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Hardwood floors provide a timeless look but can become dull, scratched, or worn. Even when well-maintained, you may eventually need to refinish your floors to return them to their original beauty.Hardwood floor refinishing is the process of restoring your wood floor’s protective layer and appearance. This can involve either screening, which removes only the top layer of finish, or sanding, which strips the floor down to bare wood. The choice between these methods depends on your floor’s condition and your current finish. Our guide covers how to identify when your floors need attention, choose the right finish, and maintain your newly restored floors.You’ll notice when your hardwood floors start wearing out. Here are some signs it may need refinishing:Bare wood exposed in high-traffic zonesDiscoloration or gray areas where the wood has been exposed to sunlight or moistureDullness or lack of shine across large areasScratches, especially those that penetrate the finishWater stains, which indicate the protective finish has been compromisedAndrew Kline | Photo by Andrew KlineThe two primary methods for refinishing hardwood floors are screening and sanding. Each has different advantages and works for different situations.Screening, also known as buffing, is a less invasive refinishing method that removes only the top layer of polyurethane finish without touching the wood itself. This process is ideal for floors with light wear and tear, where the damage hasn’t penetrated the wood.Screening is done with a floor polisher equipped with a synthetic wool pad and a sanding screen. It’s a relatively quick process that produces less dust than full sanding. However, screening is only effective on polyurethane finishes and can’t address deep scratches or wood stains. It’s a good option for regular maintenance to keep floors looking fresh.Andrew Kline | Photo by Andrew KlineSanding is a more thorough refinishing method that removes the entire finish and a thin layer of wood. This process is necessary in these circumstances:The floor has a wax finish on top of polyurethaneThe finish has worn through to the bare woodThe floor has been stained or significantly damagedSanding requires heavy equipment such as a drum sander and an edger. It’s a more time-consuming and dust-intensive process, but it makes for a complete restoration of the floor, including the ability to change the wood’s color with stain. This method is ideal for floors with significant damage or for homeowners seeking a new look.Andrew Kline | Photo by Andrew KlineThe tools you’ll need depend on whether you’re screening or sanding your floors. Here’s a breakdown of the essential equipment for each method.16-inch floor polisher (rental cost: around $25 per day)Palm sander for edges and cornersSanding screens in various grits (60, 80, 100, and 120)Synthetic wool padsTack clothsVacuum cleanerDrum sander (rental cost: around $55 per day)Edger sanderFloor scraper for cornersProtective gear (respirator, safety glasses, ear protection)Sanding disks in various gritsTack clothsVacuum cleanerRegardless of the method, you’ll also need plastic sheeting and masking tape to seal off the work area and contain dust. Screening is a more accessible do-it-yourself (DIY) option for homeowners looking to refresh their hardwood floors. Here’s how to do it:Clear the room of all furniture and remove any floor coverings.Seal off doorways, duct registers, and cabinet doors with plastic sheeting and tape.Open windows for ventilation and set up a fan to blow dust outside.Remove baseboards or quarter-round molding along the walls.Ensure all flooring nails are countersunk.Start with a 60-grit screen, working your way up to 120-grit for a smooth finish.Before attaching each screen to the polisher, lightly sand it with 100-grit sandpaper to prevent deep cuts in the finish.Make overlapping passes with the floor polisher, keeping it moving to avoid creating swales.Use a palm sander with 100-grit sandpaper for edges and corners.Vacuum thoroughly between grits and after the final pass.Wipe the entire floor with a tack cloth to remove all dust particles.Remember to work systematically across the room, maintaining a consistent technique to ensure an even finish. Sanding is a more intensive process that’s often best left to professionals, but for those confident in their DIY skills, here’s what you need to know:Sand your hardwood floors in these circumstances:The wood is visibly damaged or deeply stainedThe floor has been sanded and refinished multiple times beforeThere’s significant unevenness between boardsYou want to change the color of the woodStart with coarse-grit sandpaper (36- or 40-grit) to remove the old finish and level the floor.Progress through medium (60–80 grit) and fine (100–120 grit) sandpaper.Sand in the direction of the wood grain, making steady passes with the drum sander.Use the edger sander for areas near walls and corners.Hand-scrape corners and other hard-to-reach areas.Vacuum and tack between each grit change and after the final sanding.Always keep the sander moving to prevent gouging the floor, and be extra cautious when starting and stopping the machine. Proper technique will leave you with a smooth, flat finish.The finish you choose affects your hardwood floor’s appearance and durability. Below are the most common options.Oil-based polyurethane is a popular choice for its durability and rich, amber color. It costs around $25 per gallon and covers about 400 square feet. Benefits include the following:Can be worked while wet, allowing for correctionsEnhances the natural warmth of woodProvides long-lasting protectionHowever, it has a strong odor and requires longer drying times between coats, though the level of protection makes it a favorable choice for high-traffic areas.Water-based polyurethane is popular due to its quick drying time and low odor. It costs about $40 per gallon and covers approximately 600 square feet. Advantages include the following:Dries quickly (can apply multiple coats in one day)Has a clear finish that doesn’t yellow over timeHas low VOC emissionsThe main drawback is that it’s less durable than oil-based finishes and may require more frequent reapplication. Its clear finish is ideal for preserving the natural color of your wood.These finishes soak into the wood, providing a more natural look. They’re ideal for those who prefer a matte or satin finish. Benefits include the following:An enhanced natural wood grainEasy spot-repairLittle maintenanceHowever, oils and sealers offer less protection against wear and moisture compared to polyurethane finishes. They’re suitable for low-traffic areas or for achieving a specific look.Take the time to apply finish carefully and evenly for a beautiful and long-lasting result.Ensure the floor is completely clean and dust-free. Vacuum thoroughly and use a tack cloth to remove any remaining particles. Maintain proper room temperature and humidity as specified by the finish manufacturer.An even coat of polyurethane finish is applied in long strokes using a lamb’s wool applicator, always maintaining a wet edge. | Andrew Kline | Photo by Andrew KlineFor edges and corners, use a high-quality brush or painting pad.For open areas, use a lamb’s wool or synthetic applicator.Apply thin, even coats, working with the grain of the wood.For oil-based polyurethane, use long, smooth strokes and maintain a wet edge.For water-based finishes, work quickly to avoid lap marks.Allow proper drying time between coats as specified by the manufacturer.Lightly sand between coats with 220-grit sandpaper for better adhesion, except for the final coat.Remember to ventilate the area well during application and curing periods. Following these steps helps to ensure a durable, attractive finish.Even with careful preparation and application, issues may arise during the refinishing process. Here are some common problems and solutions:Bubbles in the finish: This is usually caused by shaking the finish or applying it too thickly. Sand out the bubbles and reapply a thin coat.Dust nibs: These are tiny bumps caused by dust settling in wet finish. Sand them lightly and apply another coat in a dust-free environment.Orange peel texture: A pitted texture is often caused by applying finish in high temperatures or humidity. Sand smooth and reapply under proper conditions.Streaks or lap marks: You’ll get these due to uneven application or working on a partially dried area. Sand the affected area and reapply, maintaining a wet edge.Maintaining Your Newly Refinished Hardwood FloorFollow these tips to protect your investment and extend your refinished hardwood floor’s lifespan:Avoid using water or steam mops, which can damage the finish.Clean regularly with a soft broom or dry mop.Clean spills immediately to prevent staining.Place mats at entrances to trap dirt and moisture.Reapply a maintenance coat of finish every few years, depending on wear.Use felt pads under furniture legs to prevent scratches.Adhering to a maintenance routine can help prevent damage and keep your floors looking better for longer.For minor damage or stains, you may not need to refinish the entire floor. Here are some spot repair techniques:Heel marks: Buff out with fine steel wool and apply a small amount of finish if needed.Pet stains: These often require sanding and wood replacement for severe cases.Scratches: Use a touch-up marker or fill stick that matches your floor color. For deeper scratches, sand lightly and apply a small amount of finish.Water stains: Try rubbing with fine steel wool and floor cleaner. For deeper stains, lightly sand and apply matching finish.Always test repair methods in an inconspicuous area first. Spot repairs can significantly extend the life of your floor without requiring full refinishing.Refinishing hardwood floors is a rewarding project that can dramatically improve your home’s look and value. We detail some DIY options above, but for those unsure of their skills or dealing with unique or historic floors, we suggest hiring a professional to handle refinishing.To understand the financial investment associated with this project, see our guide explaining the cost of refinishing hardwood floors. 2.1K Views Updated: November 24th, 2021 Whether your goal is to protect your newly installed floors or you’re refinishing ones that are several years old, the first step is to choose the right topcoat. Regardless of the specific hardwood species, your floors need a finish coating to keep them looking their best and lasting as long as possible. With so many options, choosing the correct topcoat can be an overwhelming process.Hardwood floor finishes come in varying levels of durability, sheen, and ease. The eight main types of floor finishes include water-based polyurethane, oil-based polyurethane, wax finishes, moisture-cured urethane, shellac, aluminum oxide, acid-cured finish, and penetrating oil sealer. Not sure which hardwood floor finish to choose? Narrow down your decision by brushing up on the different types of floor finishes below, along with their associated pros and cons. 1. Water-Based Polyurethane Water-based polyurethane is one of the most popular floor finishes used in the home, and for good reason. Manufactured with synthetic plasticizers and resins, this type of finish is incredibly durable and resists moisture pretty well. With this finish, hardwood floors are easy to maintain. All you’ll need is a broom and damp mop, but leaks or spills should still be mopped up as soon as they’re discovered.Additionally, water-based polyurethane is considered an environmentally friendly choice, as it releases less volatile organic compounds (VOCs) than most other options. It also has an almost undetectable odor during application and dries fast. You’ll only have to wait about two to four hours between coats, with three to four total coats being the recommended amount. Pros of water-based polyurethane Low VOC content and minimal odor. Easy application and cleanup with soap and water. Comes in different sheens: high gloss, low gloss, and matte. Fast-drying – can walk on the floors as early as the following day. Tough and scratch-resistant. Goes on clear, with no yellowing. Easy maintenance. Cons of water-based polyurethane Cannot be waxed, as it will dull the finish. High-gloss versions magnify scrapes and scratches. High-traffic or damaged areas cannot be touched up. They must be re-sanded and the entire floor must be refinished. 2. Oil-Based Polyurethane Oil-based polyurethane is made up of linseed oil, synthetic resins, and plasticizers. Because of its durability and strength, this finish is popular among old-school tradesmen and for commercial properties. Many homeowners choose to opt for oil-based polyurethane finish for high-traffic areas of their home. This finish releases high levels of VOCs, has a strong odor, and dries as a slight amber color. It can yellow over time, which adds a lovely, rich, amber color to your flooring. Though, if this is not a goal, you’ll want to opt for a different finish. Cleanup is a little more difficult with oil-based polyurethane, as mineral spirits must be used. The coats also take longer to dry – usually 10 hours for each coat, with two to three recommended in total. Pros of oil-based polyurethane Available in high-gloss, semi-gloss, and satin sheens. Relatively affordable. Easy to maintain – only regular cleaning required. Surface not prone to scratching. Resistant to moisture. Cons of oil-based polyurethane Has an amber, yellowish color. Strong odor and high VOC content. Dries slower than water-based polyurethane. Like water-based polyurethane, you cannot touch up this finish – you must refinish the whole floor. 3. Wax Finishes Before polyurethane finishers hit the market in the 60s, wax was the floor finish of choice for centuries. Today, it is still a popular choice for historic homes and preferred among do-it-yourselfers looking for a natural, low-sheen look. Wax comes in two forms: liquid and paste. Both require several coats that must be buffed by hand, but paste wax is applied with a rang and liquid wax is typically applied with a wool applicator.However, using wax has a hardwood floor finish does not yield a durable finish. Water can create white marks in the floor and scratching and scuffing is common. As such, wax is not ideal for kitchens or bathrooms. Wax can also yellow or darken over time, so it should be used with a wood that already has a warm cast. Pros of wax finishes Low odor and low VOC content. Easy application and touch-ups. Enhances natural color and grain of wood. Dries quickly. Cons of wax finishes Labor-intensive application – needs multiple coats to create depth. Darkens and yellows over time. High-maintenance – requires frequent recoating and buffing. Not very durable, scratch-resistant, or water-resistant. 4. Moisture-Cure Urethane For applications that require the toughest floor finish, moisture-cure urethane is the best choice. It was originally designed to be used in bowling alleys, making it an incredibly tough, durable, and high-shine finish. Moisture-cure urethane also resists general wear, scratches, stains, and moisture.Though, since it is difficult to apply, this finish may not be an option for DIYers. Not to mention, the incredibly high level of VOCs can linger in your home for weeks on end, causing household members to relocate for up to two weeks after application. As the name suggests, this finish takes moisture from the air to cure and is affected by humidity on the day of application.Due to the numerous drawbacks, moisture-cure urethane is most commonly used for commercial applications such as restaurants, dance halls, and bowling alleys. These are all locations that need their floors to be very strong, have a high-gloss look, and resist moisture and wear. Pros of moisture-cure urethane Incredibly durable. Resistant to scratches, moisture, stains, and wear. Ideal for commercial settings Cons of moisture-cure urethane Difficult to apply – not ideal for DIYers. High VOC content. 5. Shellac For those who desire a natural product that dries quickly and has a low VOC content, shellac is the ideal choice. Used for hundreds of years, this finish is made from denatured alcohol and combined with secretions of the lac bug. Shellac dries quickly to have a natural orange tint and a high-gloss finish. However, it can be tinted, bleached, or mixed with additional denatured alcohol to yield a more matte look.This finish is prone to staining, getting water spots, and is vulnerable to both ammonia and alcohol. While shellac doesn’t withstand foot traffic as well as polyurethane, it can be easily touched up by buffing in a new coat as needed. Pros of shellac finish A natural, eco-friendly choice. Easy to touch up and repair. Dries fast. Adheres easily to oily tropical woods. Cons of shellac finish Flammable. Can be difficult to apply evenly. Less durable than alternative options. Must be freshly mixed immediately prior to application. 6. Aluminum Oxide Aluminum oxide is a naturally occurring mineral, ideal for high-traffic areas or anywhere where a long-lasting, durable coating is desired. This finish protects the floor from water damage, facing, scuffs, scratches, and general wear and tear without altering the color of the wood or concealing the grain. It comes in varying levels of sheen, and can be as shiny or matte as you prefer.Though, this floor finish is only available for prefinished flooring planks and cannot be applied as a DIY project. If you eventually need to touch up damage or would like to swap out for a different finish, aluminum oxide is very difficult to remove or restore. However, if you want the most durable finish – lasting up to 25 years – aluminum oxides is the way to go. Pros of aluminum oxide The most durable and long-lasting floor finish available. Low-maintenance. Comes in varying levels of shine. Cons of aluminum oxide Hard to touch up or refinish. Can only be found on prefinished planks. 7. Acid-Cured Finish Also referred to as conversion or Swedish finish, acid-cured finish is extremely durable. It is commonly used for exotic wood floors or those that have intricate patterns. The product has an alcohol base and, as the name suggests, uses acid for curing. Acid-cured finish creates a shiny finish that is durable, and resistant to scuffs, scratches and chemicals, while highlight the grain, natural beauty, and color of the wood. The drawback to this finish is that it releases very high levels of VOCs has a strong odor. If you choose to apply it, you must have proper ventilation, a full-face respirator, and ensure that your family and pets stay away for several days. Pros of acid-cured finish Dries quickly. Exceptionally durable. Cons of acid-cured finish Highly flammable. Expensive product. Very high levels of VOCs and strong odor. Should only be applied by professionals. 8. Penetrating Oil Sealer Penetrating oil sealers were a popular option prior to the creation of polyurethane sealers. While they aren’t used as much today, they are still favored by some homeowners who desire a finish that brings out the natural depth, beauty, and grain of the wood without adding any gloss. There are several different types of penetrating oils, with tung oil being the most common.This finish soaks deep into the pores of the wood to prevent damage, all without creating a hard “shell” on top. For this reason, wax is often used as a final coat to add more protection to the floor. Although penetrating oil sealers will create a lovely natural look, they don’t withstand foot traffic well. In fact, you’ll likely have to refinish your floors every three to five years with this finish. Pros of penetrating oil sealer Yields a low-shine finish, while highlighting the natural characteristics of the wood. Natural, eco-friendly product. Easy to apply. Cons of penetrating oil sealer Not very durable. Expensive. Must be recoated every few years. Published September 26th, 2021 10:32 AM Floor polishing, buffing, waxing & refinishing are each different ways of restoring shine & renewing dull & scratched floors. These processes remove grime & restore the topcoat. Though these terms are often used interchangeably or may be assumed as the same thing, each is a specific process suitable for certain floor types. In this article we’ll explain each process, tell which is appropriate for every floor & what you can do yourself or whether you should hire a professional. At the bottom we’ve included every floor type along with details on what can be done to restore it’s shine. To Summarize: • Floor polishing can be done by hand with polishing products for all floor types. • Floor polishing in professional terms means using a very high speed machine (burnisher) to remove some of the finish layer & give a high gloss. On wood floors this is called floor screening. • Floor buffing in professional terms means using a slower speed machine called a buffing machine to coat & shine the floor with a buffing solution, this is the most common method for shining floors in the flooring industry. • Floor polishing & floor buffing with machines is for hardwood, tile, marble, stone, concrete, VCT & linoleum, not for vinyl, luxury vinyl or laminate which can be damaged by machines. • Sanding & refinishing uses a sanding machine to remove the top layer of wood floors & expose new wood which can be stained & finished with urethane or instead can be waxed. • Waxing (Strip & Wax) is another way to seal & shine a floor – it’s most commonly done on VCT but is also used for unglazed floor tiles like terracotta & wood floors that aren’t urethane finished. Existing layers of wax sometimes need to be stripped if it’s causing the floor to look dull. • Concrete Polishing is done with a machine for concrete which grinds the concrete to a smooth, shiny finish. Concrete buffing is done routinely to keep the polished concrete shiny. Most floor types have floor polishing or waxing products available that you can apply yourself with a cloth or flathead mop. These products are practical for most residential areas and just require the floor to be thoroughly cleaned and dried before applying. The product must specify that it’s for your floor type. Some products are supposed to be suitable for all floor types. While the ratings for several of these products are mostly favorable, there’s always a good portion who found they would have been better off having it done by a professional. In some cases floors were ruined or costly fixes were incured. Floor Polishing & Buffing Machines Professionals use machines for more reliable results. Floor polishing & buffing machines are used more often on commercial floors which are larger areas with higher traffic that need buffing or polishing more frequently. Commercial floors may need to be repolished or waxed every one to three months to keep them shiny. Residential floors polished with a flathead mop & polishing product may need to be repolished every 6 months or so. Using a machine makes floor polishing, buffing, waxing & cleaning much easier, faster & with better results. You can rent a machine and do it yourself for a more professional result, but whether you do it by hand or with a machine you should be careful to know what you’re doing first. Using wrong substances like harsh cleaners or abrasive sponges & pads can scuff & damage a floor. Buffing & polishing machines can also damage floors if not properly used & are not for use on vinyl floors like LVT (luxury vinyl tile) or laminate floors. Machines are particularly for use on hardwood, tile, marble, stone, concrete, VCT & linoleum. Aside from this one must know the right type of machine to use as there are several types – one for cleaning, buffing or waxing, one for polishing (burnishing) & another type for sanding wood floors. Machines operate at different speeds & you must use the right speed & the right type of pad. There are many types of pads & levels of abrasiveness. Using the wrong pad or speed can damage the floor or otherwise be ineffective by being too dull & clogging the pad quickly. Choosing all the right equipment, materials & knowing how to operate the machine properly, generally requires professional experience though any determined do it yourselfer can figure it out with some care and attention. Buying a floor polish product & doing it yourself may be called floor polishing, but when it comes to professional services with machines, floor polishing and floor buffing are different processes. Both increase longevity of floors by removing buildup & scratches, restoring shine and making floors look new again. There’s a different machine for each process. Buffing machines operate at a slower speed. Standard speed is 175 RPM & high speed is 1250-1500 RPM. Polishing (also called burnishing) machines are heavier & faster, running from 1500-2500 rpm. Polishing (Burnishing) is less common than buffing. It requires more expertise to operate the heavier & faster machine. Polishing actually removes the top layer of floor finish, removing nicks & scuffs. It gives more shine, more smooth surface & is longer lasting. Buffing is done either by hand or with a machine & it fills in nicks & scuffs with a buffing solution (often called ‘floor polish’) that’s buffed to a shine. Professional buffing involves buffing the entire area once or twice with a spray on buffing solution (Spray buffing) & then buffing it again without solution to remove any residue & enhance shine (Dry Buffing). More details on the procedure below. Do It Yourself Procedures Floor Polishing with a polishing product & flathead mop (most common for residential): Make sure the floor polishing product is made for your floor type. Some claim to be for all floor types. If it’s a wood floor make sure the floor has a urethane finish, most do. Floors without a urethane finish are much less common but should be waxed rather than polished. If unsure, you can scrape a little in the corner to see if there’s a clearcoat substance that comes off, in which case it is urethane. The floor must first be deep cleaned – sweep or vacuum (avoid beater bar on wood), deep clean with a suitable cleaning product for your floor type. Clean again with only warm water to remove any cleaner then dry the floor completely, a fan helps. Apply polish according to instructions using a flathead mop, working away from one corner outward, avoiding stepping on polished area. Let dry, avoid heavy traffic or replacing furniture for 24 hours. Many polishing product reviews report that they applied polish about every 6 months without having to strip away the existing polish. In some cases however, people did get clouding or unsatisfactory results even with the very first use & ended up having to do a good deal of work to remove the polish. Floor Buffing (with a machine): Floor buffing machines are for hardwood, tile, marble, concrete, VCT & linoleum (not vinyl, luxury vinyl or laminate). Floor must first be deep cleaned. Sweep or vacuum (avoid beater bars on wood). Damp mop with a cleaning solution for your floor type. Clean again with only warm water to remove cleaner. Dry floor thoroughly with fan, then dry mop. Spray buff once or twice, dry buff once, then finally dry mop once more. • Spray Buffing (done with machine under 1000 RPM). Fill a fine mist sprayer with buffing solution for your floor type or make your own with 1 cup white vinegar per gallon of water. Spray on buffing solution evenly – spray should be wet while buffing so only spray as much as you can buff before it dries. With buffing machine & appropriate pad, buff floor starting in corner furthest from exit, (so you don’t step on buffed area, it needs to dry) going back & forth over one 3×3 ft area at a time. Buff over scratched areas a little longer (not too long, you must be careful with a buffing machine). Watch for excess buildup on pad if using a machine & pad & change pad when needed. You can do a second buffing of the entire floor for more shine. • Dry buffing (with buffing machines): after spray buffing the area is dry buffed with an appropriate pad without spray to remove any spray residue & leave a dry, shiny surface. Use the same technique of moving the machine back and forth as you work your way back without walking over the buffed area, again giving some extra buffing to scratched areas. Again watch pad for excess buldup & change pad when needed. Floor Paste Wax – Used on VCT (vinyl composite tile), unglazed floor tiles like Terra Cotta & unfinished wood floors. Wood floors that are not finished with urethane are sealed with paste wax, an old time natural wax made with beeswax, carnauba wax, linseed and plant based oils. Nowadays there’s many other types of waxes made synthetically which come in liquid & are easier & faster to work with. Still, some folks prefer to stay with the old time natural stuff so paste wax is still available & we’ve heard it’s regaining polularity with environmentally friendly people. In New York City however, where we work on many wood floors, hardly any have wax. We recommend water based urethane for an environmentally friendly finish that will last alot longer & be less work than wax. To apply wax, the floor must first be swept or vacuumed & deep cleaned with an appropriate cleaner & mop. Clean again with only warm water to remove cleaner and thoroughly dry floor with a fan. Apply wax with a clean lint free cotton cloth. Apply a light, even coat according to directions on the product. Once dry, buff by hand or with a machine. For a machine follow the same procedure for buffing given above. Wood floors may need a waxing twice a year. Additional waxing may sometimes require removal of existing wax if you feel wax buildup is causing the floor to look dull. It’s removed with mineral spirits, a cloth & alot of elbow grease or a machine. Strip & Wax is a job done mostly on VCT vinyl composite tile which is common in schools and hospitals. Whenever wax is applied the vct tile must be completely stripped of wax, scrubbed & recoated with four wax coats. Floor Polishing Methods for All Floor Types Here’s what can be done with each floor type to make the floor shine. As mentioned above there are polishing products that can be used on all floors. With such products be sure it’s for your floor type, always deep clean floors and dry thoroghly before applying and follow instructions carefully. Keep in mind that there’s some risk in using any floor polishing products even the best rated ones. If possible, consider first testing it on small area & don’t use it in areas that get wet. No matter which product you’ll find a large portion of reviews which had a bad experience & either their floors were ruined or they had to do alot of work or pay a professional a good sum to remove the product & restore the floor. Bamboo: Comes factory finished which generally lasts many years & keeps shine. The main recommendation is to use an appropriate floor cleaner regularly. You can use a commercial cleaner like Bona or use 1 cup of white vinegar to 4 cups of water. While this floor polishing product doesn’t specify bamboo, it’s used on many wood floors and the reviews have several positive recommendations for bamboo floors. Machines are not usually used on bamboo. Cork: Like wood, either polyurethane finish or wax is used to seal, protect & give a cork floor shine. As such they can be machine sanded & refinished with polyurethane (urethane finish is completely removed & reapplied), screened to restore a urethane finish (urethane finish is just slightly sanded then buffed), polished with a wood floor polishing product or buffing machine (if finished with polyurethane), or waxed by hand or with machine (if without polyurethane). Concrete: Concrete floors are ground & polished with machines, sealers & a variety of pads from coarse to fine until achieving a mirror like finish. Once a concrete floor is polished it can last a lifetime & maintenance buffing with a hair pad to maximize the shine is done about twice a year. More about concrete floor polishing: Engineered wood: comes with acrylic factory finish which is only recommended to damp mop & use a cleaner recommended for engineered wood. Engineered wood flooring is a thin veneer of hardwood attached to a backing. So it cannot be sanded & refinished like hardwood can many times, but possibly once or twice. A machine buffer may be used carefully, and wood polishing products applied with a flathead mop can be used such as Bona Hardwood Floor Polish. Laminate: Has acrylic factory finish & machines are not used on laminate. If the wear layer is removed by a machine then the design layer could be ruined. The main recommendation for laminate is to clean it regularly with spray laminate floor cleaner & a microfiber pad/ lint free mop. You can also apply liquid polish for laminate as several products are listed as usable on laminate. Linoleum: Machine buffing or polishing with a polishing product for linoleum can be done on linoleum after being cleaned with a linoleum floor cleaner. Homemade polish can be made with 1 cup of vinegar per gallon of warm water & few drops baby oil. Apply with a spray bottle & buff. Marble: May be machine buffed or polished with polishing product for marble. To make your own polish & hand polish first scrub marble with a damp sponge or microfiber cloth & mild detergent, then rinse & wipe. Apply a mix of 3 tbsp baking soda per 1 liter water & let dry a few hours. Then buff with a clean cloth going in circles from large to small. For machine polishing marble is first cleaned with pH neutral cleaner then sanded and polished with a microfibre pad & powder. Stone Tile: Stone may be polished with a buffing machine or by hand with a flathead mop & floor polishing product for stone. Use a cleaner & sealer product for stone. This polishing product is made also for stone Here’s more details on machine polishing stone: Tile (ceramic & porcelain): Tile is usually glazed or else sealed with wax. Machines can be used on tile or polished by hand with a product like Bona Hard Surface Floor Polish for non wax sealed tile like ceramic, Mexican & Quarry tile. For glazed ceramic use a tile sealer once a year to protect grout. More info from Bona here on how to polish tile floors: Vinyl: buffing machines are not used on vinyl as they can cause damage. Polish vinyl & luxury vinyl with a product like Bona Hard Surface Floor Polish or Quickshine. You can also make polish with 4 tbsp baking soda & 3 liters warm water. Liquid acrylic finish applied with a mop is another option to restore vinyl finish. Wood: wood floors can be machine sanded & refinished, screened with a machine, buffed with a machine or polished by hand with a polishing product for wood & flathead mop. Sanding & refinishing is an intensive process of completely removing the finish & top layer of wood to expose a new fresh layer of untreated wood, which can then be stained & finished with polyurethane, or just stained & waxed. It removes deeper scratches than screening or buffing. Screening is done using a machine to slightly sand down & buff the polyurethane without completely removing it. It can remove scratches & scuffs which which don’t go into the wood & restore shine to the top layer of finish. Machine buffing is done using a buffing solution to fill in nicks & scratches in the polyurethane & shine it. Wood floors which are not urethane finished should be waxed regularly (6-18 months).