



# FACTORS IN CHOOSING HARDWOOD FINISHES

## GROUP 1: DURABILITY

So, you're trying to select the right hardwood finish for your floors. One of the biggest things to consider is durability—in other words, how your finish will hold up over time. These are the three factors that affect the durability of a hardwood finish:

### Abrasion Resistance

This refers to how well a finish stands up to everyday wear and tear, for example from shoes or dirt rubbing against the finish as people walk across the floor.

### Scratch Resistance

Anything beyond the typical walking and scuffing of shoes in day-to-day requires scratch resistance. Things like furniture and kitchen appliances being dragged across the floor, or even pet claws, can cause scratches on hardwood.

### Chemical Resistance

Of course, other accidents happen, too, and the chemical resistance in a hardwood finish is what protects your floor from whatever nail polish remover, coffee, cooking oils or other substances get spilled.

## GROUP 2: OTHER FACTORS

Durability might be the first thing that comes to mind when considering what finish to choose for your wood floors, but it's not the only factor. These are the other things to consider when making your selection:

### Looks

The look you elect for your hardwood finish can accentuate the wood's natural beauty, provide that perfect sheen, or place a beautiful filter of translucent color over the surface to enrich its color or texture. The levels of sheen you can choose from make a big difference, too, and can include gloss, semi-gloss, satin or matte. For a stunning, hand-rubbed look, choose a penetrating finish. Hardwax oils are the right choice for many floors, too, just ask your hardwood contractor.

### Aging/Yellowing

It's inevitable—floors age, and older finishes start to yellow. This is more noticeable where you have furniture or area rugs that have been moved after an extended period.

### Fumes/Smells

The environmental impact and emissions (including VOCs and off-gassing) that some products put off has become a growing concern for families. Some finishes produce greater emissions than others, and in some cases the area where a new finish was applied has to remain "off-limits" for days. Other finishes, however, have zero VOCs and minimal odor. This is a factor to talk to your flooring contractor about to be sure you and your family remain comfortable and safe.

### Maintenance

The maintenance each finish requires is a big factor, too. Hardwood finishes naturally provide a hard and durable surface that will be easy to sweep and keep clean. And when they're properly maintained, they provide added moisture resistance. Penetrating finishes, in particular, can be easier to repair if or when they are scratched; most scratches can be repaired by simply recoating the damaged area. However, these finishes offer minimal resistance from moisture.

Whatever your balance of resistance and maintenance is, talk to your flooring contractor to get the recommendation that's right for your household.

### Drying and Cure Time

While you do want your floors to look their best, you don't want to be away from your home for too long. Drying and curing time are important to consider, too.

"First finish" systems are NOT used or recommended by Valor Home Services. Below are the cure and finish systems to avoid, which we have ruled out for any of our projects. Be aware of them, and don't let any flooring company tell you otherwise:

### Moisture Cure

This is a cure system you might hear about, however we ruled it out because of its high level of toxicity and other safety concerns (including fire hazards and combustibility). Moisture cure also produces a terrible odor.

### Swedish Finish

Swedish finishes were also ruled out by Valor for the same reasons as the moisture cure. These are extremely durable finishes, however the high-end, two-component water-based finishes we use are just as durable and don't have these safety problems.

### 'Old School' Penetrating Oils and Wax

Penetrating oils are another system we ruled out due to quality. They spot easily when liquids are spilled on them, and they take too long to dry and cure.

## SYSTEMS WE DO RECOMMEND:

Type of Finish	2 Part Water	Single Water	Oil Based	Swedish Finish	Moisture Cure	Penetrating and Wax	Hardwax Oils
<b>Durability</b>							
Abrasion	5	3.5	3.5	4.5	5	3	3
Scratch	4.5	3.5	3.5	4.5	5	3	3
Chemical	5	4	4	5	5	2	2
<b>Other Factors</b>							
Looks	4	4	5	5	5	5	5
Aging/Yellowing	5	4	3	3	3	5	4
Fumes/Smell	5	5	3	1	0.5	3	5
Maintenance	4	4	4	4	4	3	4
Dry/Cure Time	5	5	3	3.5	3.5	3	5
<b>Total Out of 40</b>	<b>37.5</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30.5</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>31</b>

The numbers are the general average and our personal opinion for each finish type. Specific products perform better or worse.

5 - Excellent 4 - Very Good 3 - Good 2 - Fair 1 - Poor 0 - Horrible

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