



Flooring Q&A

Q. Can anyone sand a hardwood floor?

A. YES, if the right equipment is used and you take your time. Silver-Line sanding equipment is designed to make it easy for the DIYer or first time user to complete the job.

Q. I've been told that drum sanders are hard to use and will gouge my floors, is this true?

A. NO, if the correct equipment is rented. The Silver-Line SL-8 is designed to allow the DIY customer to sand and refinish his or her floors to a professional finish without damaging the floor.

Silver-Line floor sanding equipment is the only machine to rent! The first advantage to the Silver-Line SL-8 is the drum type and speed. Gouging is caused by a high speed drum staying in one place too long. The SL-8 runs the sanding drum @ 1800 RPM, or about 1/2 the speed of our competition. It is much more forgiving. The drum also runs at a constant speed, giving an even cut across the floor because the motor does not run the drum faster and slower as you work the machine. A drum that runs at different speeds during the sanding process will leave waves in the floor. Another advantage of the Silver-Line drum is the paper holding system and the drum cover. The cam holding system has proven to be the easiest to use and is designed to eliminate chatter marks from the finished product. The soft rubber drum cover is the same rubber used on professional sanders. It is very resilient yet soft and forgiving for the renter.

Q. Is it true that the lever type sanders are the best to use?

A. NO, the tilt action of the SL-8 sander gives the user total control of the sanding process. By lifting the handle on our machine you bring the drum to the floor to sand. This type of control allows the renter to feel what he is doing as well as seeing the sanding. The user has both of his or her hands on the sander while it is working. On a lever type sander the user has one hand on the lever and one on the sander, making it harder to control. The weight of the rental lever machine is not great enough to sand correctly. The motor on a professional sander weighs almost as much as the whole lever type rental sander. The heavy weight is needed because the machine moves on the lowered drum and a rear pivot wheel when it is in the sanding position.

Q. Will a square orbital machine sand my floor?

A. NO, an orbital machine will not cut through heavy finish or level a floor, this is the first step in refinishing your hardwood floors. It can be used to do light sanding or screening before putting a new coat of a compatible finish on a floor that is in good shape. The orbital machine can also be used as a polisher on resilient floors, to strip, clean and polish. It may be easier to use for some renters than the standard rotary polisher. We sell an orbital polisher to the rental industry to be used in very specific instances.

Q. What is the heaviest grit of sandpaper I should use on my floor?

A. That depends on the condition of the floor being refinished. The rule of thumb is use the lightest grit that will complete the first cut. The first cut should remove the old finish and level the floor to prepare for the finer grits. If you can use a 36 or 40 grit and complete this first step then you are ahead of the game. If the floor will not level or you can't remove the finish then you must drop down to a lower grit usually a 20 grit. Most rental stores will take a deposit on the paper and charge you for what you consume. If this is the case, take all the grits, even if you don't think you will need them. It is better to have a heavy grit that you won't use than to go back to the store to get paper that you need.

Q. What is the heaviest grit paper available?

A. Sandpaper is available in grits as low as 12 and 16. Most renters will not need paper this coarse and a lot of stores do not carry them. If the 20 grit will not cut a floor, ask the rental shop if they carry anything heavier.



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Q. Is there a trick to putting on 12 or 16 grit paper on the SL-8?

A. YES, You must remove some of the grit on the paper that will be put into the slot of the drum. To do this, put on safety glasses, and strike the grit with a hammer on a hard surface. This will allow the paper to go into the drum slot easier.

Q. How far do I have to turn the cams on the SL-8 to lock in the paper?

A. Only 1/4 turn on each cam. There are arrows on the cam to show which way to turn to tighten them. The cam on the right turns up while the left cam turns down.

Q. Is there a suggested way to insert paper?

A. The rental store should show you how to install paper on the sander. When installing 20 grit paper we suggest that you put the top flap in first and then the bottom flap. Paper installation is also shown on the "How to Refinish Wood Floors" video available from the rental stores.

Q. What grits do I need to refinish my floors?

A. Depending on the type of floor, we suggest the following:

- 20 grit Rough sanding
- 36 or 40 grit Initial sanding or Second sanding
- 60 Medium sanding grit
- 80 or 100 grit Final sanding

Q. Do I need to use all the grits?

A. YES, You should use all the grits to get the best finish. Remember, you're sanding your floors, and if done properly they will last for many years and you can take pride in the project. Take your time, don't skip any steps and enjoy the floors.

Q. Why should I use all the grits?

A. The floor sanding process actually starts with a heavy cut on the first step and removing the heavy marks with the remaining cuts. If you skip different grits you are not going to remove all the heavier marks and not get the correct finish.

Q. After I complete the final sanding is there anything else I should do before I put new finish on the floor?

A. YES, The process is called screening the floor, and it will give the project a professional finish. Using a screen mesh disc and a polisher you give the floor a very fine sanding that blends all the sanding processes together, and also will show any areas that may need special attention before you apply finish. The screening can be done with either a rotary polisher or an orbital polisher.

Q. Is there really any difference between the sanders available at rental stores?

A. Yes, the design between sanders is very important when you choose a sander. Remember the Silver-Line SL-8 has the slow constant speed drum, soft rubber cover, cam lock paper holding system, tilt action operation, the largest dust pick up system and quiet sanding.



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Q. Do my floors need to be completely sanded?

A. YES, In most cases the floor should be sanded to bare wood and refinished. If the floor is in good condition, (no bare spots, no uneven wear, no stains) and is level you may be able to just screen and recoat. BUT, you must know the type of finish you are going over, because your new finish may not adhere.

Q. My floors were waxed, can I put urethane on them?

A. NO, you must remove all wax before you put any polyurethane on the wood. Sand to bare wood and refinish, polyurethane will not adhere to wax.

Q. I have cracks in my floors are they a problem, should I fill them?

A. If the cracks are throughout the floor, between the flooring pieces then it is probably normal. They tend to go away during the summer months when you have high humidity. The wood will retain moisture so these changes are considered normal. During winter months when you are using heat they will appear. If you fill the cracks in the dry times you may have problems in the times when the wood expands with the moisture.

Q. Can I fix a squeaky floor?

A. YES, but you must decide what is causing the noise. Usually a few nails sunk into the floor will take care of the problem. You should pre-drill holes for nails, add the face nails before you sand the floor, and putty them before you refinish them. If face nailing does not help you can try to support the area from below. Nail a piece of wood to the joist to help support the floor.

Q. How do I clean my hardwood floors?

A. Depending on the finish you use there are several ways. The most common is to sweep and vacuum your floor on a regular schedule. If you have used a polyurethane then you can damp mop your floor with clear water. Do not soak your floor because water can and will seep into any cracks and could cause problems later. Do not wax a polyurethane floor, it is not required and can cause problems later if you want to screen and recoat your floor. If you want to restore a luster to a high gloss finish you may only need to buff them with a polisher and lambswool bonnet. A nylon polishing pad can also be used with the buffer. Down the road you may recoat the floors, if the buffing does not work or you see signs of wear. Many manufacturers of polyurethane now make cleaners for their products, follow the instructions on the labels of these products. Waxed floors can be polished and rewaxed as needed.

Q. Are there any differences between polyurethanes?

A. YES, there are very definite differences between cheaper polyurethanes and more expensive products. The old saying "You get what you pay for" is very much evident when you see how the polyurethanes are applied and how they last. When you look into the purchase of your floor finishes remember to think of the cost of the product over the life of the floor, not of the cost at the time of purchase. The money spent on a top quality finish will more than pay for itself over the next 10 to 15 years when it is properly maintained.

Q. Are Water-based finishes as good as Oil Modified finishes?

A. Water-based finishes have become very good floor finishes. At this time it is more of a preference call for the user. When you use water-base you should put five coats of finish on the floor. The more coats the better the gloss you will see on the floor. The dry time is much quicker with these finishes and there is minimal odor. The water-base finishes also dry crystal clear, they will not yellow with age as a oil modified finish will over time. If you apply water-based finishes to bare wood they do not darken the wood like an oil modified finish.



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Q. How do I sand corners?

A. Use a scraper with a sharp blade, and then hand sand the area. Scrape your corners after you complete the final sanding. There are scrapers made for this application, and can also be used between spindles and on the nosing of stairs. Be careful when sharpening the blade.

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