

CARING FOR YOUR DANCE FLOOR

STM Studio Supplies
by Professionals for Professionals

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We appreciate that your dance floor is a significant investment and recommend a regular maintenance schedule. One of the primary reasons people invest in flooring is to provide a safe dance environment. An improperly maintained floor can negate that good intention. Whilst this article is primarily directed towards dance floor vinyls, the same general principles apply to timber and Juju finished floors. An uncared for floor sends a bad message when we are trying to instill discipline in the hearts and minds of our students. A clean floor, compatible with what you want to do, presents the right image and also makes for better performance and in turn happier instructors, students, customers, and artists.

The regular cleaning of your dance floor is not only important to the overall life of the floor but to the well-being and professional image of the studio as an entity. A good maintenance program avoids the build up and transmission of bacteria, fungi and mildew, which may result in respiratory and other health, issues. All floors get dirty. "Dirty floors become slippery", says American Harlequin Marketing Manager, Claire Londress, who advises mopping with a neutral pH cleaner every week, and then going over the area again with water to pick up any residue. Dust, dirt, sweat, shoe marks, food, drinks, and even chewing gum are the prime offenders. The more the floor is used, the more it needs to be cleaned. Both vinyl and timber floors need proper upkeep or can create problems.

Before trying any new cleaning products or techniques, check with your manufacturer. And above all: "When you're cleaning, make sure the area is well ventilated for your own safety," says Londress. "I know it's common sense, but I can't say it enough!"

*As a minimum program,
your dance floor should be swept and dry mopped at least 3 times a week*

What's good for wood?

"Dirt acts like sandpaper on a wood floor," says Ed O'Mara, president of O'Mara Sprung Floors. "The dirtier the floor, the quicker the finish wears off." He recommends sweeping wood floors with a wide dust broom on a daily basis. For more advanced cleaning, O'Mara suggests mixing a cleanser like I .F .T (Intensive Floor Treatment) with water in a spray



bottle, spraying a section, mopping it with a damp dust mop, and then drying the area with a broom that has been wrapped in a terry-cloth towel.

“Keep flipping the towel over and pushing it over the floor until it comes up clean,” he says, then air dry. Certain cleansers can harm wood floors.

“The bottom line for a wood floor is that you don’t want to use anything with ammonia or abrasives because it can ruin the finish,” says Franklin. Spot cleaning is essential to keeping your wood floor in shape. As with vinyl, most marks can be scrubbed away by hand with a standard cleanser. But, O’Mara says, you can also get many rubber-based spots off simply by rubbing them with a tennis ball.

Randy Swartz from Dance Affiliates comments:

“There are four things that make your floor dirty. They are foreign organic materials such as dust and dirt, body oil from perspiration, scuff and dry marks from shoes, and aluminium compound residue from tap shoes. Water by itself may remove the dirt but will only spread the oil throughout the floor, which is not good.”

Swartz says studio owners must be particularly diligent about getting rosin off their floors.

“Wood is a porous substance and rosin is essentially pine tar,” he says. “Over time, rosin migrates into the wood and hardens, making it slippery.”



STM Studio Supplies carry dance floor specific cleaners including Sadie Suds, Dirty Di, Rosco All Purpose Cleaner, and Stagesep Pro Clean X. The regularity of their use is up to you and a function of how much traffic your floor is getting.

An ideal regime would be daily sweeping then a damp mop. A more thorough cleaning weekly with water and detergent, then a rinse is recommended.

Over time, an accumulation of scuff and dye marks may accumulate and become too unsightly. If this is the case, use a stripper and red pad on an orbital floor polisher. This however will leave your floor dull and if you prefer a slight sheen it will be necessary to refinish it. You may, if you wish, at this time re-colour it using Slip NoMor Color. This innovative floor finish allows you to renew the floor and maintain the same non-slip and other performance attributes required for your specific activities. Be very wary about the stripping process, as it may not suit your particular vinyl. An attempt at stripping a Rosco Adagio floor recently in Australia left it as fast as an ice rink!

Do not use any cleaner with ammonia in its formula as the ammonia will damage the floor making the surface. Sometimes more care is needed. “If it’s humid, the dancers’ perspiration evaporates into the air, warming up the room,” says Randy Swartz. “When the air cools, it can’t hold the moisture. This accumulates on the surface of the floor. If it’s where dust has collected, it creates microscopic mud and results in a slippery surface.” Swartz recommends that studio floors be dry-mopped before class, then a dehumidifier used overnight.



Dust and dirt act like sandpaper and should be removed as soon as possible. It is important to minimize the amount of dirt that makes its way into the studio. The use of entrance or threshold mats when you come into the building and again when you enter the studio can collect up to 80% of dirt. Whether they be scraps of old carpet or proprietary systems built into the floor, remember they need regular cleaning too, with a shake and beating at least monthly.

Pianos If possible move the piano if it is on the floor a 100mm or so every 3-4 hours so it doesn't leave permanent dents



Air conditioning and heater filters should be checked and cleaned regularly otherwise you could be recycling dust and dirt. Ensure that street shoes are removed outside of the studio.

Eating drinking or smoking should not be allowed in the studio, with the exception of water, but still be vigilant about mopping spills immediately.



Sharp objects such as high heels, sharp edged items, scenery, chairs, tables or other equipment should not be allowed onto the floors as these items may gouge, or damage the floor.



Felt pads under all furniture legs, especially chairs will help prevent scratching and should be changed frequently.

Painting items should be avoided while resting on your floor, consider moving the item off the floor or lay drop cloths or sheet plastic around and under the item so as to protect the floor. Any substance spilled or dropped on the floor should be removed immediately.



Before you do anything, sweep the floor

Broom choice is important, a soft bristle push broom does a better job than scissor type dust mop sweepers. Get a broom that is a least 600mm (24") wide and avoid stiff natural bristles or straw brooms as these will scratch the surface.

Sweep daily and follow up with a damp mop, using a designated bucket & mop.



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Mop choice is also important, do spend the money on commercial grade buckets and mops and replace your mop heads every six months depending on use and wear.



Cleaning Instructions

✓ 1x good quality broom

✓ 3x good quality buckets

✓ 2x good quality mops



✓ **Wash Bucket & Wash Mop** for warm water & Sadie Suds



Suds clean

✓ **Rinse Bucket & Rinse Mop**

for clean warm water rinsing and daily damp mopping only. These should **NEVER** receive detergent and should be reserved for your daily damp mop and the final rinse for a Sadie



✓ **Clean Bucket** for rinsing & cleaning **Wash Mop** only

CHECKLIST

1. ***SWEEP THE FLOOR*** please refer to STM Floor Care for tips

2. ***Combine Sadie Suds*** in ***Wash Bucket*** with warm to almost hot water.

Recommended Dilution 1L Bottle		Recommended Dilution 5L Bottle	
Light soil	1 capful Sadie Suds /1L water	Light soil	1capful Sadie Suds /1.5L water
Medium Soil	2 capfuls Sadie Suds /1L water	Medium Soil	1 capful Sadie Suds /1L water
Heavy soil	4 capfuls Sadie Suds /1L water	Heavy soil	2 capfuls Sadie Suds /1 L water
Spray/Wipe	4 capfuls Sadie Suds /500 ml water	Spray/Wipe	2 capfuls Sadie Suds /500 ml water

3. ***Use Wash Mop*** in ***Wash Bucket*** and wring out excess liquid as you want to limit the water on any floor surface. Avoid flooding the floor as the moisture can get into the sub-floor and cause delaminating.

4. ***Wash, using your mop in a figure 8 pattern*** with your dominant hand on the top and your other in the middle of the handle. This is in fact a great core exercise in the grand tradition of the Karate Kid’s “wax on wax off”. If you can’t convince yourself and your own abs of that, perhaps one of your students needs the extra work out! (Excellent incentive for those students who are constantly late to class, see also cleaning mirrors!)

5. ***Rinse Wash Mop*** in ***Clean Bucket*** then repeat the wash cycle. Change the clean water regularly to avoid spreading dirt rather than cleaning! In all instances, your floor is not clean until your rinse water is!

6. ***Final Rinse***, using ***Rinse Bucket & Rinse Mop*** rinse until the water is relatively clear. Detergents create a dirt-attracting residue so the rinse process is very important. Cleaning the mop head under a tap before you start rinsing the floor is a good idea and shortens this process. You will be surprised how dirty your rinse water is, on a 10m x 8m floor you will likely have to change the water 3 times.

Make sure that the floor is thoroughly dry before use

Spot cleaning is another issue. Most of the above detergents can be used as spot cleaners in concentrated form. There are also a number products of designed to attack spot problems. These are often solvents, usually made from a citrus base. They will cause damage if left on your floor and they will definitely degrade finishes. When using these and any of the following spot products, make sure you immediately wipe up the solvent, then flush the area with water and dry. It is advisable to wear rubber gloves when using detergents as a concentrate, they are powerful and may cause skin irritation.

Dirty Di is a high alkaline product that we recommend for this purpose. Ideally you should follow with a neutralizing wash with Sadie Suds and a rinse with clean water.

The next cheapest alternatives to this are mineral turpentine or methylated spirits. Used with care, methylated spirits and mineral turpentine are readily available and effective but can also affect the finish or "seal" of the floor and ultimately dissolve the vinyl. These must be rinsed completely and quickly after use.

Avoid xylene, acetone, alcohol and lacquer thinners, as they are too aggressive for the same reason.

Avoid any abrasive cleaners such as "Jiff", scouring powders and pads that will break the surface and create tiny, dirt attracting scratches and subsequently result in the need for more cleaning.

Rinsing of the affected area after cleaning is paramount



Tea tree and eucalyptus oil have been used successfully on some marks and interestingly we have had great success with tennis balls! Either in your hand or on the end of a broom handles, these act as a large eraser and are surprisingly effective, particularly on white marks left by some sneakers.



Disintegrating aluminum taps that produce the gray/black marks are another type of challenge for dance floor owners. Apart from the marks, loose and worn plates are a danger in themselves. Aluminum compound taps break down leaving a residue of Aluminium Oxide, an abrasive used in sandpaper which ends up sticking to the vinyl. One way to get rid of this is to use artificial chamois cloths and dry mop your floor with the cloth. The shards of aluminum will stick directly to the chamois. Wash them out and reuse the cloth. The second method is to wet down the floor and use a wet/dry vacuum cleaner to lift up the residue.



Stagstep Tap Armor and Tap Shield are worth investigating as products developed specifically for this problem.

Wax finishes obviously must be avoided or they will cause the floor to become slippery. In recent years, polish manufacturers have introduced "slip-resistant" waxes: before using these, please satisfy yourself that they are slip-resistant. This is a decision that only you can make.



Stages & touring applications the floor should be swept and mopped everyday. Derek Effew, via Control Booth online forum, recommends cleaning a performance stage after sweeping, starting downstage and working upstage, and always from the same side of the stage to the other. In the absence of a mop, Derek recommends using a bath-sized towel and wringing it out well. Wrap the towel around a 600mm (24") broom to "damp mop" the area. Rearrange the towel to present a clean side to the floor as necessary. If wet mopping with an

actual mop, use the figure-8 motion the width of a panel, from one side of the stage to the other.

Small bouts of cleaning, often and consistently, is the best programme to follow. Be sure you follow instructions as to the number of applications, technique of application, drying time and other requirements. The cleaner you keep your floor, the longer it will last, the better it will look, and the safer it will be. We are happy to answer any specific questions about cleaning or maintenance and any other dance floor related matter- just pick up the phone and call us. Warm regards and happy dancing!



The above advice can only be considered as recommendation without obligation. On account of the wide variety of conditions in practice, this information is not binding and does not warrant a contractual legal relationship or accessory obligation