

# **WARPING, CUPPING & BUCKLING: ...WHAT IS... YOUR HARDWOOD FLOORING?**

Minor damage to hardwood floors can easily be repaired by a hardwood flooring professional. Here are some common hardwood floor problems and solutions if your hardwood floor needs a little extra attention.

## **Hardwood Floor Repair: Split or Cracked Wood**

Over the years, many hardwood floors develop small splits or cracks in the surface of the wood. These can be spot repaired with some angled nails to secure the two pieces together, along with some wood putty to hide the blemishes. If your floor is suffering from large cracks, however, you might want to think about refinishing the floor. And if the split is particularly bad, you should probably replace the damaged plank altogether.

## **Hardwood Floor Repair: Gaps in the Planks**

Another common hardwood floor malady is the development of gaps between planks. The most common causes of gaps between the boards is Mother Nature. Wood shrinks as it dries out, and it expands when it gets wet and humid. That regular expansion and contraction over time is the most common cause of gaps, and is the main reason why most gaps are seasonal in nature. Perhaps your best plan of action is to exercise patience. The natural process of things will tend to close gaps as the weather and humidity changes. As a rule, if the gap is less than the thickness of a dime, your flooring is normal and there's nothing to worry about. If your gaps are more persistent, you might need to call in a professional to tighten up your hardwood floor so that they cease to be a problem.

## **Hardwood Floor Repair: Buckling**

A buckled floor happens when the boards warp and lift up from the subfloor that they are attached to. You'll most likely need to call in a hardwood floor installer to identify the root of the problem if buckling is an issue. Once the cause of your buckling has been identified, you'll need to take the necessary measures to ensure that your hardwood planks are firmly attached to the subfloor so that the problem no longer persists.

## **Hardwood Floor Repair: Cupped Floors**

Cupped floors, also called washboarding, develops gradually across the width of the wood strip where the edges of the hardwood planks raise up and the center of the board sinks down. The cause of cupped floors is a moisture imbalance where there is more water on the bottom side of the wood plank than on the top. The only cure is to balance the humidity levels in your home, and to give the surface time to return back to normal. After the floor has stabilized, you can have a professional sand it flat and re-finish it to perfection.

## **Hardwood Floor Repair: Warped Hardwood Floors**

Warped hardwood floors, also known as sagging, is a serious problem for any homeowner. It is often the result of serious moisture problems, and any evidence of warped hardwood floors needs to be addressed immediately. Warped hardwood floors are rarely the result of faulty hardwood or installation, but are a symptom of larger moisture problems in the home itself that need to be taken care of.

## **Other Hardwood Repair Problems**

Besides major problems, you may also experience scratching or loose planks with your hardwood flooring. Scratches can be repaired with touch up kits, or something as simple as a like colored crayon. If you've got serious scratching, however, you may need to hire a contractor to refinish the flooring altogether. And if you've got loose planks, your only solution is to tie them down. Ideally they should

be nailed to the subfloor to prevent any more movement, though excessively loose boards can be a sign of improper installation in the first place. Bringing in a professional hardwood installer to re-install your flooring properly is probably the only sure way to permanently solve the problem

### **WHAT CAUSES HARDWOOD FLOORS TO WARP?**

Moisture.....water... high humidity. Warping (or cupping) is usually moisture from underneath. A moisture meter can help determine where it may be coming from. Water leaks behind a frig, pipe leaks or just a damp crawl space are just a few causes. Once you've found what's causing it you can deal with it.

a crowning floor is usually caused by too much moisture on the surface (i.e. flooding of a floor or too much water used during mopping). A corrective measure may be a dehumidifier on the opposite side of the cup. It'll take some time but this is a cheaper measure than floor replacement. But once a floor has buckled it's almost a lost cause. Have a flooring specialist or contractor take a look at it before it's too late.

### **WHAT CAUSES HARDWOOD FLOORS TO RISE?**

Moisture could be causing the wood to swell and if the flooring cannot expand outward it has to go up. Another possibility is dirt getting into the joints between the boards and, like the moisture problem above, the flooring expands.