

Floating Engineered Hardwood Floors

- Can They Be Sanded?

By Ward Braun

This is one of my biggest pet peeves with the engineered, pre-finished hardwood flooring industry.

Most of the salesman that sell this type of flooring will rave about how it can be re-sanded a number of times. This is a huge misconception and they are doing the people who are buying engineered flooring based on this misleading information a giant disservice.

Technically, yes, they can be sanded a number of times. But, practically and realistically, you're unfortunately going to have a fun time trying to find someone to professionally do it for you.

The only time we will consider sanding an engineered floor is if it has at least a 5/16th wear layer and it has been *securely* glued down to a very *flat* sub-floor.

This is a huge misconception and a giant disservice

We *never* put our big sanding machines on an engineered floor that has been installed as a floating

floor. Unfortunately, this is exactly how most of these floors are installed.

Not only that but most engineered floors have far less than a 5/16th wear layer, some wear layers are as thin as 1/16th.

Because the companies manufacturing these types of flooring know it can't be re-sanded, they apply very tough aluminum oxide finishes to them.

In order to sand through this very tough wear layer, you need a very coarse grit sanding belt. The problem with this is, once

you have sanded through the tough finish, this coarse sandpaper will very quickly sand through the thin layer of wood like a hot knife through butter.

On top of this, a lot of installers don't prep and level the sub floor properly, leaving it very uneven. So if we were to try sanding one of these floating floors, the weight of our belt sander alone would buckle the floor, cracking the joints and our sander would be jumping all over the place.

This would make it virtually impossible to sand the floor evenly and there would be a huge risk of sanding through the very thin layer of wood. It's a tough go no matter which way you look at it and we haven't even talked about sanding the bevels that a lot of these floors have between boards.

Unfortunately these floors are becoming very, very popular. I say that not because I don't think they have their place, they do - in fact they're one of the only types of wood floors you can install in some areas.

But a lot of people with them in the next few years will be trying to have them refinished to remove the deeper scratches - yes, even these tough aluminum oxide factory applied finishes scratch and dent - and they may not be able to refinish them because of the above reasons.

Of course, we'll be happy to check if your engineered floors can be sanded or not.

Ward Braun is the President of Woodsmith Hardwood Floors Ltd.

Visit us online at www.WoodsmithHardwood.com