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EC1173 Care and Repair of Wall and Floors

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Care and Repair of Wall and Floors



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Care and Repair of Walls and Floors

BY MURIEL L. SMITH

“There is a moral value in having things repaired.”

The floor, walls, and ceiling together constitute the background of the room. A floor is the structural base of the room, it is the foundation from which the walls rise and form the background. Unless the background is good in color, tone, and texture, much of the effectiveness of the furniture, pictures, ornaments, and rugs will be lost.

Taking nature as a guide in the great outdoors, the earth, which we may liken to the floor of our house, is dark and generally neutral in tone; the blue sky directly over head is light and is the ceiling of the earth. The sky just above the horizon is medium in color between the two and compares with the wall of a room. This is a safe guide upon which to build a plan for surface finishes.

The thrifty housewife is constantly planning how she may make inexpensive, yet attractive improvements by means of care or repair of her house or its furnishings. One need not be baffled by the condition of an old floor or wall if one truly wishes to rejuvenate it. It may require as much exercise as a strenuous game of athletics but the final results may be more permanently thrilling.

Cheap materials are not economical. Inferior quality of paints, oils, and varnishes do not cover as much area nor wear as long as good material. Good brushes save time. The old proverb “A stitch in time” was never more applicable than in the matter of keeping a house in repair.

The first step when planning for repair or improvement is to make a survey as to the work to be done considering the time, strength, and money available.

The second step is to arrange for any major repairs such as bracing the foundation, changing a partition, repairing any roof leaks, or filling cracks and holes.

The third step is to study various possible finishes such as paper, wall paint, enamels, calcimines, and textile wall coverings; considering the cost, durability and ease with which an amateur may apply them. Then make the choice having in mind appropriateness to the room in which it is used, money available, the usefulness and durability due to quality.

Part I. Care and Repair of Walls

ROUTINE AND SPECIAL CARE OF WALLS

Dust, moisture, and dirt collect on any wall surface. So long as the surface is smooth and attractive in color we are anxious to clean it in such a way as to keep the original appearance. Occasional brushing of walls is necessary. This is best accomplished by a long handled, soft hair, wall brush made especially for that purpose. In case only the floor broom is available a homemade tufted bag may be made especially for this purpose and serve very well if kept perfectly clean. The reason for using a hair brush or such a duster for the occasional wiping of walls is to avoid rubbing the soil on to the paper so firmly that it can not be removed later with a wall cleaner.

Wall Duster. Cut strips of old soft cloth $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide and 5 inches long. Take six yards of cord. Fasten center at a convenient place such as a door knob or hook. Hold the cords taut with left hand. Place one of the strips of cloth with its center over the cords. Pull the ends of the strip up between the cords with the right hand, hold ends of strip upright and push the tuft to point where cords are fastened. Place second strip with center over cords, pull ends up between cords and push this tuft against the first tuft. Repeat until sufficient tufting has been made (about 3 yards).

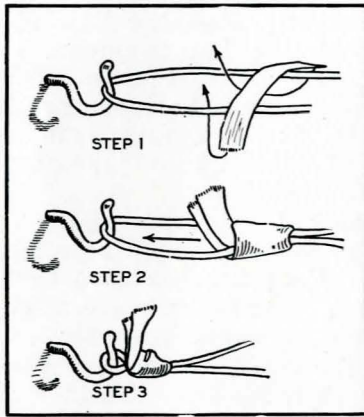


Fig. 1.—Steps in making tufting.

Measure 8 inches from end of tufted strip. Turn at this point and sew the tufted strip in continuous rows around this center forming an elongated pad about 4 inches wide and 12 inches long. Make the pads as nearly as possible the same shape and size as the surface or the brush end of the broom. Sew firmly using heavy thread.

For the side of the bag, cut a piece of strong material long enough to extend around the tufted base. Allow ample material for the seam and hem. The case must be just large enough to fit snugly over broom and tie at the base

of the handle. Allow for a seam and one-half inch hem. Sew the side piece to the tufted pad with tufted side in.

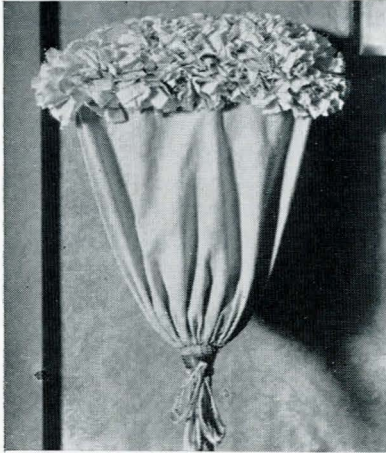


Fig. 2.—The finished wall dusters.

Begin at center of one side. Close the side seam. Finish the bag with a one-half inch hem, leaving two openings for double drawstring. Insert the drawstring. Turn the bag right side out. Slip it over the broom. Pull up drawstring and tie around the handle. Such a duster will require frequent washing as a soiled one will not clean the walls.

How to Remove Grease Spots from Wall Paper. In even the best kept houses grease spots and finger marks will sometimes appear on a new wall paper. Take a clean white

blotter, place it over the spot and press with a hot iron. In case it has not all disappeared, slightly moisten a small quantity of talcum powder or whiting with ammonia, apply to the spot and allow to remain over night. Several applications of the powder may be necessary. Brush the powder away lightly. Any rubbing tends to spread the stain.

A Homemade Wall Paper Cleaner. In cases where the wall surface has become so soiled that dusting will not clean it, the surface may need to be gone over with a cleaner. Good commercially made wall cleaners are on the market at reasonable cost. However, the following proportions will make an expensive wall cleaner which may be used. This method of cleaning requires time, patience, and, unless carefully done, the results may be uneven and streaked. But if several persons share the labor it can be quickly done.

| | | |
|-----------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1 c. flour | 2 T. salt | 1 T. kerosene |
| ½ c. cold water | 2 T. vinegar | |

Blend the flour and salt and mix to a smooth paste with cold water. Add vinegar and kerosene. Boil until thick, stirring constantly. Do not be discouraged if it appears to attain the appearance of a terrible mess. Continue to stir

until the flour is thoroly cooked, otherwise it will stick when used. **Do not add any more mositure. Let cool and knead well with the hand.** Spread papers on the floor before starting work. Apply to the walls like the purchased kind which is to erase the walls clean. Take a piece about the size of a turkey egg and rub or roll gently in even regular strokes downward. While working fold in the soiled surface of the mass until it is either too small to handle or so dirty it starts to streak the paper. It is well to double the recipe because it saves making so often. From 4 to 6 times the recipe will clean an average sized room.

Varnished or Enameled Wood Surface Cleaner. Add 1 t. powdered glue crystals to 2 qt. hot water and wash surface gently. Rinse. Rub with dry cloth to produce luster. If at any time a new coat of varnish is to be applied, be sure to wash a surface cleaned in this manner to remove all trace of glue.

Cleaners for Painted Walls and Woodwork. Several good cleaners are available on the market which are convenient and more satisfactory to use than just soap and water where a large area of very soiled surface must be cleaned. Ask your paint dealer as to the kinds he sells. In case a large amount is needed, the commercial cleaner may be purchased to advantage in large quantity amounts. Follow the directions as found on the container.

Homemade Cleaning Solution. The following solution will assist in cleaning soiled surfaces which are painted, varnished, or enameled. This solution may also be used on a smooth painted plaster wall. The only precaution to be remembered is that the solution should be applied to a small area, say not more than two square feet, rubbed over the surface in a circular motion and wiped off immediately. Follow at once with a cloth wrung from clear rinse water. If a strong soap is used 1 tablespoon of vinegar may be added to the rinse water.

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| $\frac{1}{2}$ c. laundry starch | $\frac{1}{2}$ c. sal soda washing powder |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ c. cold water | $\frac{1}{2}$ c. cold water |
| 4 c. hot water | $1\frac{1}{2}$ c. pumice or rotten stone |
| 1 lb. mild soap chips | 1 c. household ammonia |
| 2 gallons hot water | |

Dissolve the starch in the $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of cold water. Add slowly to the hot water and cook to a smooth paste. Dissolve the soap chips in 2 gallons of hot water. Add the

starch paste to the soap solution. Dissolve sal soda powder in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cold water and add to the soap solution. Stir until smooth, and let stand until cool. Add the pumice or rotten stone and the ammonia. Stir thoroly. Keep in covered container. These proportions make enough to clean the wall surface of an average room.

PREPARING OLD WALLS FOR NEW FINISHES

The first step in repair of walls is the preparation for the new finish. The following directions apply to a variety of conditions.

A good rule to go by is to remove every particle of the old finish whether it be cold water paint (calcimine, alabastine, etc.,) wall paper or oil paint. When refinishing a wall with either paper or paint the surface must be just as clean and smooth as possible in order to obtain good results.

To Remove Cold Water Paints. Tools needed: A wide whitewash or calcimine brush, 2 cups vinegar, 2 buckets of warm water; a large old cloth or old newspapers to protect the woodwork and floor; 2 stepladders or sawhorses for holding the plank on which the worker will stand; a large sponge or cloth. Spread either old cloths or newspapers so as to protect the baseboard and floor. Arrange the plank on sawhorses or stepladders over this protecting cloth.

Wet the walls with a water and vinegar solution ($\frac{1}{2}$ c. vinegar to 1 gallon of water) using the calcimine brush. Now wash off the old finish using either a cloth or sponge. Change the water often so that the wall is left clean. Use the large sponge, wiping from the top downward to clean all the old finish off the wet space.

To Remove Old Wall Paper. Tools needed: Hot water; a 3-inch broad knife. Wet all of the paper in the room, using the brush and clean hot water. If there are two or more layers of papers, wet the entire surface and scrape off the top layer and then proceed in the same way with each layer unless all comes off easily, at the same time. Wet thoroly first, as time and energy will be saved and there will be less injury to the walls. It is possible often to work up from the baseboard, pulling down gently on the paper and loosening it with the broad knife.

To Remove Oil Paint. Tools needed: A 3-inch broad knife; cloth or newspapers for protecting woodwork and floor; stepladders or sawhorses; No. 1 sandpaper; warm water, washing soda ($\frac{1}{2}$ lb. to 1 pail warm water.)

If the finish seems perfectly good with no peeling or any sign of it, wash the wall with warm water and a mild soap to remove dirt. Where the wall is greasy, use the washing soda solution. Wash off all dirt and grease, rinse with clean water and allow to dry. Then break the gloss by sanding with fine sandpaper even tho it is a flat paint, and give it a new coat of paint immediately over the original coat.

Where the old coat of paint has peeled in just a few places, scrape these spots with the broad knife until all loose paint has been removed. Sand paper these bare spots and the edges of the old paint around the spot. Paint the spots and allow to dry thoroly at least 48 hours. When thoroly dry, smooth the joining edges and go over the entire

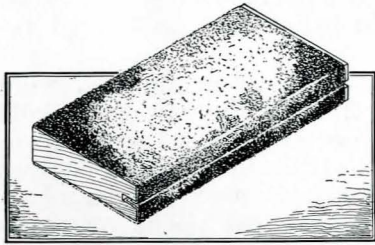


Fig. 3.—Wrap the sandpaper around a wooden block.

and guaranteed to give you a

Filling Holes and Cracks. Remove or cut out around large cracks or breaks any **loose plaster** with the edge of a broad knife. With the brush and warm water, wet thoroly the new edges from which the loose plaster has been removed. Take a quantity of Plaster of Paris, put it on the center of a good sized board; build it up into a cone with the thumb and fingers; make a hole in the center of this pile using the handle of the broad knife; pour in a little water allowing it to soak into the plaster. Use the wet plaster from the center of this pile and pack it into cracks and holes. Smooth this patch even with the wall before the plaster hardens. Use the broad knife for this work. By pouring the water into the center of the cone and using just the amount of plaster that is wet, we prevent the too rapid hardening of all the plaster. Should any of the plaster drop on the woodwork or fixtures, wipe it off immediately, using a sponge and clean water. Be sure that the Plaster of Paris patch is packed in closely and built up until the edges are even and the new work level

wall, using the fine sandpaper over a block, see figure three. Then give the entire wall a coat of washable paint. For a good finish, sanitary and easily cleaned, give the wall, after the first coat has thoroly dried, a coat of semi-gloss or any paint that is prepared by a reliable manufacturing concern dull, hard, washable surface.

with the old plaster wall. Should the plaster dry before it has been smoothed sufficiently, wet the patch with the calcimine brush and smooth with the broad knife. If the surface to be patched is large, use a wood fiber plaster mixture instead of the Plaster of Paris and apply with a trowel. New plaster in holes and cracks must thoroly dry before a new finish can be applied. A plaster wall which has many fine cracks in it may be washed over with a damp sponge. Then follow by rubbing the surface with powdered Plaster of Paris. In this way the small holes and cracks are filled.

SIZING THE PLASTER WALL AFTER THE REMOVAL OF OLD FINISH

Supplies needed: $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. painter's glue; cold water; 4 quarts **boiling** water; No. 1 sandpaper; brush.

Sandpaper the wall using No. 1 sandpaper. If paper or cold water paint is to be put on, a thin coat of varnish or a painter's glue solution is needed. Soak over night $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of flake glue until it is soft in enough cold water to cover it. Pour off the surplus water. Now pour boiling water (be sure it is boiling) over the glue. Heat to boiling and stir until all glue is dissolved. Use the calcimine brush and apply the glue water (sizing) to the wall. Brush it in thoroly and evenly. Wipe off any glue sizing from the woodwork before it dries, using a damp cloth or sponge. When the glue has dried thoroly, the wall is ready for either water paint or wall paper but glue sizing is **not desirable** preceding oil paint finish. Commercial wall sizing mixtures may be purchased which are reliable and convenient for use.

The wall surface to be painted may be sized by giving it a coat of an inexpensive varnish thinned with turpentine and colored slightly with a little of the paint that is to follow. In some cases this method makes it possible to get an attractive surface finish with only one coat of paint in addition to the sizing. Allow the newly plastered wall to dry at least one month. Wash the newly plastered wall with strong vinegar water if it is to be painted before that time. Cover small, fine cracks and any porous spots by giving the walls a coat of varnish sizing.

APPLYING NEW WALL FINISHES

To apply Calcimine. For the application of calcimine to the wall a large brush made especially for that purpose is needed. See to it that all shades are removed from the windows and as much light as possible floods the room.

The point of beginning to calcimine a room is usually the ceiling. Take care not to overload the brush and avoid spattering or having the material run down the brush handle.

Cover a strip of wall about one or two feet wide across the short way of the room. If too wide a strip is attempted at one time the mixture will dry at the edge and the joining of the first and second strip will be likely to show. If it does become too dry, touch the edge with clean water, then put on the next strip of calcimine. After the work is finished provide for ventilation to hasten the drying.

Stippling of calcimine or other water paint may be done by the same method as is used for oil paint, described in a following paragraph.

To Oil Paint the Wall. In painting plaster walls with ordinary oil paint, the priming or first coat is generally made a little thinner by the addition of boiled linseed oil and turpentine in the proportion of one quart of oil and one pint of turpentine to one gallon of paint. In most cases it is wise to follow the manufacturer's explicit directions rather than these general instructions. The modern flat washable wall paints are not expensive and give satisfactory results.

To Produce the Stippled Effect on Painted Walls. Pleasing wall finishes are secured when warm colors are chosen, examples of which are tan, cream, buff, warm gray and grayish yellow green. If the room has large bare wall areas or if the wall surface is not smooth a decoration in the form of a stipple may be desirable. Use a warm background of some color mentioned above and apply a second color which is related in hue and value. Contrasting colors such as orange and blue would be a bad choice. Colors which are strong contrasts in dark and light are not good. Some of the pleasing color combinations would be

Tan background with cream stipple

Buff background with yellow green stipple

Yellow green background with cream stipple

Cool colors such as greens, blues, cool grays or violet are not satisfactory as background colors because any room is in shadow and these colors give a gloomy cheerless atmosphere.

To secure the most effective decoration of this type, a background of solid color, usually light in shade, is first applied and allowed to dry. A second coat may be neces-

sary. To secure the stippled effect spread the paint of some harmonizing warm color which is not a decided contrast on a shallow pan. Cut a sponge smoothly in half



Fig. 4.—One method of stippling.

to make a flat side. Lay the flat side of the sponge in the wet paint on the tin, then press it against the wall. This leaves a painted imprint of the sponge on the wall.

Another method for stippling a painted wall is to brush on the contrasting coat and then lift off the paint in pattern effect by tapping with crumpled paper, a sponge or a cloth. A cloth crushed into a wad and rolled down over the wall surface, being careful

to never let it slip or slide, will give an even effect.

To Prepare a Painted Wall for Papering. Tools needed: No. 1 sandpaper; $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. washing soda; $\frac{1}{2}$ c. vinegar in 1 gallon water; stirring stick; 4 quarts of warm water; brush; old cloths or newspapers, 1 gallon of glue sizing; 1 pt. molasses, corn syrup, or 1 lb. of sugar.

Mix the sal soda in the water ($\frac{1}{4}$ lb. to 4 quarts warm water). Be very careful to protect the woodwork and floor. (Use No. 1 sandpaper over the whole wall surface.) Go over the entire wall with the soda water, using the calcimine brush. The sandpaper and soda water break the hard, smooth surface of the paint which would be impervious to the paste used for the wall paper. Wash with vinegar water. When the wall has dried after the vinegar wash which followed the soda wash, go over the entire wall with a glue or varnish size. In order to insure a good coating on the wall, add one pint of molasses or one pound of sugar to one gallon of the glue size. Brush the glue on thoroly and evenly. Test before papering. Take a small piece of wall

paper and the paste to be used and press it to the sized wall leaving the corners free. After a few minutes remove it. If it pulls off easily and without tearing, the size is too thin and should have more glue added. If the paper sticks tightly, the glue is of proper consistency.

Wall Paper Flour Paste.

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 2 lb. wheat flour | ½ c. hot water |
| 1 qt. cold water | 3 qt. boiling water |
| 1 oz. alum | |

Work the wheat flour into a batter free from lumps with the cold water. Dissolve the alum in the ½ cup of hot water. Add the boiling water gradually to the flour paste stirring constantly. Boil until the paste thickens to a semi-transparent mucilage after which stir in the dissolved alum. Strain before using.

Directions for Hanging Wall Paper. Tools: A temporary table of wide boards for use when spreading paste on paper. Wide boards and supports to make a platform on which to stand while working.

Large shears for trimming.

Yard stick.

Paste brush or whitewash brush, 7 or 8 inches long.

Paper hanger's smoothing brush or an 18 inch lath padded with a clean soft cloth.

Paper seam roller or a stiff clothes brush to press the edges flat.

Tracer wheel for cutting paper at casings or mop boards.

To proceed:

1. Cut the paper in the required lengths, allow for match.
2. Place face down on the pasting table.
3. Spread a thin coat half the length of the strip and fold the end over towards the center, the edges should be exactly even.
4. Apply paste to the other half of the strip and fold in the same manner.
5. Then proceed to trim, one side only if not already trimmed. The advantage of this is that the paste is distributed evenly at the edge and two thicknesses of paper are cut at once.

Note: 1. Paste and trim only one sheet at a time.

2. Paper the ceiling first.

To hang ceiling paper: Have the platform high enough for the worker's head to be 6 inches below the ceiling. Begin work at a corner, plan to have the trimmed edge toward the left.

1. Unfold the end of the paper you are to begin with, hold it over your head and let the other end which is still folded hang down behind you.
2. Attach the paper to the ceiling and smooth into place with the hands until the width edge or end of strip is set, then smooth it out with the paper hanger's brush or covered lath.
3. When the first half of the strip is on, unfold the other half and smooth into place. The first strip is the guide, so it should be carefully placed.

To hang the side wall: Side wall strips should be cut 3 inches or more longer than the actual measurements, depending upon the pattern. This allows for the perfect matching of the design. The strips may be cut off at either end.

1. Paste, trim and fold the paper as directed for the ceiling.
2. Begin hanging side wall paper at the right hand side of a door frame, with the trimmed edge next to the frame.
3. Set the top edge in place allowing the weight of the folded strip to form a plumb line next to the door frame. Brush the first half of the strip into place, unfold the other half and brush into place to the base board.
4. Make a crease in the paper at the top of the base board, cut off with wheel tracer and press into place with a clothes brush.
5. Match the following strips and continue to the right around the room.
6. Over and under windows and over door, match the designs and fill in the spaces as you proceed.
7. Finish by replacing the picture molding.

Note: Cool damp days are better for paper hanging. Paper is not so likely to crack from fast drying.

Part II. Care and Repair of Floors

Attractive floors are the pride of any homemaker. A floor can be a thing of beauty in itself as well as the background for furnishing. Against a well kept floor both rugs

and furniture show up to best advantage. Right care keeps a floor looking its best.

Whether your floor is waxed, painted, varnished, or finished in any other way, it will be damaged if dirt is allowed to accumulate on it and grind into its surface. Daily sweeping and dusting saves any kind of finish. If you want your floors to last a long time and keep their good looks, keep them clean and protect them from heavy wear and stains.

Naturally enough, certain places on the floor get harder wear than others. Areas near doors, for example, receive the most wear. Protect these hard wear areas with small rugs. The mat just outside the entrance to your house will catch mud, sand, and other dirt that might otherwise be carried in on the shoes.

ROUTINE AND SPECIAL CARE OF THE FLOORS

The day to day care of floors is much the same for every type of floor finish. Keep the floor swept and dusted with a dry mop to prevent soil accumulating and grinding into the finish. If something is spilled upon the floor, clean it up as quickly as possible. If grease is spilled and has had time to be absorbed by the wood, or if acid from radio batteries makes an ugly spot on the floor, we must not expect to rectify the damage completely, without refinishing the spot.

Sweeping today is more closely akin to the gentle art of brushing because of modern equipment and modern flooring. The ordinary type of household broom has an increasingly used assistant in the soft bristled push broom with an action similar to a brush. This push broom is light to handle, sweeps close to the floor, and with even forward strokes will raise little or no dust. It reaches under low furniture, and, because of its width, it covers a large surface with each stroke. It does not scratch polished floors.

OUTLINE OF ROUTINE CARE FOR VARIOUS FLOOR FINISHES

| Equipment and Supplies | Method |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
|-------------------------------|---------------|

UNFINISHED WOOD FLOORS

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| 1. Mild soap | 1. Scrub with grain of floor |
| | 2. Use little water and mild soap |
| | 3. Rinse with clear water and wipe dry |

OILED FLOORS

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| 1. Soft brush | 1. Sweep with soft brush |
| 2. Dust mop (oiled or not) | 2. Wipe with oiled mop |
| 3. Soap | 3. Wash occasionally with mild soapy water |
| 4. Oiled cloth | 4. Re-oil when necessary |

PAINTED FLOORS

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 1. Kerosene | 1. Wash with warm water to which a little kerosene has been added |
| 2. Cloths | |

WAXED FLOORS

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 1. Soft dry cloth, soft brush, treated mop * | 1. Wipe regularly with clean cloth |
| | 2. Rub with a treated mop * |
| | 3. Re-wax any worn spots |

VARNISHED AND SHELLACKED FLOORS

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1. Soft brush | 1. Sweep with soft brush |
| 2. Damp mop (not wet) | 2. Clean with damp mop |
| 3. Mild soap | 3. If necessary wash with mild soapy water |
| 4. Treated mop * | |

* **To Prepare a Treated Mop.** Secure a tin can large enough to hold the dusting mop. Brush the inside of the can with a mixture using equal parts boiled linseed oil and turpentine. Press the mop into the can, cover with a lid and allow it to remain in can over night, before using. The mop absorbs enough of the mixture so that it will easily take up the dust from the floor.

Treatment for Wood Finish which has Turned White. Wood which has had its finish marred so that it has turned white because of heat or by water which was allowed to stand on it, may usually be restored by one of the following methods:

1. Rub with a soft cloth and a mixture of pumice and boiled linseed oil.
2. Apply a small amount of turpentine to the spot. This usually penetrates the surface and restores the color to the stain. Then rub the spot with boiled linseed oil.
3. Mix the following in a small bottle, shake well before using.

| | |
|-----|------------------------------------|
| 1 | T. vinegar |
| 3 | T. boiled linseed oil or olive oil |
| 1/2 | t. turpentine |

Cover the spot with the liquid and allow it to stand a few minutes. Rub briskly with a soft cloth following the grain of the wood. Repeat until stain disappears.

Preparing Old Floors for New Finishes. Before any finish can be applied to a floor it must be made clean. Remove any old finish, make smooth by planing, if necessary. Countersink or remove any nails, sandpaper the surface with the grain of the wood and make perfectly clean and dry.

It may be necessary to remove old paint or varnish in which case use either a commercial or homemade remover. A commercial remover is easily applied but is expensive for a large surface. It must be followed with an application of denaturated alcohol to prevent it from continuing to burn the wood.

Homemade Varnish Remover

4 T. laundry starch or corn starch

1 qt. water

2 T. concentrated lye dissolved in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cold water

Make a cooked starch solution and pour the dissolved lye into it. Stir until smooth. Prepare this mixture in a crock or old granite kettle as it will react with metals. Apply to a small area (3 square feet) with a vegetable fiber brush which has a handle or with a swab made by attaching a cloth to a stick. Allow to remain on the floor only a few minutes or until varnish or paint is softened. Scrape off with broad knife into a newspaper. Rub with steel wool and wipe as clean as possible. Then wipe with a cloth saturated in vinegar which prevents the further action of the lye on the wood. Finish by washing the area of floor with clear water. Repeat the process on another 3 foot area. Let floor dry 24 hours.

To Bleach Dark Stains in Wood. When moisture has soaked thru the finish and caused wood to darken it must be bleached. Remove the entire finish. When dry apply the following:

Make a concentrated solution of oxalic acid by dissolving $\frac{1}{4}$ pound of oxalic acid crystals in 1 quart of water. Apply the acid to the spot with a cloth wrapped around the end of a stick. Allow the solution to stand on the spot one to two hours. Wipe off. In case it is not sufficiently bleached make other applications. Wash the bleached area thoroly with clear water and let dry. Sand the surface carefully. Apply the new finish.

Stain and Filler for Wood Surfaces. Stain is used to bring out the grain of the wood or to make it harmonize

in color with other woodwork of the room. For open grain woods, purchase a natural paste filler and add to it an oil stain to secure the desired color or purchase it already mixed. For close grained woods only the stain is necessary.

Directions for use: A filler stain in any case should be thinned with turpentine to the consistency of thin cream, applied with a bristle brush and worked well into the pores of the wood. When the filler has had time to penetrate rub it in with a scouring motion across the grain of the wood. The longer it is allowed to remain on the wood the darker the color becomes. To take off all of the surplus paste use a coarse material such as burlap, sawdust, or excelsior. Rub smooth with clean rags or fresh burlap. Allow to dry 24 to 36 hours. Sandpaper and wipe the floor free of all dust, then the surface is ready for varnish or other finish. The room should be kept free from dust until the finish is dry.

APPLYING VARIOUS FLOOR FINISHES

Varnish Floor Finish. A slow drying spar varnish which is elastic, resistant to water and durable is a wise and economical choice. Cheap varnish may be used for vertical surfaces which will not receive hard wear, but for floors only the best quality material is advisable. Allow ample time between coats for thoro drying.

Painted Floor Finishes. In selecting paints for interior woodwork, attention should be given to the following points:

1. The ease with which the color chosen will cover the former finish.
2. The beauty of the finish (gloss or dull).
3. Its appropriateness.
4. The permanence of color.

Sanding lightly between each coat will add much toward a good finish. A little varnish added to the last coat of paint will serve as a binder and give a higher gloss to the surface if that is desired. Select paint for bedroom and porch floors in a color which shows dust as little as possible such as a warm gray, tan or dust color.

Oiled Finish (No. 1). A satisfactory floor oil can be made at home using equal parts of boiled linseed oil and turpentine. Heat the oil and turpentine mixture by placing the can in a pail of hot water. **Away from any open blaze.** Apply the hot oil to the floor with a mop, allow

to remain on the floor one half to one hour. Wipe off the excess oil with a dry cloth or clean mop.

This is an inexpensive finish which preserves the wood but which must be carefully handled. It darkens the wood if excess oil remains on the surface and collects dust. A floor that has been oiled can also be waxed.

Oiled Finish (No. 2).

1 gallon boiled linseed oil
 ½ gallon turpentine
 1 oz. Japan drier

Heat the linseed oil in a double boiler. Remove from the fire and stir in the turpentine and Japan drier. Paint while hot on to a clean, dry floor using only a good paint brush. Wipe off any excess oil with a cloth. Let stand 2 days if possible before using. The only advantage of this proportion over No. 1 is that it gives more oil to the wood which with more oil may wear longer.

Waxed Finish. A waxed floor is most attractive and durable if given proper care. It preserves the natural color of the wood, brings out the beauty of the grain and is easily revived and renewed. Waxed floors improve with age as is shown in some of the European palaces where floors have been polished for centuries with nothing but wax and are bright and beautiful in color. The waxed floors require labor to polish them. Success in waxing lies in applying the wax in **thin** coats and rubbing a great deal. The commercial waxes may be purchased to advantage in large quantities. When bees wax can be secured at little or no cost, a satisfactory floor wax can be made, otherwise buy a good grade of commercial floor wax.

Homemade Floor Wax No. 1. CAUTION—Do not work in a room where there is a fire when combining the turpentine and wax as turpentine is inflammable. Melt the following in a vessel over hot water:

½ lb. beeswax
 1 lb. paraffin wax

Remove from the stove and add the following:

½ pt. raw linseed oil
 1¼ pt. turpentine

Stir the mixture vigorously. Pour into a container. When using apply a small amount to the floor surface. Allow it to stand half an hour. Rub into the wood and polish until there is no free wax on the floor.

Homemade Floor Wax No. 2. 1 lb. beeswax; 1 pt. turpentine; 2 T. linseed oil.

Shave the wax. Add the turpentine. Allow this to stand over night and be absorbed. Do not stir the mixture at first. Add the oil when all the wax is dissolved. Stir vigorously.

Do not use as much of this wax as is necessary with some other wax preparations. Use sparingly, rub well into the wood with a weighted polisher. A commercial weighted brush is by far the best. However, a substitute may be made as described in a following paragraph. Certain places frequently walked over may need to be re-waxed and polished frequently.

New products are now being advertised and shown on the market which are water base waxes and which are being sold on the merit that they need no polishing and are quick drying. Any finish which dries rapidly is to be questioned for endurance. Dealers urge that this wax be applied only on a perfectly clean surface saying that it will not be successful if applied where there is any trace of other wax left on the surface.

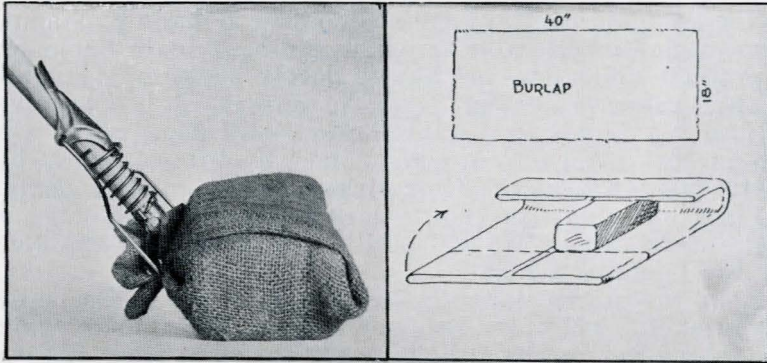


Fig. 5.—The homemade waxer.

For the task of podishing a waxed floor the weighted brush or an electric polisher is desirable. The weighted hand polisher may be purchased reasonably and will serve a long time. Often house furnishing dealers have electric polishers which may be rented for a small amount. A polisher may be made as follows using material available.

Homemade Floor Polisher. Cover an ordinary building brick with several thicknesses of padding using any old

soft material. Cover the padding and sew this cover into place around the brick. Take a piece of burlap 40 inches by 18 inches which is the half of an ordinary sack. Fold each end to center. Place the padded brick to the right of center edge and bring burlap up over each end of brick and pin to the padding. Now bring the ends of the burlap from each side and pull them thru the wire bale of an ordinary mop holder. Draw the burlap thru as tightly as possible and clap the holder at one side of the brick. This makes a light weight polisher but with friction rather than weight a good polish can be obtained. To give the final polish to a waxed surface cover the polisher with a piece of woolen material or old carpet and continue rubbing the surface.

LINOLEUM, ITS CARE AND REPAIR

Linoleum is one of the best and most serviceable of all floor coverings. The three general types on the market are plain, inlaid and printed linoleums. The plain has no design but the coloring matter is added to the plastic mass. It is made in a variety of colors, brown, gray, green, and others. Inlaid linoleum has a design each part of which extends thru to the backing. The pattern will last as long as the linoleum itself. Printed linoleum is made by stamping a design of oil paint on a thin grade of plain linoleum. A product which does not have a burlap back but is similar in appearance to linoleum is on the market. It is attractive at first but is not so durable. For small rugs which are low in cost, used only a short time, this material may be useful but for large floor coverings it is not good economy.

Plain linoleum has good wearing qualities but being a plain surface it shows soil easily and is not as attractive for the floors of a home.

From the practical standpoint, linoleum floors offer many advantages. They are resilient and comfortable to walk and stand on, making housework easier. They absorb noise, so that even without rugs there is less clatter of heels. They are easy to keep clean and sanitary. When cemented, linoleum is an air-tight floor which keeps out cold, so that in old houses particularly it is valuable as an insulator and helps cut down heating costs.

To lay linoleum properly requires some skill and if the work is not correctly done the linoleum may buckle and crack. Dealers can often give reliable directions. If possible, it is well to employ a trained worker who has the

necessary tools and cement. The quarter-round should be removed before laying linoleum.

In cold weather linoleum should be in a warm room for at least 48 hours before it is unrolled. Linoleum becomes brittle when cold and is likely to crack. Cut the linoleum so as to leave $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch for expansion. Do not tack or cement linoleum into place at once but let it lie on the floor a short time to allow for expansion. Quarterround molding should be nailed to the baseboard and not thru the linoleum.

The initial cost of inlaid linoleum seems high but the cost of varnish or lacquer alone for printed linoleum in the course of a few years would pay the difference aside from the added satisfaction of having a more attractive floor covering.

Surface Care of Linoleum. Printed linoleum should be given a coat of clear linoleum lacquer soon after it is laid. As the lacquer wears off in places it may be touched up without re-lacquering the whole floor. Lacquer is more resilient than varnish and is colorless. Floors may be waxed after lacquering. To re-lacquer after it has once had wax on it, all wax must be cleaned off with gasoline or naphtha and then the floor carefully washed with a mild soap. The linoleum should be thoroly dry before the lacquer is applied. To clean wipe it with clear water or water and mild soap. The excess alkali of laundry soap reacts chemically with the oil or paint of linoleums, thus taking the paint off printed linoleum and making the inlaid and the plain linoleum porous and lifeless in appearance.

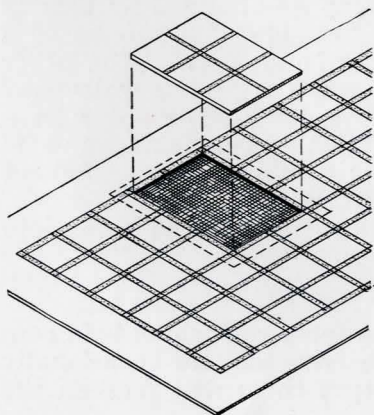


Fig. 6.—Patching linoleum.

How to Patch Linoleum.

To repair a worn place in linoleum, cut straight lines around the hole with a sharp knife. Use this piece as a pattern and cut a patch from new material or from under a piece of furniture where its absence will not show, matching the design as nearly as possible. A piece of strong cotton material, flour sack material or muslin, should be fitted smoothly into the opening and its edges worked well under

the linoleum and cemented to the linoleum. Apply linoleum cement to the back and edges of the patch and fit the patch into place. Wipe off any excess cement. Weight down the edges for 24 hours. Unless the patch is allowed to get soaked with water while mopping, it will remain in place satisfactorily.

Painted and Stippled Linoleum. Linoleum which has become ugly with long service but which still has a smooth firm surface is worth painting. This is particularly true of a good grade of printed linoleum. If any places are to be patched, let that be done first as described in the paragraph above.

Purchase a good grade of linoleum paint. Choose the colors having in mind the amount of light in the room. Some of the more attractive and usable colors are deep buff or tan, gray, green and brick. Usually the pure color is too intense and is made more attractive by the addition of some gray.

When stippling is to be done it is well to blend two colors. For example, a brick color to which some gray is added becomes lighter and softer in color. Apply one coat of the grayed brick color to the entire linoleum surface. Let the paint dry the length of time indicated on the label. Apply a second coat of this foundation color, if possible let dry thoroughly. To give the effect of a rug with a border paste decorator's tape along each side of the rug leaving a border. The width of the border should be in proportion to the size of the rug. Then start painting small areas with the contrasting color out to the decorator's tape. The stipple effect may be obtained by patting the paint while moist with the flat side of a sponge or a pad of crumpled paper or wad of old cloth. The other method the same as suggested when stippling walls may also be used. Paint some of the contrasting color on a shallow pan, press the sponge into this paint and apply to the wall. Avoid any twisting or turning motion. Reload the sponge frequently to keep the print uniform.

Old pieces of linoleum may be reclaimed and made into attractive small rugs by stippling.

RUGS, THEIR CARE AND REPAIR

Sweeping is not sufficient care for a rug which is in constant use. Rugs may become badly soiled and occasionally should be washed to thoroly clean them and freshen the colors.

To Wash a Rug. First sweep the rug thoroly, then make a soft jelly as follows:

- 1 medium bar mild soap (shaved)**
- 1 T. household ammonia**
- 3 qt. hot water**

Dissolve the soap in hot water, add the ammonia and beat the mixture until a good lather forms.

Spread some of the soap with as little water as possible on a small area (3 sq. feet) of the rug. Apply with a brush using a circular motion and rub the surface to wash the nap of the rug. Scrape off the suds with the dull edge of a wide, pliable spatula. Go over this same area immediately with a cloth wrung from warm water to remove the soap, continue on a new area. Place the rug where it will dry quickly and thoroly.

To Re-size a Rug. First thoroly clean the rug and let dry. Tack the rug napside down on a floor. Apply with a brush the following solution:

- 1 part glue ($\frac{1}{4}$ lb.)**
- 8 parts water (2 qt.)**

Dissolve the glue in the water in a double boiler. If a rug is light weight, be careful not to put on so much glue that it penetrates to the right side. Let the rug dry 24 hours. To remove the sizing, it is necessary to use gasoline.

To Prevent Rugs from Sliding on Polished Floors. 1. Ordinary oilcloth either old or new may be cut just enough smaller than the rug so that it will not show and placed slick side down on the floor under the rug. This will hold the rug so that it will not slide on a polished floor.

2. A rubberized burlap may be purchased which holds a rug firmly in place.

How to Mend Rugs. When clean and mended a rug takes on a new appearance. Examine the warp and filling threads to see which need renewing or strengthening. Choose material for mending which will as nearly as possible match in color and quality that to be replaced. If colors can not be matched, neutral shades corresponding in tone may be used or it might even pay to dye the yarn.

Ingrains may be darned with the ordinary over-and-under stitch used on stockings and the pattern worked in afterwards, but Brussels, Axministers, Wiltons, or any of the pile carpetings required a little more complicated method. The linen, jute, or cotton back should first be

darned in and then the pile made with loops of colored worsted yarn left uncut in Brussels and clipped in those with velvety surface.

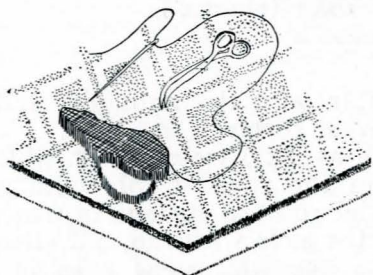


Fig. 7.—Mending rugs.

Curved scissors are especially convenient for this work. Work in the pile yarn similar to the method used for hooked rugs adapting it to the kind of carpet. Design can be replaced so skillfully that mended places can hardly be detected. Oriental workers are particularly clever in mending handmade rugs and are employed in the workshops of all the large rug and carpet dealers, but satisfactory work may be done at home if plenty of time can be given to it.

“Serging” the Edge. 1. Rip off the fringe. Trim the edge. Hold two rows of heavy cord along the edge and darn them with an over-and-under stitch so close together that the cords are entirely covered, and a flat, narrow edge is formed. Care must be taken to take stitches far enough back from the edge to make the selvage substantial. If the warp near the edge has lost its firmness it should be reinforced with a facing of some strong material before starting the selvage. (See illustration.) Use brown, gray, or any neutral colored worsted yarn and a large eyed needle. This edge is called “serging”.

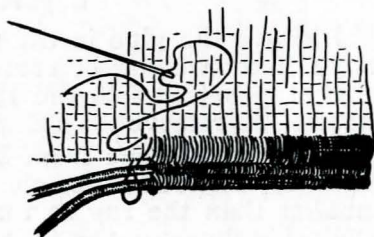


Fig. 8.—Serging the edge.

References for Material Used in this Circular

- Farmers' Bulletin No. 1219, Floors and Floor Coverings.
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- The Better Homes Manual, Chapter XIV, Reconditioning and Refinishing Walls, Floors, and Furniture.
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- How to Hang Wallpaper, Bulletin No. 102 B. Wallpaper Association of U. S., 10 East 40th Street, New York City.