

How to Tell If Hardwood Floors Need Refinishing or Replacement

A new article helps homeowners figure out whether a tired hardwood floor needs a simple sanding or a full tear-out, using checks anyone can do at home.

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-- Homeowners are often faced with the same dilemma after years of foot traffic, sunlight, and the occasional spilled glass of wine: does a worn hardwood floor just need a fresh coat of finish, or is it time to [tear out and refinish your hardwood floors or completely replace them](#)? A new article addresses exactly this question, walking through the practical checks that separate a simple cosmetic fix from a structural one.

Here's the twist most people don't expect: how a floor looks from standing height barely matters. The real answer is almost always hiding beneath the surface, and the article breaks down exactly how to find it.



refinish hardwood floors or replace them



hardwood floor refinishing services in Georgia

Wood thickness comes first. Solid hardwood is forgiving. It can be sanded down again and again, sometimes five or six times over the decades, which is part of why so many century-old homes still have their original floors. Engineered hardwood plays by different rules. Its wear layer is thin, so it typically has room for only one or two sandings before there's simply nothing left to work with.

From there, the article points to a handful of physical checks that take less than five minutes. Press along the boards. If the edges rise higher than the middle, that's cupping, and cupping

almost always means water got in somewhere. Soft or spongy spots tell a similar story. A scratch from a dropped skillet or a dog's nails, on the other hand, is rarely more than surface damage, the kind that disappears with a good sanding.

The article also makes a point that's easy to overlook: the right answer for one room in a house isn't automatically the right answer for the whole house. Bedrooms and living rooms, where foot traffic is steady but moisture is rare, are usually the easiest rooms to bring back to life. Kitchen floors and entryways tell a messier story, since a slow leak under a dishwasher or wet boots tracked in during a Georgia downpour can quietly damage boards long before anything looks wrong on top. Basements face their own uphill climb, fighting humidity no matter how many times the wood gets refinished.

Then there's the money question, which the article tackles head-on. Refinishing a room generally runs a few dollars per square foot and finishes in a matter of days. Full replacement costs considerably more and can stretch out for weeks, especially if a subfloor needs repair or a particular wood species has to be special-ordered. One detail worth knowing before getting quotes: if a floor needs heavy board repair before it can even be sanded, the price gap between refinishing and replacing starts to close fast.

"People often call us assuming their floor is a lost cause, and half the time it just needs a good sanding and a new coat of finish," said Bill Colombo, owner of [BCAL Flooring Consultants](#). "The other half, the floor looks fine standing up, and then you get down on your knees and realize it's been cupping for months from a leak nobody noticed."

Colombo has spent more than 40 years in the flooring trade and has walked through thousands of homes across Cobb and North Fulton County since 2002. His approach, he says, comes down to honesty over upselling. "I'd rather tell someone their floor just needs refinishing and save them the money than sell them a new floor they didn't need. That's how you get a call back for the next project, and the one after that."

The article also notes regional quirks worth knowing. Older Marietta homes often have original solid hardwood hiding under carpet, sometimes in better shape than owners expect. Newer construction in areas like Alpharetta or [Milton, GA](#) built during periods of rapid growth, sometimes comes with a thinner wear layer than homeowners assume, making that thickness check especially worthwhile before committing to a sand-down.

About BCAL Flooring Consultants

BCAL Flooring Consultants is a locally owned flooring company based in Marietta, Georgia, serving homeowners throughout Cobb and North Fulton County, including Roswell, Alpharetta, Johns Creek, Milton, Kennesaw, and Smyrna. The company specializes in hardwood flooring installation, hardwood floor refinishing, engineered hardwood, luxury vinyl plank flooring, carpet sales and installation, and stair runners. Founded by Bill Colombo, who brings over 40 years of hands-on flooring experience to every project, BCAL Flooring Consultants offers free in-home

consultations to help homeowners make informed decisions about their flooring.

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