

Following are furniture care recommendations from the Hardwood Manufacturer's Association

### **Heat, Humidity and Hardwoods**

Did you know that up to half the weight of freshly sawn wood is water? Furniture is crafted from wood that is carefully dried, retaining just enough moisture for the furniture to properly acclimate to the relative humidity in your home. The wood in furniture continues to exchange moisture with the air, shrinking and expanding in response to changes in relative humidity.

Like your own skin, solid hardwood furniture's natural response to extremely dry air is to lose moisture and shrink a bit. The halves of an extension table may part slightly, or a few tiny openings may appear on a solid wood surface. This will correct itself as the relative humidity rises, and the wood absorbs enough moisture to expand slightly.

On the other hand, if you don't have an air conditioner or dehumidifier, your home's relative humidity may get too high. Parts of your wood furniture may absorb excess moisture from the air and expand, perhaps causing drawers to stick. Once again, this will correct itself as your home's relative humidity decreases. The furniture's quality and sturdiness are not affected by these natural changes.

Here are some ways to ensure your solid hardwood furniture's longevity:

- For your comfort, as well as to protect your furniture, use a humidifier in the winter and an air conditioner in the summer to keep the relative humidity at 25 to 35 percent.
- Avoid placing furniture directly in front of radiators, heat runs or fireplaces.
- Don't expose hardwood furniture to continuous direct sunlight. Draw the curtains occasionally.
- Store table leaves as close as possible to the table. Keep them in an upstairs closet rather than in a damp basement, so that the table leaves are adjusting to the same relative humidity.

### **Tender Loving Care**

It's surprisingly simple to protect and enhance hardwood's natural beauty. All that's needed is some tender loving care. Here are a few tips from the experts:

- Read the manufacturer's care directions carefully and keep them handy for future reference.
- Dust with a soft cloth by following the grain pattern of the wood. Use an old T-shirt, baby diaper or cheese cloth that's been laundered to remove the sizing.
- Dust often to remove everyday abrasive particles from wood surfaces. Before dusting, moisten cloth lightly with a spray product. A dry cloth can leave hairline scratches on the finish.
- Surfaces also can be cleaned with a mild non-alkaline soap and water. Use the suds on a damp sponge or cloth, but be sure to pretest the solution on an out-of-sight-section to make sure it doesn't damage the finish. Dry immediately with a soft cloth and buff lightly, following the grain.

- Wood finishes benefit from an occasional waxing or polishing. A paste wax can be applied every six to twelve months. Remove old wax first with a mild non-alkaline soap and water solution.
- Avoid waxing urethane-finished furniture. Waxing these surfaces causes them to gather dust and dirt rather than repel it.

**Repairs Made Simple**

Minor damage to solid hardwood furniture can be repaired quickly and effectively with the right materials, a bit of elbow grease, and some careful attention to detail. More complex repair or refinishing jobs are best left to professionals, especially if the piece has one of today's "super finishes".

**Scratch and Nick First Aid**

When preparing to repair small nicks or scratches, always test an inconspicuous area of the furniture first to make certain the mixture won't damage the finish.

**Finish Treatment**

- Dark Wood or Stain

Fill scratches with shoe polish that matches the lightest shade of the finish, or rub with walnut or Brazil nut meat in the direction of the scratch. A child's crayon or felt-tipped marker can also be used.

- Cherry

Fill the scratches with cordovan or reddish shoe polish that matches the wood, or apply darkened iodine with a cotton swab or thin artist's brush.

- Light Wood or Stain

Fill scratches with a tan or natural shoe polish, or apply darkened iodine diluted 50 percent with denatured alcohol.

**Stain Removal**

Today's high-performance finishes demand special and careful attention when it comes to stain removal. While there are countless remedies for stains, some may damage the furniture's finish. If you're at all unsure, you should call a professional refinisher.

These common stains often can be treated with do-it-yourself furniture first aid. Bear in mind you should always test your remedy on a small area to see if it removes the stain without disturbing or damaging the finish.

**Stain Treatment**

- Water Marks & Rings

Often, rings are in the wax, not the finish. Cover the stain with a clean, thick blotter, press down with a warm iron, and repeat. Or rub with salad oil, mayonnaise or white toothpaste. Wipe dry and wax or polish.

**White Marks**

Rub with a cloth dipped in a mixture of cigarette ashes and lemon juice or salad oil. Or rub with a cloth dipped in lighter fluid, followed by a mixture of rottenstone and salad oil. Wipe dry and wax or polish.

**Milk or Alcohol**

Use your fingers to rub liquid or paste wax into the stain. Or rub in a paste of boiled linseed oil and rottenstone with the grain, substituting pumice for dull finishes. Or rub with ammonia on a dampened cloth. Wipe dry and wax or polish.

**Other Home Remedies**

During everyday use, your hardwood furniture may be subjected to mishaps and spills which temporarily mark its finish.

**Problem Treatments**

- Cigarette Burns (light): Rub with scratch-concealing polish, or with a paste of linseed oil and rottenstone, working with the grain until the burn mark disappears.
- Heat Marks: Rub gently along the grain, using a dry steel wool soap pad or a cloth dampened with camphorated oil or mineral spirits, or rub gently along the grain with extra-fine (0000) steel wool. Wipe clean and wax or polish.
- Nail Polish: Blot the spill immediately, then rub with fine steel wool (0) dipped in wax. Wipe dry and wax or polish.
- Paint Marks: If fresh, remove latex paint with water and oil-based paint with mineral spirits. If dry, soak spot in boiled linseed oil, wait until paint softens and lift carefully with a putty knife or wipe with cloth dampened with boiled linseed oil. Residue can be removed by rubbing along the grain with a paste of boiled linseed oil and rottenstone. Wipe dry and wax or polish.
- Sticking Paper: Dampen the paper thoroughly with salad oil, wait five minutes and rub along the grain with extra-fine (0000) steel wool. Wipe dry and wax or polish.
- Wax or Gum: Harden the substance by holding an ice cube wrapped in cloth against it, then use your fingernail or plastic credit card to remove it. Rub the area with extra-fine (0000) steel wool dipped in mineral spirits. Wipe dry and wax or polish.

**Keep Your Furniture Looking Great**

Furniture is made to be used and enjoyed and accidents happen, especially when there are children at home. Take these steps to keep damage from everyday life to a minimum:

# FURNITURE CARE

- Unless your furniture has a new “super finish” to protect it, use coasters to prevent spills, stains and damage from hot dishes. Blot all spills immediately. Keep solvents, alcohol, nail polish and polish removers away from your furniture surfaces.
- When dusting, always lift lamps and other objects - don't slide them across the furniture's surface.
- Always lift furniture to move it - don't drag it.
- Open and close doors, drawers and lids gently.

These care instructions, compliments of The Hardwood Manufacturers' Association, are general in nature, and may not apply to all Brazil Baroque products. Remember to test cleaning procedures on a small, inconspicuous area first. If you have questions, please consult a furniture care professional.