

CLEANING GUIDE

floor maintenance



Colophon

This brochure is published by the Sectoraal Vormingsfonds Dienstencheques

Copyright © 2022 Vorm DC

Texts: Antoon Jaminé in cooperation with VDAB


Drawings: Steve Van Bael

3D drawings: Cliff Debue, interior designer

Coordination: Elke Beyers

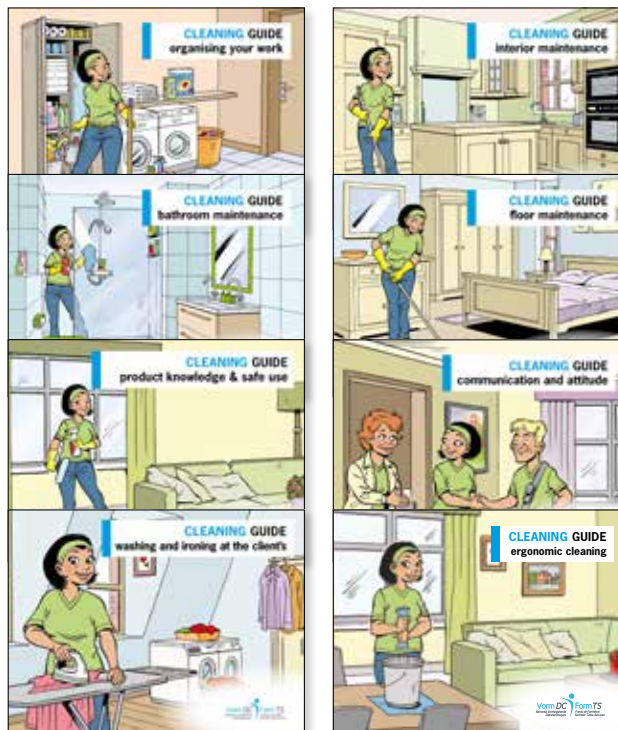
Layout and printing: Pages

Acknowledgements: Lut Bormans, cleaning expert - VDAB

Floor specialist  into wood & stone

Responsible publisher: Peter Van de Veire, director Sectoraal Vormingsfonds Dienstencheques

All rights reserved. Neither this brochure nor any part of it may be reproduced in any form or using any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage systems or reading devices, without the prior written consent of the authors, with the exception of short summaries in published discussions.



Hello,

I'm Sarah, your cleaning coach. I have many years' experience as a home help and consider myself an expert at brushing, polishing, scouring and scrubbing.

Cleaning is my passion and my profession! I enjoy teaching people how to brush and polish perfectly. Even if you already know a lot about cleaning techniques, read this brochure and you're sure to learn something new.

In this cleaning guide, I'll tell you all about cleaning and maintaining floors. There are many different types of floors. It is very important to use the correct product!

Follow the directions and  tips in this brochure to make cleaning floors a whole lot easier.

**Good luck,
Sarah**



Contents:

Cleaning floors	5
Which product should you use: acids or bases?	7
Types of cleaning products	9
Ceramic stone	11
Porous ceramic stone	11
Non-porous ceramic stone	13
Natural stone	15
Calcareous natural stone	15
Non-calcareous natural stone	17
Stone carpet	19
Linoleum	21
Vinyl (PVC)	23
Wooden floors - parquet	25
Varnished wood	25
Polished wood	27
Oiled wood	27
Laminate	29
Cork	31
Carpet	33
Caution!	35

4.



Cleaning floors

Before you start cleaning a floor, it is best to ask the client's advice. He or she will be sure to know which products should be used for the different floors in the home. If this is not the case, or if you are in doubt about a particular product or working method, then ask the company where you work for advice. They are sure to have an expert in house who can help you with the right information.

Draw up a work plan in consultation with the client: for weekly cleaning and for periodic tasks.

Always work in a safe environment and take care with wet floors. They can be dangerously slippery. Don't put buckets, brushes or wipers in the way. Bear in mind the occupants who are at home.

Check that your equipment is in good condition. Ask for safe, environmentally friendly and ergonomic equipment.

- ✓ *Always read the instructions for use of the products.*
- ✓ *Use the amounts indicated on the packaging.*
- ✓ *Do not mix products.*
- ✓ *Choose the correct product in consultation with the client.*
- ✓ *Ask the client how the floors should be treated (impregnating agent, varnish, polish, etc.) so that you can use the correct cleaning product.*

Sarah





Which product should you use: acids or bases?

You don't clean with water alone. You also need cleaning products. These products can be divided into two main groups: **acids** and **bases**. Acids descale and bases degrease.

Acids have a strong, corrosive effect. You use them to descale.

Examples include vinegar or a descaler.

You need bases to degrease. Examples include ammonia or an oven cleaner.

Acids and bases have a different pH value: acids have a low value,

bases have a high value. **Strong acids and strong bases affect the equipment.**

They can be so caustic that the equipment (and floors) may be permanently damaged.





8.

Types of cleaning agents

- **Soaps**

Soap is used with water as a cleaning product.

Brown soap is the most commonly used, most well-known soap in cleaning.

You don't need to use soaps to remove dirt. In fact, soap leaves behind a film.

You can then polish the floor to obtain a shiny effect.

Once you have cleaned a floor with soap, you have to carry on doing so.

- **Detergents**

Many of today's cleaning products contain detergents. Unlike soaps, they degrease and clean well.

- **Solvents**

These products can dissolve stubborn dirt or stains that cannot or hardly ever be removed using soap or detergents.

You use solvents, for example, to remove oil stains, blood stains, paint stains, etc.

- **All-purpose cleaners**

All-purpose cleaners can be used to remove all sorts of dirt.

By preference, use a product with a neutral pH (pH 7).

- ✓ *Be careful with solvents. They can be harmful for health.*
- ✓ *Whenever possible, use a neutral product on floors, such as a detergent.*
- ✓ *Be careful with some cleaning agents for windows. They contain alcohol and may leave stains on some floors.*

Sarah





Terracotta



Terracotta



Concrete paving stones



Concrete paving stones



Concrete

Ceramic stone

You don't clean with water alone. You also need cleaning products. These products can be divided into two main groups: **acids** and **bases**. Acids descale and bases degrease.

- **Porous ceramic stone**

For example, terracotta tiles, concrete paving stones, concrete floors, etc.

These tiles or floors are not glazed and absorb water unless the floor is treated.

So be careful how much water you use.

Clean:

- Loose dirt:
Sweep, brush (on smooth tiles only) or vacuum.
- Stuck dirt:
Untreated floor: use a floorcloth or a squeegee with soap or a neutral cleaner.
Treated floor (with impregnating agent):
use a floorcloth or a squeegee or scour with a neutral product.

- ✓ *Discuss with the client how much time you have to clean the floors, depending on how dirty they are.*
- ✓ *Always use soap on soap. Never soap on an impregnating agent.*
- ✓ *Some porous ceramic tiles are sensitive to acids. Put a floorcloth or a towel under the bucket to prevent stains or rings on the floor.*
- ✓ *The cement joints between the tiles are always sensitive to acid. Wet the joints and tiles before applying an acid product so that the joints are not damaged.*

Sarah





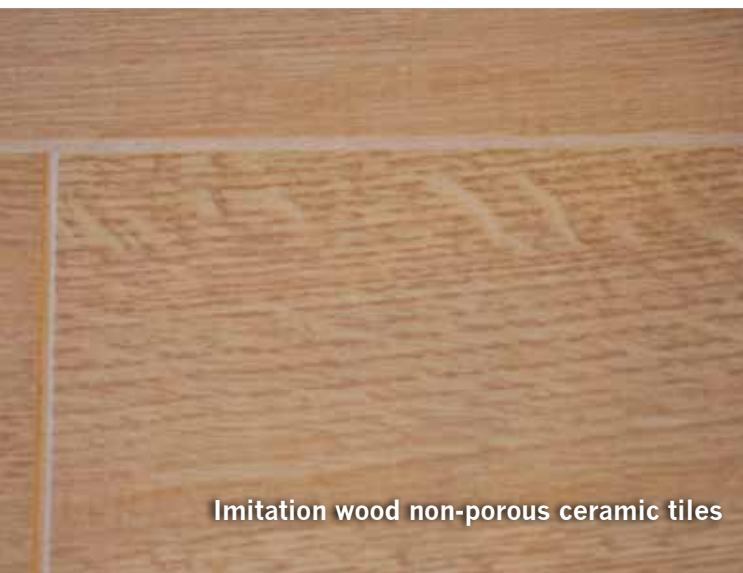
Non-porous ceramic tiles



Non-porous ceramic tiles



Non-porous ceramic tiles



Imitation wood non-porous ceramic tiles



Imitation wood non-porous ceramic tiles

Ceramic stone

- **Non-porous ceramic stone**

There are many different ceramic tiles.

If you are not sure which sort of tiles these are, ask your client or your company for advice.

These days there are even ceramic tiles that look like wood.

See the bottom photos shown here.

Clean:

- Loose dirt:
Sweep, brush or vacuum.

- Stuck dirt:
Use a floorcloth or a squeegee with a neutral product.
If the floor is very dirty, it may be necessary to scour.
It is best not to use soap on these floors.

✓ *The cement joints between the tiles are always sensitive to acid. Wet the joints and tiles before applying an acid product so that the joints are not damaged.*

✓ *If you have to use soap on these floors after all, rinse well to remove the soap residue.*

Sarah





Travertine



**Arduin
(Belgian blue stone)**



Jura



Marble



White limestone



Terrazzo

Natural stone

Nature stone comes from quarries and is a natural product. Many natural stone tiles are porous. They contain calcium and are therefore sensitive to acid products. Some natural stones are calcareous, others are not. The latter are not sensitive to acid.

- **Calcareous natural stone**

Clean:

- Loose dirt:
Sweep, brush or vacuum.
- Stuck dirt:
Untreated natural stone: use a floorcloth or a squeegee with a neutral product, soap or a recommended product.
Treated natural stone (with an impregnating agent):
use a floorcloth or a squeegee with a neutral or a recommended product.
If the floor is very dirty, it may be necessary to scour.

- ✓ *Always use soap on soap. Never soap on an impregnating agent.*
- ✓ *By preference, use rainwater if you work with soap. Soft water avoids soap scum.*
- ✓ *Acid products such as toilet descaler leave stains on the floor. Be careful and always clean the canister, container or bottle well. Put it on a cloth or a piece of cardboard.*
- ✓ *Cola, lemonade, beer, wine and vinegar can damage the floor and leave dull stains. You will not be able to remove these stains with a cleaning product.*

Sarah





Granite



Slate



Basalt



Quartzite

Natural stone

- **Non-calcareous natural stone**

Clean:

- Loose dirt:
Sweep, brush or vacuum.

- Stuck dirt:
Use a floorcloth or a squeegee with a neutral or recommended product.
If the floor is very dirty, it may be necessary to scour.

✓ *Do not use soap on this floor.*

Sarah





Stone carpet



Stone carpet

Natural stone

- **Stone carpet**

A stone carpet consists of millions of tiny pebbles glued to the floor. These pebbles may be coloured and are sometimes laid in patterns.

Clean:

- Loose dirt: Vacuum
- Stuck dirt:

Use a damp floorcloth or squeegee with a neutral product.

If the floor is very dirty, it may be necessary to scour with neutral soapy water.

To clean thoroughly: ask the client to contact a specialised cleaning company.

- ✓ *Remove streaks left by shoes using a pencil eraser or a damp microfibre cloth.*
- ✓ *Be sure not to use a scouring agent.*
- ✓ *Do not use solvents such as white spirit or acetone. They could affect the vinyl and cause stains.*

Sarah





Linoleum



Linoleum

Linoleum

Linoleum is made of natural materials: linseed oil, resin, cork dust and sawdust, with a jute backing. It is a particularly long-lasting product. You can tell the difference between linoleum and vinyl thanks to the special weld (see bottom photo shown here). With vinyl, the strips or tiles are closer together.

Clean:

- Loose dirt:
Sweep, brush or vacuum.
- Stuck dirt:
Damp clean using a floorcloth or a squeegee with a neutral product.

Monthly treatment with a protective product is possible.

- ✓ *Do not use too much water when damp cleaning with a floorcloth to prevent water seeping beneath the floor covering.*
- ✓ *Remove streaks left by shoes using a pencil eraser or a damp microfibre cloth. Be sure not to use a scouring agent.*
- ✓ *Do not use strong degreasing agents or solvents. They could affect the linseed oil and cause discolouration.*

Sarah





Vinyl



Vinyl



Vinyl

Vinyl (PVC)

Vinyl is a synthetic product (polyvinyl chloride). You can tell the difference between vinyl and linoleum thanks to the weld. With vinyl, the strips or tiles are closer together than with linoleum (see photos shown here). Vinyl is made in many different versions and imitations: parquet, stone, linoleum, etc. It is available in wide strips or tiles.

Clean:

- Loose dirt:
Sweep, brush or vacuum.
- Stuck dirt:
Use a floorcloth or a squeegee with a neutral product. If necessary, you can use degreasing products.

- ✓ *Remove streaks left by shoes using a pencil eraser or a damp microfibre cloth. Be sure not to use a scouring agent.*
- ✓ *Do not use any solvents such as white spirit or acetone. They could affect the vinyl and leave stains.*

Sarah





Parquet, varnished



Parquet, varnished

Wooden floors - parquet

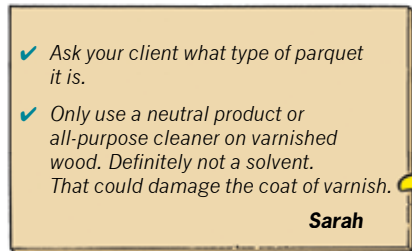
Parquet is made of solid wooden planks or blocks. It does not sound hollow when you walk on it. (Laminate does sound hollow).

- **Varnished wood**

Clean:

- Loose dirt:
Sweep, vacuum or brush.

- Stuck dirt:
Damp clean using a floorcloth or a squeegee with a neutral product. The parquet floor needs to be treated with a special product to protect it against wear once or twice a year.
Tell the client.



✓ Ask your client what type of parquet it is.

✓ Only use a neutral product or all-purpose cleaner on varnished wood. Definitely not a solvent. That could damage the coat of varnish.

Sarah



Parquet, polished



Parquet, polished



Parquet, oiled



Parquet, oiled

Wooden floors - parquet

- **Polished wood**

Clean:

- Loose dirt:
Sweep, brush or vacuum.

- Stuck dirt:
The parquet floor needs to be polished once or twice a year. Tell the client.

- **Oiled wood**

Clean:

- Loose dirt:
Sweep, brush or vacuum.

- Stuck dirt:
Damp clean with a floorcloth or squeegee using appropriate soap (shake well before use).
The parquet floor needs to be treated with a special product to apply a protective coat once or twice a year.
Tell the client.

- ✓ *Polished parquet does not like water.
Beware of water stains.*

- ✓ *Be careful when damp cleaning
oiled wood with a floorcloth.
Do not use too much water.*

Sarah





Laminate



Laminate

Laminate

Laminate is a product comprising several layers: a hard fibre plate onto which compressed paper (usually with a wood structure) is glued. A layer of synthetic material is then added.

So laminate is not parquet! It sounds hollow when you walk on it.

The planks have a recurring pattern.

Clean:

- Loose dirt:
Sweep, brush or vacuum.
- Stuck dirt:
Damp clean using a floorcloth or a squeegee with a neutral product. The laminate floor needs to be treated with a product to protect the upper layer once or twice a year.
Tell the client.

- ✓ *Do not use solvents containing ammonia or acetone (nail polish remover) on laminate. They could damage the upper layer.*
- ✓ *Laminate should only be damp cleaned with a floorcloth. Dry well and never scour.*

Sarah





Cork



Cork

Cork

A cork floor is made of the ground bark of the cork oak tree. A protective lacquer coat is applied to cork floors. Cork feels warm and has a typical uneven appearance.

Clean:

- Loose dirt:
Sweep, brush or vacuum.
- Stuck dirt:
Damp clean using a floorcloth or a squeegee with a neutral product. The cork floor needs to be treated with a product to restore the lacquer coat once or twice a year. Tell the client.

- ✓ *Do not use solvents on cork floors.*
- ✓ *Never use a scouring agent.*
- ✓ *Be careful when damp cleaning with a mop. Do not use too much water.*

Sarah





Low-pile carpet



Deep-pile carpet



Fitted carpet



Fitted carpet

Carpet

Carpet can be made of natural fibres (such as wool, cotton, coconut or silk), synthetic fibres or mixed fibres. Some carpets are deep pile, others are low pile. They may be either loose or fitted.

Clean:

- Loose dirt:
Vacuum: both deep-pile and low-pile carpets.
Carpet sweeper: low-pile carpets only.
- Stuck dirt:
Treat like textile in consultation with the client.

- ✓ *Discuss removing stains on a carpet clearly with the client and pass this on to your company to avoid risks.*
- ✓ *It is important to remove the stain as quickly as possible.*
- ✓ *Remove stains using a damp microfibre cloth and an appropriate product. Dab from the outer edge inwards so that you do not make the stain bigger.*

Sarah



34.



Caution!

- Cleaning floors just with a damp microfibre cloth (without product) is usually sufficient. If this does not work, you can use a neutral product (all-purpose cleaner).
- Many clients stand by old habits, such as adding a splash of bleach to the water to clean the floor. However, bleach is bad for health and the environment. 'Ordinary' cleaning products are sufficient to clean properly.
- Clients also have the idea that bleach disinfects, but this is not the case. Bleach only bleaches.
- As long as the floor has a good weekly clean, disinfecting with a special product is not necessary. Discuss this with your company if the client does not agree.





Vorm DC  Form TS
Sectoraal Vormingsfonds *Fonds de Formation*
Dienstcheques *Sectoriel Titres-Services*

VDAB