

# STAGESTEP/AESON FLOOR MAINTENANCE PROGRAM



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# INTRODUCING STAGESTEP'S/AESON'S FLOOR MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

If you are responsible for a dance, theatrical or performing arts surface, you will need to develop a floor maintenance program. The problem is figuring out what maintenance program is right for you and your floor. For each type of flooring system and its use, there are a number of factors that impact on procedures, cleaning frequency, equipment and supplies needed.

Maintenance is a four part process: keeping the floor clean; protecting the surface; appearance; and, keeping it safe for participants. You must also consider temperature, humidity, static electricity and the presence of foreign substances. All these factors will affect the time and cost spent on this never-ending job.

A miscalculation people make is not considering the amount of time and expense needed for floor maintenance. First determine which maintenance factors are most important to your situation. Appearance, cleanliness, non-slip consistency, safety, longevity and sanitation are not the same thing. Each require a different approach and commitment. After you evaluate your maintenance parameters (you should write them down), you can then determine what procedures it will take to accomplish your needs.

At this point, it is a good idea to decide if you are going to maintain the floor(s) yourself or farm it out to professionals. Even if you have determined to do it yourself, get a quote from a professional. You will have a better idea of process, time and cost. You may reconsider doing it yourself. Most flooring maintenance professionals have no idea what you need for your floor. By and large, they come to the table with appearance as their only objective. They are apt to leave you with a bright, shiny and very slippery floor unless you are there to tell them exactly what you want.

Today, surfaces used in specialty movement environments include: wood, laminates, vinyl, linoleum and carpet. Our purpose is to provide a general outline of helpful tips to maintain your flooring, deal with specific problems, and make some recommendations on products and techniques to reduce your out of pocket expense.

As you review this guide, we are happy to answer your questions and welcome your insights and experiences. Send your questions and comments to [stagestep@stagestep.com](mailto:stagestep@stagestep.com) or [info@aesonflooring.com](mailto:info@aesonflooring.com). Together, we can come up with a plan that works for you.

# WHAT IS FLOOR MAINTENANCE AND WHY YOU NEED A PLAN?

Most of us have come to the realization that no matter how new and high tech our car may be, we have to bring it in for scheduled maintenance from time to time. We know that if we don't, sooner or later we are going to have problems. All those moving parts and wear and tear will take their toll. It is the scheduled maintenance which keeps things running in the short term and extends the life of the car in the long term.

Your floor is no different than your car. Every floor made by every manufacturer needs a maintenance plan appropriate for the floor, its use(s) and the conditions and circumstances under which it was installed.

It does not matter how much money you spent, or if you have a high-end specific-use flooring system, you need to initiate a maintenance plan. It may sound like I am repeating myself or stating the obvious, but after thirty years in the business, a week does not go by without hearing of someone complaining about their flooring getting dirty, scuffed, slippery or worse. Usually, they have done nothing to address these problems, have never thought about a plan to maintain their floor, and just assumed that since they invested in a floor designed to meet their safety and performance needs, that all they had to do was install it.

Let's get real. Floors are inert. They don't do anything. Things are done to them. Everything that can go wrong with a floor has a cause for every effect. Simply put... there are six reasons to maintain your floor. They are appearance, health, performance, safety, reliability and longevity. A sloppy looking floor makes for an undisciplined environment and undisciplined is not a message or core value we want to give our artists and students.

A good maintenance program takes into consideration the health of the people working on it. Bacteria, fungus, mildew and dirt can impact end users in a bunch of ways that all spell trouble.

A well-maintained flooring system contributes to the desired end result of the user. A floor compatible with what you want to do makes for better performance. Better performance makes happier instructors, students and artists.

The primary reason people invest in flooring is to provide a safe environment. Depriving your floor proper maintenance can jeopardize safety. Taking care of your floor means you won't have to take care of injured end users. Consistency and reliability are the cornerstone of both safety and performance. Controlling the environment, keeping the floor clean and in good repair will insure a consistent coefficient of friction.

A flooring system is a major investment. Take care of this piece of equipment and it will take care of you. We will explore in detail all you will need to know about creating and executing a viable and appropriate maintenance program. It is not a huge investment of time and money; however it is a necessary ingredient to keep everyone working efficiently and safely.

## KEEPING YOUR FLOOR CLEAN.

Things happen. Things happen big time to specialty flooring used in arts and dance. First and foremost, you want your floors safe, your clients, customers and students sound, and your investment secure. Before you get fancy, you need to consider creating a floor maintenance schedule. Number one on the agenda is keeping your floor surface clean on a consistent basis.

All floors get dirty. Dust, dirt, sweat, shoe marks, food, soda and gum are the prime offenders. The more the floor is used, the more it needs to be cleaned. What exactly does “clean” mean?

The first mistake people make is they think what they do at home also applies to studio or stage. Not so. Cleaning materials and applications created for home use are not appropriate for commercial and professional situations. Specialty floors are subject to much more wear, tear and environmental punishment. They may need special protective finishes. The desired aesthetics and coefficient of friction are very different from your floors at home. To begin, you need a general purpose, mid-range PH (measures acidity and alkalinity) detergent/degreaser. It cleans without destroying finishes and without leaving any surface residue.

In fact, many cleaners leave a residue on the floor to make it shiny or resistant to dirt. When you use a cleaner that leaves a residue of any kind, you inevitably change the coefficient of friction. In simple terms, if you use the inappropriate cleaning agent, your floor becomes stickier or more slippery after application. If there is one thing you want in a specialty movement floor, it is consistency. What you find in the supermarket is not what you want. Better to shop in a hardware store or a place offering industrial cleaning supplies.

Once you have secured your detergent/degreaser (Stagestep/Aeson offers *Proclean* and *Slip NoMor Cleaner*), it can be used with a mop or a flooring machine usually with a green pad. The two bucket technique is more effective and efficient if you use a mop. One bucket (use warm water) contains the detergent/degreaser; the second bucket just plain warm water. Put the mop in the detergent bucket, ring out (you never want to put excess water on any floor surface) and mop your floor. Rinse out the mop in the second bucket then repeat. When you use most detergents/degreasers with a high concentration of water, you will not have to rinse your floor. At the very least, you will have picked up the dust, dirt, grime and sweat.

If your floor is not entirely clean, it is time to up the intensity of your effort. Usually what is left is bad scuff marks, dye marks, gum, adhesive residue or food stains.

A floor stripper, applied with a floor machine and red pad, usually used in conjunction with floor finishes, is an aggressive and effective way to address dye and scuff marks on a large scale. There are also a number of products to attack spot problems. These are solvents, usually made from a citrus base. They can cause damage if left on your floor. They definitely will degrade finishes. When using these products (such as **Wipeout** and **Tapemate**) make sure you immediately wipe up the solvent then flush the area with water and dry.

After using a stripper, it is very important to clean your floor with your detergent/degreaser. Stripper left on the floor can damage the surface, destroy a finish about to be applied and can damage shoes.

An appropriate finish applied to the floor will help reduce the time, effort and frequency of cleaning. Make sure you follow instructions as to the number of applications, technique of application, drying time and other requirements. The cleaner you keep your floor, the longer it will last, the better it will look and the safer on which it is to work.

## THE ENVIRONMENT

Floor surfaces are inert. They don't do anything. Things happen to them. Seems obvious, but many of us attribute the bad things that happen to floors to the floors. It is true that softer surfaces can be damaged quicker and more extensively than harder surfaces. Certain colors and patterns can either show or hide scuff marks. And, there are floor surfaces and finishes that resist staining better than others. But in the end, stuff happens to floor surfaces and to address whatever problem you are facing you have to know why? When you know the "Why" your next choice is either prevention or maintenance or both.

## THE WHY

The number one cause of problems for floor surfaces is environmental. Issues regarding quality of the air, temperature, humidity and static electricity are usually not considered at first. If you can get a handle on, and control the environment, you will eliminate some problems altogether and reduce maintenance by as much as a half.

Humidity and temperature are two key factors in keeping your floor safe and clean. The warmer the room gets, the softer the floor surface becomes. The darker the color of the floor, the more heat is absorbed and retained. Floor surfaces can get so soft that heel impressions can become permanent. The floor also becomes more vulnerable to percussive cuts and abrasions.

If your floor has been semi-permanently installed and gets much warmer than when it was laid, it will probably expand, bubble up, create waves and have to be reset. On the other hand, if the floor gets cold, it contracts, gets harder and less flexible with the possibility of cracking and fracturing. Temperature changes of 20 or more degrees can have a major impact on the viability of the floor surface. Temperature change comes about because of window and skylight sun, wind penetration at doors and windows, slabs and ceilings that are not insulated, heat given off by dancers, and erratic thermostat settings.

Wood subfloors and surfaces especially are vulnerable to the effects of temperature and moisture or high humidity. Wood can cup, warp and swell resulting in excesses wear, splintering and a place where mold can develop. Most of the conditions that cause this kind of deterioration can be reversed and the floor can be salvaged if addressed sooner rather than later. Call Stagestep Technical Support for assistance.

## THE OUTSIDE INVASION

The dirt and grime that gets on your floor comes from outside your facility. Stopping the dirt, grime, foreign materials and wetness before it lands on your floor can save you a ton of time and money in maintenance costs. The best way to deal with this outside invasion is to have entrance mats both at your exit/entrance and at the doorway into the studio. I am not talking about a throw rug. These are pretty high tech items in that they scrape, remove and dry the shoe bottom just by walking on it. They come in all kinds of configurations and sizes. They can be installed as portable systems or installed recessed permanently. What they do is eliminate about 80% of the outside particulate matter that gets on your floor. For more information about the mats contact Stagestep/Aeson.

# MOISTURE

Moisture in the form of humidity, perspiration, spillage, leakage, cleaning supplies, unprotected concrete slabs and outside invasion can wreak havoc on maintenance, safety, performance and the life of the floor. Moisture can cause slippery spots, be a magnet for dirt and dust, destroy tape and adhesive, and warp and buckle wood subfloors and surfaces.

Moisture in the air and temperature of the air relate to one another in such a way as to be the primary cause of floor problems. Warm air has the capacity to retain moisture. During your work day, the temperature in your studio is relatively high. Sweat is evaporated into the air. Classes end. Temperatures drop, evening comes and the thermostat is lowered. The cooler air in the room can no longer hold the moisture and it collects — Where? In addition, all the dust that has been kicked up during the day settles in the still air — Where? The mixture of dust and moisture coats the floor turning it into an ice skating rink. How do you know for sure this is happening to you? First thing in the morning, put your hand on the floor. If it is cooler than the air in the room, you have excess moisture in the room. It is both a magnet for dirt and lowers the co-efficient of friction. This is a formula for more work, less safety and an ugly looking floor.

What to do? First, dry mop your floor every morning. Second, get a dehumidifier and turn it on at night. Third, check the filters in your HVAC system and change or clean them every six months. Check for and fix leaks. Insulate where possible. Monitor room temperature and try to keep it steady. Add blinds or drapes to block direct sunlight. Make sure shoes are put on and taken off in the studio and that the bottoms are wiped regularly.

A moisture meter can be used to check the percentage of moisture in your flooring system and warn you of a possible problem.

Flooring and flooring systems, containing wood, needs special care when exposed to moisture of any kind. Wood surfaces may need to be screened or sanded and re-finished. Before taking action call Stagestep for technical support.

## STATIC ELECTRICITY

Another problem at the other end of the moisture spectrum is static electricity. In a dry atmosphere, usually caused by a heating system and or winter weather, the relative humidity drops. Add friction caused by walking on carpets or dancing and you produce static electricity. A static electricity charge can be painful and give you a shock. It can also blow out sound systems. Static electricity turns shoes into a dust and dirt magnet and the first slide, shuffle or hop deposits the mess on your floor. Install a humidifier in your HVAC system and wet mop your floor in the morning before classes start should put an end to that disagreeable problem. Being aware of your environment and its impact on your floor is the key to dealing with, and preventing problems that may have been baffling you about the care and maintenance of your floor.

## THE MARKS THAT WON'T COME UP

After a fair amount of elbow grease, on-going effort, and a myriad number of chemical supplies, does that once lovely floor still look like a '71 Chevy at the end of a demolition derby? Nothing seems to work and many despair that nothing ever will work. You have been plagued by the marks that don't come out. Many a floor owner feels marked for life ~ or so they think.

There are a number of ways to triumph over those resistant blights upon our floor. First, we need to know how those marks get there, exactly what they are and where they come from. Know thy enemy and you are on your way to being victorious.

There are some who think that marks and spots are inherently part of the floor and just materialize. Not so. Floors are inert. Our shoes, the environment and the things we do are responsible for all those little nasties.

We begin with shoe bottoms since they are the prime cause of marks. Rubber, rubber compound, leather, metal, metal compounds, thread and an assortment of synthetic materials located near or on the bottom of our shoes wear out. In many cases, they wear out on the floor.

The traditional scuff mark is a classic problem. In the case of percussive movement, such as tap or clogging, the problem is compounded by the abrasive, burnishing and grinding nature of the transference of materials to the floor surface. Normal mop, pail, water and detergent may not get the job done. There are two ways to attack these problems and in some instances, a combination of both work well. There are aggressive chemical cleaning agents

that can dissolve and “lift” the mark off the floor and there are mechanical means utilizing a floor machine, brushes and/or aggressive pads (red or black) to muscle the offending marks off the floor. Please note the following caution: That which can dissolve foreign matter off your floor may very well dissolve your floor along with any floor finish you may have had on your floor. The first time out test any new product or technique. Read maintenance instructions for do’s and don’ts before you dive in. More floors get ruined by failed attempts to clean them than for any other reason.

While the scuff mark(s) problem can be troublesome, there is a much more sinister problem facing the floor owner and it looks just like a scuff mark. It is the dye mark, produced when, due to heat and perspiration, shoe dye leaches through the shoe onto the floor. It is virtually like spilling paint on your floor. Now you need to escalate the level of attack. It is time for a solvent cleaner. Needless to say, there is an inherent problem in that the substance that dissolves the dye mark can also dissolve your floor. First, use citrus-based solvents. Second, use a small amount and apply directly to the offending spot. Third, immediately flush the area with water and dry. Stagesep/Aeson carries two “safe” solvents: *Tapemate* and *Wipe Out*, a towelette system.

If your floor has a finish, it is a possible these solvents/cleaners will remove it. The faster you work, the less likely any damage will occur. If you have an extra piece of floor, test the product on it. Re-finishing is not the worst thing that can happen. If your floor is a total wasteland of scuffs and dye marks, and you used a finish on it, it might be time to strip the finish off, clean the surface of any residual stripper and re-finish.

If you have not used a finish, you always have the option of using a stripper and a red pad. That should get everything up. It will, however, leave your floor dull unless you follow up with an application of finish. (You want a satin finish, not a shiny finish.)

Set up a maintenance schedule after experiencing the scope of your maintenance needs. Address your needs early in the game or you will end up late at night trying to fix a problem that could have been managed with a bit of planning.

Our ultimate weapon to combat “permanent” marks is **Wipeout**. This product will eliminate ballpoint pen marks along with the tough, hard to remove dye marks. It is important to know that the longer the dye marks remain on the vinyl floor, the harder it is to remove them. These marks will transmute directly into the vinyl, making them almost impossible to get rid of. When it comes to maintaining your vinyl flooring, the sooner you eradicate the marks the better.

Another type of mark that infuriates floor owners is the gray/black marks produced by disintegrating aluminum taps. Once again, you pay the piper for crappy materials. Steel and aluminum taps are the appropriate way to go but are more costly. Aluminum compound taps break down leaving a residue (the metal turns black when exposed to friction or heat) which ends up sticking to the vinyl. There are two ways to get rid of this mess. First, purchase artificial chamois cloths (used for cleaning cars) and dry mop your floor with the cloth. The shards of aluminum will stick directly to the chamois. Wash them out and reuse. The second method is to wet down the floor and use a wet/dry shop vac to dispose of the particulate matter.

Obviously, when planning your floor care maintenance program, using the appropriate products makes the whole process easier and less time consuming. We suggest using our ***Slip NoMor Finish***. It will add luster and brightness to the surface and, most importantly, it will reduce tap residue by 50%. Keeping your floors in top notch condition is important to the health and safety of both teachers and students.

***Tapemate, Wipeout*** and ***Slip NoMor Finish*** are available from Stagesstep/Aeson.

# MOVING, STORING AND USING YOUR FLOOR OUTSIDE

More damage is done to flooring in transporting it than in using it. Here are a few tips to reduce the possibility of damage.

- 1) Always roll the floor up around a core. We recommend a 6" diameter plastic tube which you will be able to find at most plumbing/hardware stores.
- 2) Always store your flooring on end. Laying it flat will ultimately result in gravity causing it to "egg" and crease when unrolled.
- 3) Always store your floor at room temperature or at least between 50-90 degrees. If your floor is exposed to cooler or hotter temperature, let the floor acclimate before unrolling it.
- 4) Protect your floor when moving it from dirt, grime and contact damage by putting it in bubble wrap, transport it in boxes or flooring bags (available at Stagestep/Aeson).
- 5) Allow your floor to relax after rolling it out before applying any tape. If you are using the flooring outside, be careful of three environmental elements. Excessive temperature will soften and expand flooring, making it vulnerable to damage. The sun emits UV radiation that will attack the plasticizers in the floor that makes it flexible. Prolonged exposure to sunlight will cause your floor to become ridged and shrink or crack. Cover the flooring with a tarp when not in use, especially from 10am-2pm.

While water itself will not damage most PVC floors, it can create an ideal environment for mold. Immediately dry the floor and inspect for any mold spots. You should be especially concerned if you have foamed-back flooring because water can permanently damage the foam if not removed immediately.

Never leave flooring outside without protecting it from the elements.

NOTE: The advice given is for roll out PVC based flooring. Wood flooring needs protective coatings for outdoor exposure. Contact Stagestep/Aeson for additional information.

# SLIP NO MORE!

The biggest complaint regarding movement floor surfaces is that they get too slippery. The second biggest complaint is that they also get too sticky. How can this be? There are three answers: PERSPECTIVE, ENVIRONMENT and MAINTENANCE.

Every movement activity has an ideal co-efficient of friction that provides optimum performance and safety. Unfortunately, that optimum is different for every discipline. So, if you are barefoot, in high tech sneakers, tap or pointe shoes, your PERSPECTIVE on the appropriateness of the floor surface will differ significantly from someone else doing different activities or sporting different activity footwear.

Tappers like fast floors. Ballroom dancers prefer even faster floors. Ballet dancers like slow floors. The bottom line: It all depends on what you do. If your floor is fast or slow, it is always somewhat dependent on your perspective.

The key to adjusting the floor to meet your movement needs is to assess the condition and maintenance of your floor. In many cases, floors get slippery or sticky because they are not being cleaned properly or not being cleaned at all.

First, clean the floor on a regular basis. Does the floor perform better right after cleaning then deteriorate over time? If so, clean the floor more often.

Use a detergent degreaser or manufacturer recommended cleaning product. Many home cleaning agents contain chemicals that make floors more slippery so be careful.

Check your HVAC system, insuring the temperature and humidity are under control. Both can cause major changes in coefficient of friction. Use a dehumidifier overnight if humidity is an issue.

Dry mop the floor daily.

There are two recommended products that make floor surfaces less slippery (“slower”). They are *Slip NoMor 2000C*, the original “liquid rosin”, and *Slip NoMor Cleaner*, a multi-purpose cleaner and non-slip agent. Follow directions or call Stagestep/Aeson for additional information.

To make your floor “faster”, you can use a white pad with a floor machine and “dry buff” the surface. To make your floor “slower”, use a red pad with a floor machine.

Floor finishes have a profound effect on how fast or slow your floor responds to movement. Always test a small area of your floor before applying anything to the entire floor.

Professional movement floors have a variety of means to adjust the surface friction and ultimately meet the needs of the end user. With a bit of effort, you can have your surface and move on it.

If you have any questions regarding your floors co-efficient of friction and what you can do to get optimum performance based on your perspective, please contact us.

# TIPS AND TRICKS FOR LOOKING AFTER YOUR FLOORING

If you are taking your floor on the road or just down the block for a single performance, here are a few tips and tricks to make your flooring experience easier.

- 1) Always roll your flooring around a tube at least 6" in diameter. Never store or roll up your flooring without it.
- 2) During transit protect the rolled floor by: a) using touring bags; b) putting bubble wrap on the ends; and, c) create protective racks.
- 3) Never transport or store floors on top of each other. Try to store and transport floors on end, if possible. (For short term travel, floors may be stacked on one another but must be placed upright or unrolled as soon as possible. Prolonged stacking will cause failure of the floor.)
- 4) Roll out flooring on stage and let acclimatize. Do not tape immediately, especially in cold weather.
- 5) Leave a 1/16 to 1/32 of an inch gap between rolls before top taping.
- 6) Always wet mop floor prior to performance.
- 7) Remember rosin is not recommended for vinyl flooring.

## THE WAVES

If your flooring has been rolled for a while, been stored without a tube or has had weighted objects put on top of it, it is possible you have wave set. You know the minute you roll out your floor. It has waves and doesn't lie flat.

- 1) Reverse roll the floor around a tube and keep it in a warm place for a day or two. Then, unroll to see if you have fixed, or at the very least improved, the condition of the flooring.
- 2) Use heat (with caution) and pressure. A hair dryer works. Warm up a wave then put weight overnight on it. If it has not improved by the next day, you may have an unfixable floor.

## GENERAL TIPS

- 1) The first time you do anything to a floor, do it in a small area and make sure you do no harm.
- 2) Be very careful of solvents. They can soften and ultimately dissolve your floor.
- 3) Be very careful about what you use to clean your floor. Stay away from standard household products. They usually leave a residue that will make your floor slippery.
- 4) Use dedicated cleaning materials and equipment for your floor, including mop, pail, brushes, sponge mops, etc.
- 5) If you are using tape, remember that top tape deteriorates. Change your tape often. Double-face tape must be changed every two (2) weeks at a minimum.
- 6) The longer you wait to address maintenance problems, the harder it will be to deal with them. Vinyl floors will absorb dye and scuff marks into the floor itself, making it very difficult to clean.
- 7) Do not expose your flooring to direct sunlight, especially between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. The UV radiation will disable the plasticizer that keeps your floor flexible.

**When in doubt or if you have questions, call Stagestep/Aeson  
Technical Support at call 800-523-0960 or 866-658-0456 toll free in Canada  
or visit [stagestep@stagestep.com](mailto:stagestep@stagestep.com) • [info@aesonflooring.com](mailto:info@aesonflooring.com)**

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Not Valid With Slip NoMor Finish (Kits).

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# PRICE LIST

MAINTENANCE	EACH	CASE†
Slip NoMor 2000C (1 gal.) .....	\$50.00**	\$180.00**
Slip NoMor 2000C (5 gal.) .....	\$200.00**	
Slip NoMor Cleaner (1.3 gal.) .....	\$45.00	\$150.00
Slip NoMor T (1.3 gal.) .....	\$65.00	\$210.00
Slip NoMor Finish Kit* (wood or vinyl) .....	\$500.00	
Scuffguard X (1 gal.) .....	\$25.00	
Tapemate (1 pint) .....	\$9.95	\$32.50
Wipeout Container .....	\$19.95**	\$60.00 (Case of 6)

\* One (1) kit covers 1,000 sq. ft. \*\* FREE shipping within Continental U.S.

† Case = 4 Units

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