How to Clean Laminate Floors

Smooth, streak-free laminate — without soaking it, steaming it, or damaging the finish.

GOLDEN RULE: Never soak laminate and never steam-mop it. Under the printed top layer is a fibreboard core that swells and warps if it gets wet. Mop only damp, and dry quickly.

What You Will Need

- Soft-bristle broom, or a vacuum cleaner on the hard-floor setting (no spinning beater bar)
- Microfibre flat mop — wrung out well, never dripping
- Bucket of warm water
- Laminate-safe floor cleaner, or plain warm water with just a few drops of mild dish soap
- White vinegar (for sticky spots and streaks only)
- Clean, dry microfibre cloths or towels
- Soft cloth or old toothbrush for edges and corners
- Baking soda (for stubborn scuffs)

Everyday Cleaning

- **1. Sweep or vacuum first.** Remove loose dirt before any wet cleaning — grit left on the floor acts like sandpaper under shoes and furniture.
- **2. Damp-mop — never wet-mop.** Add laminate-safe cleaner per the label, or just a few drops of mild dish soap, to warm water. Wring the microfibre mop out thoroughly — it should feel barely damp, not wet. Mop in the direction of the planks, in sections of about 1–2 metres at a time.
- **3. Dry straight away.** Go over each mopped section with a dry microfibre cloth or towel before moving on. The floor should be dry within a minute or two. Standing water seeps into the joints and causes swelling, bubbling and lifted edges.
- **4. Finish the edges.** Wipe skirting boards and corners with a wrung-out cloth, and check the joints for any drips. Wipe up any puddle immediately.

Spills and Spot Stains

- **Food and drink spills:** Blot — never rub — with a dry cloth first, then wipe with a damp cloth and dry.
- **Sticky spots (juice, jam, syrup):** Hold a cloth dampened with warm water and a tiny drop of dish soap on the spot for 30 seconds to soften it, then wipe and dry. For a really stubborn patch, wipe with 1 part white vinegar to 3 parts water, then rinse with a plain damp cloth and dry.
- **Greasy marks:** A drop of dish soap on a damp cloth, wiped in the direction of the planks, then a clean damp wipe and a dry finish.
- Never pour cleaner or water directly onto the floor — always apply it to the cloth or mop first.

Streak Prevention

- Use less cleaner than you think you need — a few drops of dish soap in a full bucket is plenty.
- Mop with a well-wrung microfibre mop, not a string mop that holds excess water.
- Mop with the grain of the planks, not across them.

- If streaks appear, go over the floor once more with a mop dampened in plain warm water, then dry immediately. A final buff with a dry microfibre cloth leaves a clean, even finish.

Scuffs and Marks

- **Shoe scuffs:** Rub gently with a dry microfibre cloth first — many light scuffs come straight off. For a stubborn mark, make a paste of 3 tablespoons of baking soda mixed with 1 tablespoon of water, rub it lightly over the scuff in small circles for 20–30 seconds, then wipe clean with a damp cloth and dry.
- **Crayon or pen marks:** Try the baking soda paste above. Avoid acetone, nail polish remover or abrasive erasers — they can strip the printed top layer.
- **Furniture dents and scratches:** Stick felt pads under chair and table legs, and lift — don't drag — furniture when you move it. Small scratches can be hidden with a laminate repair pen matched to your floor colour.

Protecting Your Laminate Day to Day

- Put doormats at every entrance and wipe shoes before coming in.
- Wipe up pet water bowl spills straight away, and put a mat under bowls.
- Keep indoor humidity moderate — very damp air can swell the core over time, so ventilate kitchens and bathrooms well.
- Trim pets' nails regularly to prevent scratches.

What NOT to Do

- No steam mops — steam forces moisture into the joints and will damage laminate.
- No soaking — never flood the floor, never leave a wet mop sitting on it, and never leave spills to dry on their own.
- No wax or polish — laminate has its own sealed top layer; wax and polish just build up into a cloudy, sticky film.
- No abrasive pads or scrub brushes — steel wool, scouring pads and stiff brushes scratch the surface permanently.
- No oil soaps or “mop and shine” products — they leave residue that attracts dirt and dulls the finish.
- No wet vacuum cleaners on laminate — they push water into the joints.

Tick-Off Checklist

Tick each step as you finish it.

- ☐ Dirt swept or vacuumed (hard-floor setting, no beater bar)
- ☐ Mop wrung out well — damp, never dripping
- ☐ Floor damp-mopped in the direction of the planks, section by section
- ☐ Each section dried straight away with a dry microfibre cloth
- ☐ Spills blotted immediately, never left to dry on the floor
- ☐ Sticky spots softened with a damp cloth, then wiped and dried
- ☐ Greasy marks cleaned with a drop of dish soap, then rinsed and dried
- ☐ Streaks fixed with a plain-water damp mop and a dry buff

- [ ] Shoe scuffs rubbed with a dry cloth, or baking soda paste (3 tbsp + 1 tbsp water) for stubborn marks
- [ ] Edges, corners and skirting boards wiped and checked for drips
- [ ] No steam mop, no soaking, no wax or polish, no abrasive pads used
- [ ] Felt pads fitted on furniture legs; furniture lifted, not dragged

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