



Apply Osmo Polyx Oil (the original Hardwax Oil) by Hand

A remarkable floor and wood finish from Germany.

- As durable as polyurethane.
- Preserves the look and feel of natural wood, rather than masks it with plastic.
- Easy to spot-repair, so you can keep the finish looking great indefinitely.

What to expect when you use Polyx-Oil on your floor

- Dries to a satin-matte sheen. No shiny surface film.
- Preserves the look and feel of natural wood. Because it's not a plastic coating, the finish doesn't fill wood pores.
- Suitable for all interior rooms and woodwork-even where spills may occur.
 - Water-repellent, so it protects against water marks. Suitable for kitchens and bathrooms.
 - Microporous, so any moisture within the wood can escape.
 - Resists stains from wine, beer, cola, coffee, tea, fruit juices and milk.
- Contains carnauba, the toughest natural wax. Resists wear even better than polyurethane.
- Much more forgiving than other finishes in terms of showing dust.
- Can be easily spot-repaired and refreshed indefinitely. No need to move out all the furniture or create clouds of sanding dust.
- A very low-toxic, low-solvent formula. Exceeds U.S. air-quality laws, even though it is an oil-based formula. When dry, meets European safety standards for use on children's toys.
- Pleasant to use. No strong chemical smell.
- We sell sample sizes to make it easy for you to test this finish in your home.

Key points before you begin

Polyx-Oil is easy to apply. But don't use it like polyurethane. Polyx-Oil is a *penetrating* finish, not a surface film.

It works by fortifying wood fibers, not walling them off.

- Treat it more like a stain than a paint or varnish.
- Apply a very thin layer.
- Scrub it in. Do not paint it on.

- Never let the finish puddle or build.
- If in doubt, put on less.
- Use two coats.

Ingredients

Polyx-Oil is made primarily from natural, rapidly renewable ingredients. It contains sunflower, soybean and thistle oil, plus two hard waxes—carnauba (from a Brazilian palm tree) and candelilla (from a Mexican shrub). It also contains highly purified, low-odor mineral spirits (29% by weight). It has no biocides or preservatives

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can OSMO Polyx-Oil be applied over existing water-based paints, stains and sealers?

A: No. As a penetrating sealer, OSMO Polyx-Oil should only be applied to bare wood, or other OSMO penetrating finishes. Existing water-based paints, sealers and finishes may fill the pores of the wood, making it impossible for the Polyx-Oil to penetrate properly. We also offer OSMO's Wood Wax Finish; a stain that can be used as a base coat, to add color to the wood. Keep in mind, though, that staining the wood compromises your ability to spot-treat scratches and stains.

Q: Can OSMO Polyx-Oil be used in conjunction with other oil-based stains and finishes?

A: The OSMO Polyx-Oil has been tested to be compatible with other OSMO products like Wood Wax Finish. Other than that, you will have to perform your own tests for compatibility with other stains. Test in a small inconspicuous area, and check for proper penetration and color before using the finish over the entire application. For your convenience, we offer testing samples of OSMO Polyx-Oil.

Q: Is OSMO Polyx-Oil applied like other finishes?

A: OSMO Polyx-Oil is applied differently than most finishes you'll find. This finish can not be simply painted-on, or applied and left to soak in. Instead, the Polyx-Oil must be rubbed into the wood using an abrasive applicator and a fair amount of elbow grease. Essentially, there must be enough heat and friction to break-down the wax content of the finish, so it will penetrate into the pores of the wood. The Polyx-Oil is a fairly simple finish to apply, but can be difficult to fix if applied improperly. Simply READ AND FOLLOW OUR APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS, and you'll end up with an incredibly durable and beautiful floor!

Q: I have applied OSMO Polyx-Oil as directed, but am experiencing uneven patches of color and sheen. What should I do?

A: Because wood is unevenly absorbent, it is common to see uneven color and sheen after the first coat. An uneven blotchiness after the second coat indicates that OSMO Polyx-Oil has been over-applied in some areas, or under-applied in some areas. The solution would be to either sand-off the excess Polyx-Oil once dry, or to apply a very thin third coat in dry areas, making sure to remove any excess material left on top of the wood.

Q: Can I use OSMO Polyx-Oil for other projects besides the floor?

A: Absolutely. OSMO Polyx-Oil is an excellent finish for practically all interior wood applications. It provides excellent protection for unfinished wood paneling, trim, windows, stairs, railings and furniture. Once fully cured, Polyx-Oil will not emit any harmful odors or chemicals, and is non-soluble in water. Therefore, Polyx-Oil can also be used on food preparation surfaces, such as tables, cutting boards and butcher block countertops. Polyx-Oil has also proven itself to be an excellent finish for unglazed terra cotta tile.

Q: How long does it take for OSMO Polyx-Oil to dry?

A: Ideal conditions for drying finishes include a constant supply of fresh air, temperatures around 70°F, and relatively low humidity. Given adequate conditions, a floor finished with Polyx-Oil is safe to re-coat 24 hours after the first coat, and is safe to open to regular traffic 24-48 hours after the second coat. The full curing time for this finish, however, is 2-3 weeks. During this time period the floor can be exposed to regular traffic, but all areas of the floor must have constant access to fresh air. We recommend leaving-up all rugs or low-lying furniture that may impede airflow across the

surface of the floor.

Q: How do I tell if I've over-applied OSMO Polyx-Oil?

A: Over-application of OSMO Polyx-Oil is one of the more difficult problems to remedy, so it's very important to apply thinly, rub adequately, and READ AND FOLLOW APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS. While the floor is still wet, check for excessively shiny areas, and use the OSMO Floor Brush or a white or red pad to move the excess to other areas of the floor. Brush marks in the finish are a good indicator of over-application. Once the floor is dry, try to scratch the floor with your fingernail. If you're able to pull-up a powdery white line of wax, you will need to sand or screen the excess finish off, and apply another coat VERY THINLY.

Q: What do I do with my leftover OSMO Polyx-Oil?

A: Unopened, OSMO Polyx-Oil has a shelf life of approximately 4-5 years. Once the can has been opened, there is a much higher chance that the finish may become contaminated or dried-out. To prevent contamination, we recommend pouring the amount of Polyx-Oil needed into a separate container, rather than dipping your brush or pad into the can. When storing, the less air in the can, the less likely skimming or contamination is to occur. Leftover Polyx-Oil should be transferred to a smaller can or jar, and an oxygen displacer like Bloxygen should be used to remove extra oxygen from the container. If you open the Polyx-Oil at a later date and find that the finish has skimmed-over, remove as much of the "skin" as possible, and stir the finish thoroughly. If you notice a significant discoloration or strong rancid odor, discard the material properly.

Q: What kind of safety precautions should I take when working with OSMO Polyx-Oil?

A: The most toxic component of OSMO Polyx-Oil is its solvent. The solvent used is disaromatized mineral spirits, from which the benzene has been extracted, making it a very low-toxic version of ordinary mineral spirits. Most people are able to use the Polyx-Oil without any problems with its toxicity, but we always recommend self-testing for chemical sensitivity. For the best protection, use nitrile gloves and a respirator with a NIOSH-approved organic vapor cartridge.

Q: How should the floor be sanded and prepared for application of OSMO Polyx-Oil?

A: Proper preparation of the floor is one of the most important factors in a successful OSMO Polyx-Oil application. The final sanding should use no finer than 120 grit sandpaper. Be extra-careful that no marks or gouges are left in the surface of the wood, as the penetrating finish will accentuate these marks. Pay particular attention to the transitions from the drum sander to the edger. Use a vacuum and a dry cloth, alternately, to remove any sawdust or sandpaper grit. Leftover dust or debris will get caught in the finish, leaving you with a rougher texture.

Q: What should I do if I find dust or debris in my first coat of OSMO Polyx-Oil?

A: First, determine whether the finish was over-applied. If debris is embedded in a layer of Polyx-Oil on top of the wood, you will need to sand-off the existing layer, and re-apply, making sure to backwipe any excess material from the floor. If the finish was not over-applied, use a red or tan buffing pad to buff-out debris stuck in the finish, preferably within 24 hours of application.

Preparation: Polyx-Oil must be applied to clean, sanded wood or over itself. It cannot be applied over different existing finishes. Sand off other coatings and vacuum thoroughly.

- On most floors, sand to 120 grit. Sanding too fine hinders absorption.
- Stop at 100 grit on exceptionally dense wood (reclaimed old-growth, dense tropicals, bamboo). Certain tropical hardwoods are so dense or laden with resins that they may need a solvent scrub before finish is applied. Test the finish on a few boards. If a solvent scrub is needed, use OSMO Brush Cleaner or other odor-free mineral spirits; lacquer thinner works even faster.

If you use a filler, chose a latex- or solvent-based product listed as "stainable." We recommend latex for environmental reasons. Because Polyx-Oil does not fill wood pores, consider using a trowel filler on open-pore woods such as red oak.

Ultimately, the wood must be clean, dry and free of wax, grease and loose material.

Vacuum thoroughly. Polyx-Oil is not as finicky about dust as polyurethane, but the floor should still be clean.

Coverage: Apply two coats. On each coat, 1 liter of Polyx-Oil covers 200-260 square feet. So, each:

- 0.75 liter can should cover 150-195 sf per coat (75-97sf over 2 coats).
- 2.5 liter can should cover 500-650sf per coat, translating to **250-325 sf over 2 coats** per can.

Cork floors will spread lower rates; exotic and other harder floors will spread higher rates.

Application conditions

For ideal application apply when:

- the room is 60 to 75 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Relative humidity should be below 50 percent.
- A lower temperature or a higher relative humidity may slow drying.

Tools & materials

- OSMO floor brush or a 9-inch foam pad.
- Pole to fit brush or pad.
- Old plastic beverage bottle with 3 or 4 nailset holes in lid.
- Red or tan Scotchbrite pad.
- OSMO Brush Cleaner
- Knee pads
- Half-face respirator with organic-vapor cartridges, if desired. (Although the concentration is low, the solvent in Polyx-Oil is a petroleum distillate.)
- Nitrile gloves. (Not latex)

3 easy steps: The hand method is easy and almost foolproof if you follow our directions. We recommend this process for homeowner applications.

Begin by stirring the Polyx-Oil thoroughly. Plan your work. Start in a far corner. End near a door.

Step 1: Pour the necessary amount into a drip pan, dip the edge of your brush or pad into the finish, and scrape the excess of on the side of the pan.

Step 2: Scrub in with the OSMO Floor Brush, or white Scotch Brite pad.

Step 3: Finish by stroking with the grain of the wood. Check for grayish areas with excess finish, and spread or remove excess.

Proceeding across the floor

Move on to the next area and repeat the three steps.

Always feather edges to blend sections.

Areas near baseboards and cabinet kicks are susceptible to over-application. Never dribble finish there; instead, work material into these areas.

Polyx-Oil usually becomes tacky in 10 to 15 minutes. Before this occurs, look back over the work. Distribute any excess material with the floor brush or foam pad mounted on the pole.

Second coat: Polyx-Oil requires two coats. The second coat should be applied after the first coat is thoroughly dry. Most people wait until the next day. The test is to rub a small section with fine steel wool or a green Scotchbrite pad. If the finish produces a white powder, it's dry enough to recoat.

The second coat of Polyx-Oil can be applied without sanding if the first coat has been properly applied. But if too much was applied, the excess must be sanded.

If there is any question, you can't go wrong by lightly abrading the entire first coat until the surface is evenly dull. A red Scotchbrite pad usually works well. Very shiny areas may require a more aggressive abrasive.

Vacuum thoroughly, then apply the second coat using the same system and quantity of finish as before.

Cleanup: Clean tools with OSMO Brush Cleaner (or other mineral spirits, also known as paint thinner).

To store tools overnight between coats, we recommend simply wrapping the brush or foam pad in a plastic bag. Squeeze out as much air as possible.

Before disposing of oily rags, wet them with water and wrap tightly in plastic.

WARNING: Spontaneous Combustion Danger!
Oil-soaked materials (rags, steel wool, sanding dust, etc.) may spontaneously combust. Immerse oil-soaked materials in water and store in an air-tight container.

Living with your new finish

You can walk on the floor in stocking feet once the second coat has thoroughly dried, usually eight to 24 hours. But move heavy furniture carefully, and do not unroll carpets for at least a week. Polyx-Oil cures over several weeks, and it must have contact with fresh air during this time. If possible, leave the floor uncovered for two or three weeks.

The finish may look blotchy at first, but it should even out in a day or two. If the problem persists, please call for help in evaluating the cause.

Long-term maintenance

Properly maintained, this finish lasts indefinitely. Vacuum regularly. Remove sticky spills and clean regularly with a cloth or mop dampened with *OSMO Wash & Care* diluted in water. Don't slosh water onto the floor.

Just as with any floor finish, high-traffic areas will show wear over time. Prompt attention restores the finish. Clean thoroughly. Dry. Then moisten fine steel wool or a white Scotchbrite pad with *OSMO Liquid Wax Cleaner*. Rub onto the surface. When the material dries to a haze, buff lightly with a soft cotton cloth.

For severe damage, recoat with Polyx-Oil. Clean and sand the area, then apply the finish by hand using a white Scotchbrite pad and a vigorous circular stroke. Wipe up any excess immediately. The patch may appear lighter, but it will "catch up" to the rest of the floor in 30 to 90 days. To eliminate deep scoring, you must sand out the scratches. Polyx-Oil does not fill holes in wood.

Safety

WARNING: Spontaneous Combustion Danger!
Oil-soaked materials (rags, steel wool, sanding dust, etc.) may spontaneously combust. Immerse oil-soaked materials in water and store in an air-tight container.

WARNING: Contains Flammable Solvents!
Use only in areas with no open flames or other sources of ignition. No smoking. Provide good ventilation. Observe all local and federal laws that pertain to the handling and storage of these types of products.

Apply Osmo Polyx Oil by Machine

Tools & supplies

- Floor buffer.
- Natural-fiber brush head
- Red abrasive pad
- Polyx-Oil
- OSMO Brush Cleaner (odor-free mineral spirits)
- Lint-free rags
- Vacuum
- Dry plastic beverage bottle with 3 or 4 nailset holes in lid
- Foam paint pad (type used to apply polyurethane) or OSMO floor brush (a stubby, 9-inch wide brush designed especially for this finish)
- Pole to fit pad or brush
- Small pad of red or tan Scotch-Brite
- Half-face respirator with organic-vapor cartridges, if needed. (The solvent in OS Polyx-Oil is a petroleum distillate. Although the concentration is very low, a respirator is advisable where ventilation is poor)
- Nitrile gloves (not latex)
- Dull paint scraper or putty knife to remove drips

For small areas inaccessible to the buffer, if desired:

- Random-orbit sander with hook & loop sanding pad or terry cloth cut to fit.
- White polishing pad, cut to fit sander.

Site conditions: For ideal application, the room should be between 60 and 75 degrees Fahrenheit and relative humidity should be below 50 percent. A lower temperature or a higher relative humidity may slow the drying period.

Hand application

Hand application is useful for small areas, tight inside corners and places where the buffing machine can't reach.

To coat large areas by hand, we recommend thinning Polyx-Oil by up to 10 percent with OSMO Brush Cleaner. If you dilute directly into the application bottle, swirl contents to mix thoroughly.

Step 1: Dribble a fine stream of finish onto an area about 2 feet by 4 feet.

Step 2: Scrub in the finish with a foam pad (type used to apply polyurethane) or the OSMO floor brush. Use a circular motion.

Step 3: Finish by stroking with the grain.

Move on to the next section, and repeat the process. Always feather edges to blend one section with the next.

Areas near baseboards and cabinet kicks are susceptible to over-application. Never dribble finish by an edge; instead, work material into these areas.

The floor is ready for a second coat of finish when the first is thoroughly dry, usually in 8 to 24 hours. If too much finish was applied, resulting in glossy areas, lightly sand and vacuum before proceeding. A red Scotch-Brite pad usually works well. Apply the second coat using the same technique and approximately the same quantity of finish as for the first coat.

Cleanup: To store tools overnight between coats, wrap in plastic and squeeze out as much air as possible. At job's end, clean tools with OSMO Brush Cleaner.

WARNING: Spontaneous Combustion Danger!

Oil-soaked materials (rags, steel wool, sanding dust, etc.) may spontaneously combust. Immerse oil-soaked materials in water and store in an air-tight container.

WARNING: Contains Flammable Solvents!

Use only in areas with no open flames or other sources of ignition. No smoking. Provide good ventilation. Observe all local and federal laws that pertain to the handling and storage of these types of products.

Machine application is ideal for large areas.

1. Stir Polyx-Oil and pour a small amount into the dry water bottle. Use full strength for machine application.
2. By hand or with the random-orbit sander, first treat inside corners, stairways and other areas inaccessible with the buffer. To use the hook & loop random-orbit sander, attach the white polishing pad and squirt a small amount of finish directly onto the pad. Avoid splattering finish onto the wall or trim by turning on the sander several inches out into the floor. Work in just enough finish to darken the wood. When the pad runs dry, apply more finish to it.



3. Fit the brush head onto the buffer. Mount the foam pad or floor brush onto the pole.
4. Dribble a modest amount of finish onto a section of floor. Be conservative until you get a sense of how far the material will cover. Absorption rates vary with different kinds of wood.
5. Work the buffer over the finish to distribute it evenly and completely. There should be no obvious wet spots. If there are, use the buffer to "move" excess finish into drier areas.



6. Immediately look over the area just covered. Swirl marks generally indicate that you have used too much finish. Depending on the severity, either use the buffer to move excess to a dry area or lightly brush the boards in the direction of the grain with the pole-mounted foam pad or floor brush (without adding finish). Sometimes swirl marks can mean that you have used too little finish; parts of the wood are still dry. When the finish is applied at the proper rate, the sheen across the worked area should be consistent.



Continue this process over the whole floor. Overlap with the buffer to ensure even, consistent distribution. Polyx-Oil usually becomes tacky in 10 to 15 minutes. If this occurs before you have brushed out excess material, allow the finish to dry and then sand these areas before the second coat is applied.

Store the brush head in an enclosed tub with a quarter-inch of OSMO Brush Cleaner. Or clean thoroughly in Brush Cleaner.

Second coat

The second coat of Polyx-Oil can be applied as soon as the first coat is dry. In normal conditions, this takes 8 to 24 hours. When the finish is dry, rubbing a small area with steel wool or other abrasive will produce white powder, not gummy residue. Use lights to illuminate the job from floor level to check the first coat. Flick off grit and hairs with the paint scraper or putty knife.

Generally, there is no need to sand before the second coat. However, you can never go wrong by lightly abrading the floor between coats. And there are two conditions when sanding is required:

- When there are glossy areas or swirl marks because of excess finish or inadequate buffing.
- When there is a long delay between the first and second coats. This is often the case on construction projects, where the first coat is applied to protect a new wood floor and then left for weeks or months while construction continues.

If you sand, use a red or tan abrasive pad that matches the size of the buffer head. Just set the pad on the floor and the buffer on the pad and buff. It does not take more than a quick pass. Consider using a second buffer for this process. That allows you to keep the applicator-buffer clear of dirt and debris. To hand-sand areas inaccessible to the buffer, use the square of red or tan Scotch-Brite.

Vacuum thoroughly. Apply the second coat, using the same techniques and approximately the same amount of finish as before.

Moving back in

It's OK to walk on the floor in stocking feet once the second coat has dried (usually 8 to 24 hours).

But move heavy furniture cautiously, and do not unroll carpets for at least a week. The finish cures over several weeks, and it must have contact with fresh air during this time. If possible, leave the floor uncovered for two or three weeks.

At first, the finish may look blotchy. It should even out in a day or two. If it does not, please call for help in evaluating the cause.

Follow-up information for your customers

Properly maintained, a Polyx-Oil finish will last indefinitely. As with any floor finish, vacuum regularly. Wipe away sticky spills and dirt with a cloth or mop dampened with OSMO Wash & Care diluted in water. Be sure to wipe the floor dry, and don't slosh water onto the floor.

Over time, high-traffic areas such as kitchen, main entries and stairways will show wear. Timely attention restores the original finish. First clean thoroughly. Allow to dry. Then moisten fine steel wool or a white Scotch-Brite pad with a small amount of OSMO Liquid Wax Cleaner. Rub this onto the surface. When the material dries to a haze, buff lightly with a soft cotton cloth.

If damage has been done to a specific area of the floor, or if high-traffic areas are not maintained as above, it is possible to recoat the floor with Polyx-Oil. Clean and sand the area, then apply the finish by hand. Use a white Scotch-Brite pad dipped into the finish and scrub it in with a vigorous circular stroke. Wipe up immediately so that no material is left on the floor.

If you need to sand damaged areas before applying a fresh coat of Polyx-Oil, this flooring may at first appear lighter than surrounding wood. The repaired area will probably darken and "catch up" with the rest of the floor in 30 to 90 days.

Be aware that you can refinish an area that has been damaged by deep scoring, but Polyx-Oil will not fill in the damaged wood.

Troubleshooting

Q. The transitions from my drum sander to the edger are visible under the first coat of Polyx-Oil. This never happens with the polyurethane I use. What is wrong?

A. Because Polyx-Oil does not bury the wood under a coat of polyurethane, it's important that craftsmanship at the sanding stage be of the highest order. The tradeoff is that when it comes time to apply the finish, Polyx-Oil is more forgiving than polyurethane.

Q. I can see swirl marks from the buffer. What is wrong?

A. Swirl marks generally indicate that too much finish was applied or that it was not spread out sufficiently. If the finish is still wet, work it out with another pass of the buffer. If it is already tacky or dry, sand or scrape the dry finish to uniform dullness before applying the second coat.

Q. After the first coat, some areas are still not dry after 24 hours. They are shinier than the rest of the floor, too. Now what?

A. The answer is the same: Too much finish was applied or it was not spread out sufficiently.

Q. After the second coat, I see just a small glossy area where I must have applied too much finish. Do I need to resand the entire floor and start over?

A. Areas with far too much finish will not dry, even on floors with radiant heat. You might try removing the gummy finish with a dull paint scraper or putty knife. If the first coat dried properly, it may still be intact underneath the gummy layer. Smooth the boundary of the cured area with a purple Scotch-Brite pad, either by hand or attached to a hook & loop random-orbit sander.

Q. I found that the finish did not spread the same way when going from the white oak in the dining room to the fir in the bedroom and halls. Is this a problem and how do I compensate for the difference in appearance after the first coat?

A. This is normal because softer woods absorb more finish than harder species. Just be sure to spread the finish as far as it will spread.

Q. My spread rate on antique heart pine seems really different. Is this a problem? Should I have done any special preparation?

A. Antique heart pine can be very resinous. Two techniques can help prepare the wood so that it absorbs enough Polyx-Oil. Sand only to 100 grit, rather than the usual 120. After sanding, try wiping the wood with a solvent to remove some of the resin. OSMO Brush Cleaner works well. Lacquer thinner is even more efficient.

Q. My second coat is really shiny and full of cloudy areas. What now?

A. Far too much finish was applied. Remove it by sanding and start over. *Follow the directions!*

Repairing floor finishes—how OSMO will save time and money

Plastic floor finishes such as polyurethane have become so standard in the United States that many people are surprised to learn they have an option: a repairable floor finish, also known as a penetrating oil or wax finish. Instead of coating the floor with a film, as polyurethane does, these finishes penetrate into wood fibers and protect from within. When the finish wears—as all floor finishes eventually do—spot-repair is so easy that homeowners can keep the finish in good shape indefinitely.

The only problem with most oil and wax finishes is that they need frequent maintenance. Our OSMO Polyx-Oil is far more durable. Tests in Germany, where it is manufactured, showed it to be just as tough as polyurethane. Yet it is very definitely a repairable floor finish—with the added benefits of being natural, low-toxic and pleasant to use.

Why plastics are hard to touch up

Spot repairs on polyurethane are difficult for three reasons:

- These finishes don't bond chemically to previous layers, so touch-ups grip only where the surface has been thoroughly scuffed. But if you attempt to scuff up a spot with sandpaper and then paint fresh finish over the area, you discover the problem: Inevitably, the dried repair shows.
- Particularly with oil-based polyurethane, which gives wood a rich amber tint, color-matching can be difficult.
- The sheen of a patch will differ from that of the surrounding floor, unless the repair is done while the surrounding finish is still relatively new. The problem is that polyurethane loses gloss with heavy wear, and no amount of buffing will restore the sheen to the same level that will show on the patch.

OSMO Polyx-Oil, on the other hand, can be buffed repeatedly to its original luster. Wear spots treated with our Liquid Wax Cleaner buff well too. And when a fresh coat of finish does need to be applied, it's a simple process.

Why resanding is bad

With any floor, it's important to avoid letting the floor get in such sad shape that it must be totally refinished. Sanding grinds away wood. At best, most wood floors can be sanded six times before the nails poke out. Three or four sandings is typical. Some floors get only two. Then the remaining wood needs to be ripped up and replaced.

With polyurethane finishes, the trick is to apply a fresh coat as soon as the old finish dulls. At that point, the old finish can be thoroughly screened (scratched up with an abrasive pad mounted on a machine) and recoated with another layer of plastic. If this job is delayed until the finish wears off in spots, however, it won't work. Then it will be necessary to sand off all the finish and some of the wood and start over. Unfortunately, screening and recoating can't be done unless all the furniture is moved out, and the job usually means calling in professional help. So many families delay the task—and the life of their wood floors is shortened as a result.

See how costs compare

We went to Tom Salisbury of Salisbury Hardwood Floors on Bainbridge Island, a top-notch floor finisher familiar with OSMO Polyx-Oil and most other floor finishes. We asked him to compare the costs of finishes over time. The figures below are typical costs.

	Polyx-Oil	Polyurethane
Day 1: <i>1,000 square feet of flooring is ready to install. (Includes kitchen, dining room, living room and entry way.)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> OSMO Polyx-Oil costs slightly more but needs only two coats. Polyurethane is cheaper but needs three coats. So cost to install, sand & finish is the same. 	\$5,900	\$5,900
Year 2: <i>Piano mover gouges entry floor.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Polyx-Oil gets professional touch-up. (Homeowner could do.) Polyurethane can't be repaired, so scratch stays. 	\$30	\$0
Year 7: <i>Entry floor and area around dining room table look badly worn.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> OSMO Polyx-Oil gets another touch-up, involving 300 sf. Floor with polyurethane must be sanded to bare wood and refinished, involving 1,000 square feet. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Labor to sand and apply required finish. * Finish required² * Handwork in toe kick areas. * Move & reinstall baseboards * Move household contents * Move & reset refrigerator * Mask to control dust * Clean up 	\$450 \$60 \$0 \$0 \$0 \$0 \$0 \$0	\$3,920 \$240 \$493 \$560 \$1,120 \$140 \$420 \$616
Total after seven years	\$6,440	\$13,409

¹ We priced water-based polyurethane from Home Depot, just to underscore our point. (Updated November, 2005.)

You save \$6,969!! And this is just the beginning! Skip the mess. Skip the hassle. Preserve your wood floors.