

Should I SAND & FINISH My Hardwood Floors Myself?

Hardwoods are known for their durability and are *touted as floors that will “last a lifetime,”* which is why they are in such high demand. However, they take a lot of abuse on a day to day basis so it’s no surprise that over time they can look worn and may be in need of some TLC. If that’s the case, it may be time to refinish them.

Many homeowners are handy and with the wealth of information on the internet, you can find a step by step process for just about anything. Refinishing hardwood floors is no exception and if you do it yourself you could save quite a bit of money. Sounds appealing, right? With that said, remember that *your wood floors are a huge investment and the last thing you want to do is damage them* as it could cost you far more in the long run.

Sanding doesn’t sound too complicated. They even rent sanding equipment at big box stores, so how hard could it be? Don’t be fooled—it takes years and years to learn the proper techniques and it *requires expensive specialized equipment that is properly calibrated.* If one step is missed in the process or done incorrectly, the result will show in the stain and finish and a complete re-sand would need to happen. So proceed with caution if taking this on as a DIY project.

In addition, remember that this is a specialty craft and just because someone is a contractor does not mean that they are qualified either. Some contractors want to

include it in their repertoire of services and quickly realize that *unless you are doing this on a consistent basis, it’s not easy to pick up the skill* and can easily cost them thousands of dollars in repairs if done incorrectly.

If sanded properly, *only ___ should be removed from the wood’s surface* and it’s recommended to re-sand only every 10-20 years (depending on need). Solid oak flooring is 3/4” thick, so you might think you have nothing to worry about if you sand too much. Unfortunately, that’s not the case. The wood can only be sanded down to the level of the tongue and groove, which is 3/8”. Once you reach this level where the boards connect, further sanding compromises the integrity of the floor. If someone sands too aggressively they *can easily remove more and take years or even decades off of those floors that were supposed to last a lifetime.*

It is recommended to hire a professional for a project like this, however, if you feel confident and choose the route of DIY, make sure you go to specifically to a hardwood flooring distributor to rent equipment. They are far more knowledgeable than if you go to a big box store and will tell you exactly what equipment, stain and finish to use. Also, check out our *step by step guide on “How to Sand & Finish Hardwood Floors”* and remember each step is *crucial* for a good result, so don’t skip even one.