

## **Overview and comparison of Trip Trap Oils to other commonly used finishing systems**

### **Why use an oil finish?**

Until a few years ago most wood floors in America were finished with fairly high levels of gloss. Waxes and urethane top coating systems were used to protect the floor and to achieve these levels of gloss. As wood floor customers have come to desire more of a natural look in their floors that complements the natural beauty of wood, gloss levels have been reduced to a satin or even matt look. With the advent of older looking floors, such as scraped or antiqued floors, less gloss has become even more important in an attempt to achieve a natural, “old world” look.

An oil finished floor provides the most natural look of any wood floor finish. An oil finish also tends to make some floors look “old”, as if they had been installed for a very long time. Prior to the use of various urethane and similar finishes, oil was the traditional finish of choice. In Europe, where this traditional natural look has been in demand for quite some time, oil finishes account for almost a third of all wood floor finishes.

Since an oil finish actually penetrates, and becomes a part of the surface of a wood floor, it is not nearly as sensitive to scratches and wear as a urethane finish. As it not only penetrates, but also hardens, a Trip Trap oil finish provides very good protection, is easy to maintain and, if done properly, will prevent a wood floor from ever having to be sanded.

### **Should I use oil on my floor?**

If you like the older, more natural look, a Trip Trap oil finish of your wood floor should definitely be considered. Trip Trap oil finishes are also great if you expect a lot of wear on your floor. The level of wear can range from a household pet to having thousands of people a week walk across your floor in a commercial establishment.

If you like the fact that a Trip Trap oil finished floor can be spot treated where needed, as needed, instead of having to be fully sanded and refinished, you may want to consider the Trip Trap Oil finishing system.

## **The three most commonly used wood floor finishing systems**

### **1. Top coating (urethane) systems**

A wood floor with a urethane finish, whether site finished or factory prefinished, will never look better than the day it is installed. Urethanes are residual sheets of plastic, sometimes with minerals added, whose purpose is to provide a surface on top of the wood upon which to walk and live. The minute they are lived on, they begin to degenerate by wear and tear and the floor will gradually become more and more worn.

Initial and short term maintenance is simple, but long term maintenance involves the entire floor being cleared and then sanded or screened and recoated with new finish. For best results, this work should always be performed by a wood flooring professional.

The main advantages to this system are that a higher gloss level can be achieved than with the other systems and that initial maintenance in residential applications may be slightly less. There

are also wear warranties usually associated with this type of finish. These warranties, however, must be considered more or less worthless, since the limitations inherent in all of them, prevents the user from actually benefiting.

### 2. Penetrating sealers without hardeners

This commonly used system utilizes traditional stains and penetrating sealers in a solvent (mineral spirits) solution. It is a good system for many residential and commercial applications. The wood floor, in theory, is sealed with the pigments that the finish products have in them. A downside is that this system can not get the pigments deeply into the wood and will leave the surface of the wood floor partially open after curing. Application of multiple coats of penetrating sealer (3-5) will help, but does not provide a complete solution. It also increases the cost and downtime of the job.

When using penetrating sealers, it is difficult to achieve a gloss level exceeding a flat satin look. Sometimes wax is used to improve the protection and sheen of these floors. This may well bring problems of its own, since most waxes are dirt collectors and will display visible light spots when water is spilled on the floor. They also must be cleaned and polished frequently.

### 3. Penetrating and hardening wood floor oils

Oil finishes currently used in the U.S. are primarily tung oil based or similar. These oils, while they do penetrate and dry, do not harden and will not provide the best protection against wear and stains.

The European style oil finish provided by Trip Trap of Denmark will both penetrate and harden to achieve a very wear resistant finish, which is easily applied and maintained. This type of oil finish has been manufactured in Europe for over 30 years and is currently used on almost a third of all wood floors sold in Europe. Some regional markets have almost exclusively converted to oil finished wood floors. This is due to the fact that wood floors finished in this way look very natural and are easily maintained and repaired where needed, as needed. Trip Trap oils are also very different from non-hardening oils, as they contain very high amounts of solid particles, as high as 91%. This translates into a high quality floor finish that is very friendly to our environment.

Trip Trap oils, containing primarily cold pressed vegetable oils and aromatic hardening oils, penetrate into the surface of the wood floor and, as they cure, harden to form a very protective surface that becomes part of the wood floor. This means that normal wear and tear, such as small scratches and indentations, do not show up as much as on a floor with a urethane finish. The oil finish will also let the wood floor breathe through its surface, not just along its edges. Normal cleaning is easy using Trip Trap soap, simply mixing it with warm water and mopping the floor periodically. As the floor is being cleaned, it is also given added protection against wear and tear. The Trip Trap soap contains soy and coconut fats, which dry as an invisible film on the surface of the floor and give it added protection. As a result, wood floors finished with Trip Trap oil finish are not in need of any fancily worded finish warranties. Periodic cleaning and maintenance will make it unnecessary to ever screen or sand your wood floor.

## **SPECIAL HARDWOOD** PRODUCTS INCORPORATED

Trip Trap oil finishing products are constantly researched and improved at the manufacturer's own laboratories in Denmark, always meeting the highest possible environmental standards. Trip Trap wood care products are also approved and certified by independent laboratories, such as IBR, the German Institute for Biological Building Materials, and are in accordance with DIN-Norm 53-160. Trip Trap products also meet or exceed the most stringent VOC (volatile organic compounds) regulations in North America.