

STAGESTEP Flooring Solutions

For Dance, Theatre and the Performing Arts

Why is it so important to maintain your **DANCE FLOOR?**

It takes time, effort and money to keep your dance floor looking good, and there are many good reasons to have a maintenance program to keep your floor in top condition.

An appropriate dance floor system in a proper environment is **SAFE** for both teachers and students. Injuries and slip and falls are dramatically reduced. Second, a clean floor is a healthy floor helping to eliminate the transmission of bacteria and viruses, along with reducing upper respiratory inflammation from dust and other contagions.

With a safe and healthy environment dancers thrive, taking more classes, making you more money, and your flooring investment pays dividends by lasting longer.

Finally you have a professional image to maintain. A clean floor that looks good makes you look good to dancers and their parents.



Randy Swartz
President,
Stagestep, Inc.

Randy Swartz founded Stagestep 40 years ago and has introduced many innovative flooring products, including Slip NoMor, foam backed flooring, pre-fabricated floating subfloors and colorize, a color-changing floor finish. He has also served as artistic director of Dance Celebration, a major dance series in Philadelphia, and has served as the U.S. judge at a number of international ballet competitions.

Tips for maintenance that will save you money:

1. Use entrance mats when you come into your building and again when you enter the studio. 80% of the dust and dirt that gets on your floor will be caught by these mats. Clean them regularly.
2. Check and clean air conditioning and heater filters frequently, otherwise you will be recycling dust and dirt.
3. Use a dehumidifier at night if your floor feels cool in the morning. Temperature change can result in moisture collecting on the floor, making it slippery.
4. Dry mop your floor before classes with a large mop without any additive.
5. Washing down your floor with water is a waste of time. You must use a detergent/degreaser, usually found in a hardware store. Do not use cleaning agents for home use and stay away from acetone, alcohol, ammonia, and bleach. They will ruin your floor. A good and safe bet is Proclean or Proclean NS, available from Stagestep.
6. Dye marks and heavy scuff marks will require special attention if they don't come up after general cleaning. Many strippers, solvents, and aggressive spot removing can discolor, soften, or dissolve layers of your floor. Always test new products before general use. Wipeout and Tapemate will handle virtually all marks and stains.

The sooner you address issues of spots and stains, the easier it will be to remove them. Foreign material will penetrate the floor surface over time, making removal virtually impossible.

7. One of the biggest problems facing studio owners today is the gray/black residue left by aluminum compound taps. They are most likely found on children's shoes, and they are, at best, difficult to get off the floor. What is worse is that they will stick to tights, clothing, and body parts. There are two ways to eliminate this metal dust. First, wet down the floor and use a wet/dry shop vac to suck up the particulate matter. Wet mopping will just move the residue around the floor. Metal does not dissolve in water or detergent. So by sucking it up, you remove a good portion. Do not attempt to dry vac up the aluminum. It will just be blown into the air to settle later back on the floor.

A second method is to attach an artificial shami cloth to the bottom of a mop and run it over the dry floor. The residue will stick to the shami. Rinse and reuse the shami when dry. Either way, it is a tedious task cleaning this mess up.

There is one solution, and that is treating your tap shoes with Tap Shield. It will prevent the transference of residue to the floor.

The key to floor maintenance is to have a plan and a schedule. You will save time and money while providing your students with a professional looking environment. If you have any questions regarding the products or methods mentioned please contact me at randy@stagestep.com, or call 1-800-523-0960 ext 105.



THE FIRST PRODUCT THAT PROTECTS AGAINST
Aluminum Compound Residue

It's real easy to destroy a dance floor during installation, transportation, or storage. The good news is that it is just as easy not to destroy it. Here are some dos and don'ts for handling your floor.

INSTALLATION

Do's and Don'ts

- Rolled floors stored for any amount of time over a couple of days should be stored vertically (on end) not lying flat on the floor, to prevent gravity from stretching and distorting the floor. Floors should always be rolled up around a core at least four inches in diameter to prevent roll set (wavy floor syndrome.)
- Before installation, floor should be rolled out and allowed to lie flat. Never install a floor that is not lying flat before taping. Allow 24 hours (if you can) for the floor to acclimate to room temperature. Floors expand in heat and contract in cooler temperatures. That means floors can 'grow' and bubble up in the summer and seams can open in the winter unless they are installed at the average working temperature for the room. If it is a permanent glue down installation, follow the instructions on the label.
- Wood is likewise prone to expansion and contraction with the changes in seasons, making it just as important to install after acclimating the wood to room temperature.
- Every roll out floor can crack if folded over from the sides. Never flip or move a floor by twisting or pulling it. Use the core to roll the floor up during installation, transportation, or storage.
- The sun, represented by UV radiation is an enemy of your floor. It will cause the plasticizer that makes your floor flexible to leach and evaporate. Your floor loses volume (shrinks) and becomes stiff, prone to cracking. Direct sunlight ages the floor. Fortunately windows block UV radiation, but if you take your floor outside be careful, they have not invented a sun block for floors.
- More floors get damaged and have to be replaced during transportation than from the wear and tear of studio use. Protect your floors in transit. Use bubble wrap or a touring floor bag. The bags offer an easy way to handle a heavy and awkward floor roll.
- There comes a time when the floor seems to have reached the end of the line. Stains, scuffs, and surface scratches have conspired to make it look worn out. It may either be too slippery or too sticky even after cleaning. It may be time to replace or it may be time to refinish. We have a new finish system that can re-colorize and revitalize your floor, virtually giving it a facelift and adding years to its life. So before investing in a new floor check out the viability of refinishing. If your floor is more than 12 years old it may not be worth the investment to re-finish.
- New dance floors and subfloor systems have evolved over time and before you jump in you should check out what vendors are offering. Get samples and written price quotes. The important thing to remember is you need to match your needs to the product's benefits. Consider installation costs into your budget and the life expectancy and guarantees offered.
- It is a big investment, but remember you will be spending a lot more over the life of the floor on maintenance, so keep an eye out for labor and material cost savings on keeping your floor safe, healthy to work on, and beneficial to the ways you move.

DANCE FLOOR SYSTEMS

What makes them tick and why you need to know.

No one has to tell you that dancing requires serious physical effort. It demands strength, stamina, and skill. If you want to excel, it requires a daily commitment. When you add it all up, the demands on the body are great. Exhaustion and injury are too frequent by-products of the art form.

Most injuries and a good deal of that fatigue can be avoided simply by dancing on an appropriate dance floor system. For the dance studio owner, teacher and students that means happy, healthy productive and active clients and staff.

There are four important attributes that directly impact the frequency and seriousness of injury.

When you jump, even if it is only a couple of inches, when you land on an immovable object the impact is equivalent to three times your body weight. Over time, fatigue, stress fractures, and permanent damage to ligaments, tissue, and bone can occur.

A good floating wood subfloor reduces that shock to the body by half. It converts some of the impact energy to resilient energy (think diving board) and safely returns it to the dancer. Commonly this is referred to as “spring.” Other energy is transferred to a layer of foam under the subfloor. The subfloor absorbs the excess energy thus helping to create a safe working environment.

There are two other critical elements needed to make your dance environment safe and performance-friendly.

First is lateral foot support. While your flooring system is dissipating excess energy it should be providing support for balance.

If the surface deflects or moves unevenly, you lose stability. You can't dance on a trampoline because it has no lateral foot support. Some may reference the floor's deflection as pointe elastic, but I prefer to look at meeting the needs of the dancer, not the floor's characteristics as a guideline for safety. Wood usually makes an excellent subsurface to assure lateral foot support.

The final element is co-efficient of friction. In other words, how fast or slow is the surface on which you are working.

I don't like using the word slippery because it sounds unsafe. The fact is if a floor was completely non-slip you could not turn, slide, or glide. Most floor surfaces can be tuned to be either faster (ballroom, hip hop) or slower (ballet) with finishes, treatments, or a change in environment. Changes in heat, cold, and humidity affect the surface's co-efficiency of friction. A dedicated maintenance program will help keep your floor surface consistent.

There seems to be a proliferation of dance floor surfaces, and claims to go with them. Let's clear the air. All roll-up dance floors (sometimes referred to as Marley) are made of PVC (polyvinylchloride) a derivative of oil. There are only two processes used to turn PVC into flooring; calendaring, which produces soft, flexible flooring, and extruded, harder, denser surfaces for heavy-duty use. There are homogeneous floors (solid throughout) and heterogeneous floor (layered).

Floors usually consists of a wear layer, filler, and backing. Sometimes they have a fiberglass lining for stability, and sometimes they have a foam backing for shock absorbency.

A few come with a factory finish, most do not.

A floor should be more than 1 mm thick, otherwise it was probably designed for use on a wall.

They are all relatively the same in wear, use, and required maintenance. Get samples, try them out for yourself, and simply go with the lowest price for the type of floor you are considering.

The only caution is the softer floors do not hold up well with tap, clogging, or ballroom. Ask questions before you buy.

Damage, vandalism, dirt, dye-marks, and floods are not covered by guarantees. Remember you and your floor will be together for a long time. When it all works you don't even know it is there.