

LOW MAINTENANCE DOES NOT MEAN NO MAINTENANCE

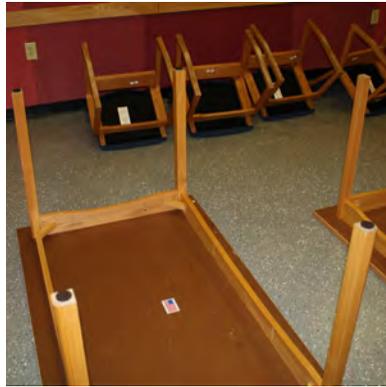
Is it simply a consumer's desire to hear, "no maintenance required"? I'm not sure but ... there is no such thing as a **NO MAINTENANCE FLOOR.**

A frequently encountered and commonly misused phrase about flooring is "My floor is a no maintenance floor!" Apprehensive that I missed something earth shattering one night while sleeping, I decided to research 10 major US flooring manufacturers who make luxury vinyl tile. LVT is not the only type of flooring referred

to as 'no-maintenance' however it is one of the most frequent so that is the focus of this flooring topic however these rules apply to other types of resilient flooring as well. My homework confirmed that I did not miss anything at all and there is still no such thing as a no maintenance floor... whew! Based on my existing



Walk-off Door Mat



Furniture Floor Protectors

knowledge, my research with LVT brands and a recent conversation with Terry Fitzpatrick, who recently retired after a long tenure as Manager of Technical Services for Mannington Mills, I came up with a consolidated

Walk-off Door Mat A footnote from my talk with Terry Fitzpatrick, who has been a close friend since my days at Mannington Mills where he was my Supervisor, he shared a story with me about a gentleman that he worked with years ago, installing floors, long before his days at Mannington. The gentleman told Terry, "The day that we install a floor is the best that floor will ever look. After that, gravity takes over and everything that can, will land on the floor." A simple statement but it stuck with Terry and it sums up the fact that regardless of the type, brand, quality of a floor, as 'stuff' spills, falls and tracks onto a floor, it will need to be cleaned up!



list of 6 MUST-DO items for a low (not a no) maintenance LVT floor.

Six Must-do Maintenance Items for LVT:

1. Walk-off doormats. Place them at all exterior entrances and vacuum routinely. Door mats collect moisture and dirt that tracks in from outside keeping most of it off your floor. Use quality matting that has bound, tapered edges and a non-staining backing material. In commercial buildings, retaining soil and moisture at the point of entry reduces flooring maintenance costs and it can prevent slip, trip and fall accidents.
2. Moving glides. To avoid unwanted damage to the floor, use moving aids such as felt-bottom glides under the items being moved or Masonite® to cover the flooring when moving furniture and equipment across an LVT floor, especially a new flooring installation.
3. Furniture floor protectors. Equip all furniture, including file cabinets, chairs, chairs with casters, desks, tables, rolling equipment, etc. with soft, adequate floor protectors engineered for heavy-duty commercial use. TIP: Most new furniture including chairs, tables and casters come standard with floor protection designed for carpet use, not hard surface floors. A simple rule of thumb- for a soft surface floor (carpet) the caster or protector should be hard and for hard surface flooring, such as LVT, the protector or caster must be soft.



Wash LVT routinely with a 2-bucket system or auto-scrubber.



Application of a flooring finish will add protection against surface scratches.

4. Sweep or vacuum regularly. Using a soft bristle broom or a vacuum that does NOT use a beater bar on hard-surface floors or is equipped with a soft bristle or felt rib lining on a vacuum attachment head. Your broom or vacuum must be clean and free of dirt and debris to work effectively.

5. Wash floor with a neutral cleaner. Clean LVT regularly and routinely (determined by location, type of use, traffic, etc) with a quality Neutral Cleaner. When using a mop and bucket, use a two bucket system to capture the dirty grey water in one bucket while keeping other bucket for the clean, cleaning solution. Pushing dirty water around the floor does not count as washing!
6. Apply a flooring finish. Floor polish or finish, though not always required, will extend the life of a floor because it adds a protective layer against wear and tear. It's a must in high-traffic areas. There are many finishes out there. I typically recommend Hilway Direct Floor Finishes because I can rely on the quality of their standard finishes, the Plus cleaner/maintainer or the newer Primo extended wear finish. Dr Schutz is another reliable option when a more permanent and highly protective wearlayer is ideal. Some flooring brands specify the exact flooring finish to be used on their flooring. This is the ultimate guide and should be heeded.

It is truly amazing how words get twisted. Is it the words that are used to describe the amount of maintenance that will be required for a floor? Is it simply a consumer's desire to hear, "no maintenance required"? I'm not sure but make no mistake...there is no such thing as a NO MAINTENANCE FLOOR.

As a consumer, always read the flooring manufacturer's maintenance instructions prior to purchasing a new floor so you know what you're getting. As a salesperson, distributor or installer, do the same and provide a copy to your customer. If you're concerned about the customer's perception of the floor because they want something easy to care for and yours calls for routine maintenance, gather the competition's documents for care and maintenance as well and present the similarities –there will be many. When a customer finds out after the fact that their floor requires more maintenance than they were led to believe, they are not likely coming back to the same person when they replace that floor and they are not likely to recommend a flooring brand that they are unhappy with. It is really that simple.