is lightly sanded.

• Use a sanding block or an electric palm/hand sander to sand the edges with the same grit of sandpaper you just used with the drum sander. Start in a corner, and run left to right along the wall. Rotate the sander in a circular fashion, using long, oval circles when running with the grain, and tighter, more rounded circles when running against the grain. Be sure to overlap the floor sander’s passes to ensure an even appearance. Continue until all edging is complete.

• Repeat this process with the floor sander and the hand sander for each grit of sandpaper.

• Go slowly, and always keep moving. Never stop moving the sander while it is in operation unless you first raise the drum, or the sander may damage your floor.

• Remove all sanding dust. Any dust in the room may settle into your wet finish, causing blemishes. Wait for the dust to settle, then vacuum the floor several times, clean the window sills, door frames, and anywhere the sanding dust might have settled. Finally, use a lint-free cloth dampened with mineral spirits to wipe the floor and remove the remaining dust.

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**Step 5**

**Stain Floor (optional)**

• Floors only need to be stained if you want to change their color. If you are happy with your floor’s color, skip this step!

Note: Since stain must be able to penetrate the wood of the floor, stain can only be applied to new, unfinished flooring or to floors that have been sanded according to the directions given in the Sanding section for “Floors that need a complete refinishing.”

• If your floor is made of soft wood, like pine, pre-treat the floor with Minwax® Pre-Stain Wood Conditioner to ensure that the floor takes the color evenly. Apply Minwax® Wood Finish™ within two hours of pre-treatment.

• Choose your stain color. Minwax® Wood Finish™ offers twenty beautiful colors of
wood stain, all appropriate for use on hardwood floors.

- Test stain in an inconspicuous area of the floor to ensure that the color is what you want. Remember that the clear polyurethane topcoat that you will later apply to your floor will slightly amber the stain, giving it a warmer tone.

- Applying stain is easy. Be sure to read and follow the label directions and cautions.

- Stir stain thoroughly before and occasionally during use.

- Start in a back corner, and apply the stain with a natural bristle brush or clean cloth. Follow the label directions. Be careful to plan your exit so you don’t stain yourself into a corner!

- Apply the stain in the direction of the grain. Let the stain penetrate until you achieve the desired color. Remove excess stain with a clean cloth. If a darker color is desired, wait 4-6 hours, then apply a second coat, repeating the same steps you used for the first.

- Once the floor is stained, let it dry for at least eight hours before applying Minwax® Super Fast-Drying Polyurethane for Floors.

**CAUTIONS: CONTAINS ALIPHATIC HYDROCARBONS.** Contents are **COMBUSTIBLE.** Keep away from heat and open flame. **VAPOR HARMFUL.** Use only with adequate ventilation. To avoid overexposure, open windows and doors or use other means to ensure fresh air entry during application and drying. If you experience eye watering, headaches, or dizziness, increase fresh air, or wear respiratory protection (NIOSH approved) or leave the area. Avoid contact with eyes and skin. Wash hands after using. Keep container closed when not in use. Do not transfer contents to other containers for storage.

**FIRST AID:** In case of eye contact, flush thoroughly with large amounts of water for 15 minutes and get medical attention. For skin contact, wash thoroughly with soap and water. In case of respiratory difficulty, provide fresh air and call physician. If swallowed, do not induce vomiting. Call Poison Control Center, hospital emergency room, or physician immediately.

**DELAYED EFFECTS FROM LONG-TERM OVEREXPOSURE.** Contains solvents which can cause permanent brain and nervous system damage. Intentional misuse by deliberately concentrating and inhaling the contents can be harmful or fatal. **WARNING:** This product contains chemicals known to the State of California to cause cancer and birth defects or other reproductive harm. **DO NOT TAKE INTERNALLY. KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN.** CONFORMS TO ASTM D-4236. Contact a physician for more health information.

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**Step 6**

**Topcoat Floor**

Applying the clear topcoat is your final step! Minwax® Super Fast-Drying Polyurethane for Floors is a durable, protective clear finish that is specifically formulated for use on hardwood floors. It gives long lasting
Pour the product into a paint tray and dip your applicator into the tray.

Start along a wall and apply the clear finish. Apply a thin coat using a lambswool or synthetic pad applicator or a natural bristle brush. Maintain a wet edge to avoid lap marks, preferably overlapping into the finish you previously applied by several inches. Be sure to feather in your start and stop places with your applicator.

Let dry at least 3-4 hours until film is no longer tacky, and can be walked on in soft, flat shoes without damaging the surface.

No sanding is required.

Note: If film is allowed to dry for more than 12 hours, sand lightly with 220 grit sandpaper, then wipe the floor with a cloth moistened with mineral spirits to remove all dust.

Apply a second coat of Minwax® Super Fast-Drying Polyurethane for Floors following the same steps as you used for the first coat.

If the floor was not stained or sealed with Minwax® Sanding Sealer, apply a third coat of Minwax® Super Fast-Drying Polyurethane for Floors.

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may cause the finish to look or feel bumpy. You can choose to sand between coats for an extra smooth finish. If you do sand, a longer dry-time may be needed between coats.

• Finish floors in moderate weather (temperatures in the 70˚ F range) so that the finish dries appropriately. Finish applied in cold weather dries more slowly than finish applied in more moderate weather.

• Work when humidity is low (at or below 50% relative humidity) and there is no rain in the forecast, as high humidity extends drying times.

• Floor will accommodate light foot traffic 12-18 hours after the final coat of Minwax® Super Fast-Drying Polyurethane for Floors. Avoid heavy traffic and do not replace furniture for 72 hours after the final coat. When replacing furniture, do not slide. Do not install rugs or clean floors for 7 days to allow finish to cure properly.

• Sweep or vacuum your floor and mats frequently to remove dust and debris.

• Put floor protector pads or glides on the bottom of furniture so that moving it does not scratch the floor.

To clean floors protected by Minwax® Super Fast-Drying Polyurethane for Floors, we recommend a gentle cleaner such as Minwax® Hardwood Floor Cleaner.

Tips to improve your finish:

• Remove loose fibers from your applicator by rinsing it with mineral spirits prior to using it. Wring it out thoroughly. Let it soak in the polyurethane for a couple of minutes to ensure that the polyurethane penetrates the applicator before you begin your project.

• Be sure to remove all dust from sanding and other sources prior to applying your finish. If your room is at all dusty, the dust will settle into the finish as it dries and

watering, headaches, or dizziness, increase fresh air, or wear respiratory protection (NIOSH approved) or leave the area. Avoid contact with eyes and skin. Wash hands after using. Keep container closed when not in use. Do not transfer contents to other containers for storage. **FIRST AID:** In case of eye contact, flush thoroughly with large amounts of water for 15 minutes and get medical attention. For skin contact, wash thoroughly with soap and water. In case of respiratory difficulty, provide fresh air and call physician. If swallowed, do not induce vomiting. Call Poison Control Center, hospital emergency room, or physician immediately. **DECREASED EFFECTS FROM LONG-TERM OVEREXPOSURE.** Contains solvents which can cause permanent brain and nervous system damage. Intentional misuse by deliberately concentrating and inhaling the contents can be harmful or fatal. **WARNING:** This product contains chemicals known to the State of California to cause cancer and birth defects or other reproductive harm. **DO NOT TAKE INTERNALLY. KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN. CONFORMS TO ASTM D-4236.**

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