

How to...

Sand a floor

The final appearance of any wooden floor will depend to a large extent on how well it is sanded. In the case of Trip-Trap oils, the whole floor must be sanded so that the oil can be absorbed into the wood pores. It is important that sanding work is uniform, as defects will become apparent during the oiling process.

The following information is not intended to teach sanding to an amateur, since an experienced contractor best undertakes this work. It is intended to introduce the project manager to the process so that he can control that the proposed contractor knows his work.

Ensure you keep emptying the bag of the belt sander to ensure it does not start emitting dust. All other machines should be connected to a vacuum cleaner to control dust emissions. Dust removal is not just good for your working conditions, but also prolongs the life of your sanding papers.

Belt sanding

The grade of paper required is dependent on the condition of the floor. Belt sanding is required to remove any meaningful quantity of old finish or uneven wood from the surface. Exposed nails should be driven deeper into the wood or removed to avoid damaging the sanding belts and machinery.



Very thick paint or pitch coats with a high resin content will quickly fill the sanding paper and are more easily removed with alternative technology i.e. heat guns or planing drums.

In the case of a new floor you need only remove the micro-chatter marks from the surface, which will require a grade 100 paper along the length of the board. Other amounts of work will require stronger paper such

as grade 80 or 60. For old varnished, but uneven floors use a drum sander with G 36 paper used at 45 degrees to the grain.

Hole and gap filling

If specified, fill holes and cracks. Best is fresh sanding dust mixed with priming varnish or specialist resin. This ensures an accurate colour match. Alternatively use a pre-mixed, quick-drying wood filler. In this case prior to application test the colour compatibility of filler and wood when finished with the chosen oil.

Remove excess filler when dried using a drum sander with a G 60 paper on ship's deck or board floors (patterns where the grain is always parallel). On fish-tail or other parquet patterns use grit grade 100.

If the floor boards are themselves loose then the fill will not be durable.

Edge sanding

Sand the room edges or areas where the belt sander cannot go with an edge sander and grade 80 paper or stronger dependant on the unevenness of the floor. Work with a zig-zag pattern away from the wall to blend the edge and room sanding together.



Final sanding

Use a rotary disk sander or an alternative design of rotary machine such as a Trio to complete your project. The work will blend belt sanding with edge sanding and remove from the main areas of the floor any remaining mark from belt sanding. Commence with grade 80 before using grade 100.

Use a quality orbital sander to take your work right up to room edges and into corners. Normally this will be with paper grade 100 unless there is still lacquer to remove.

Finally work the entire floor with a grade 120 mesh.



Hand scraping and sanding

Under obstacles and right into corners can only be done by hand.

Finally use a vacuum cleaner to remove dust prior to the oiling or priming process.

Specialist sanding

To remove old finish from steps and small platforms use a specialist orbital such as a Festool rotary orbital connected to a vacuum.