

## Got Slippery Gym Floors?

How to fix slippery hard wood gym floors

Slippery floors are always a safety problem. When it comes to gym floors in school, the problem may not be so obvious as water or liquid on the floor. Slick gym floors can be a serious problem and often warrants immediate corrective action.



### **A** Little Background on Gym Floor Finishes

Finishes for normal walking surfaces require a minimum slip coefficient of 0.5 or greater as defined by the ASTM Slip Resistant Standard D2047. While this defines the minimum for a safe walking surface, finishes specifically designed for hard wood gym floors need to be different.

The activity on gym floors is different, so using a finish designed for residential or commercial wood floors may lead to unsatisfactory results. This is why it is always best to insure the finish is specifically made for wood sports floors. These finishes are carefully formulated to have a higher slip coefficient that is optimum for sport activities. One might think the higher the number the better, but not so. Having too high a coefficient can also create problems. Our own experience is that the sweet spot for coefficient of friction usually falls in the 0.65-.80 range. This optimum range can be found in oil base varnishes and today's modern water based gym floor finishes.

### **W**hy do Gym Floors Get Slippery?

When slippery gym floors become a problem, the blame is usually the finish that was applied to the floor. Often, the finish itself is may not be the culprit.

Everyone is concerned about what should be used to clean wood floors for fear the floors might be damaged. For those that have wood floors in homes, sometimes they use such products as Murphy's Oil Soap, vinegar, or other mild cleaners. Likewise, on gym floors, the product selected to clean the floor may be a mild product like a neutral floor cleaner. This may be the same product used to clean tile floors in hallways and classrooms.

The problem is slippery gym floors are most often a result of contamination on the floor. Those mild cleaners that are used because of the fear of harming the floor or the finish, just won't do the job. The secret is a stronger cleaner that will not harm the floor, dull it, or leave a residue.

## **G**etting a Grip on Slippery Gym Floors

Most of the contamination that may cause slipperiness on a gym floor has an “oily” characteristic. This can be caused from sweat, oil base dust mop treatments, food spills, etc. It is necessary to have a stronger cleaner specifically made for cleaning hard wood gym floors. These products are stronger to remove oily contamination, yet are safe for gym floors, non-dulling and don't leave a residue. These products when used regularly as part of a gym floor maintenance program will prevent floors from becoming slippery.



If slippery floor complaints are already occurring, action needs to be taken. In this case, the gym floor cleaner combined with aggressive scrubbing will be required to bring the floor back into playing condition. Follow these steps:

1. Thoroughly dry dust mop or sweep the floor to remove all loose debris and dirt.
2. Prepare the cleaning solutions according to label instructions.
3. For scrubbing, use a 175 rpm floor machine or automatic scrubber with a BLUE pad. If you will be using an automatic scrubber\*, fill the tank with the cleaning solution.
4. Apply solution to areas of the floor then scrub with the floor machine or scrubber. Work an area no more than 1000 sq. ft. Pick up the solution after scrubbing with a wet-dry vacuum or the scrubber.
5. Allow the floor to dry.

\*if the wood floor is less than 2 years old, consult with the wood floor installer before using an automatic scrubber on the floor.

Multi-Clean makes Hi-Trac, a wood floor cleaner and maintainer designed specifically to maintain and restore traction for hard wood gym floors.

Visit our [Wood Floor Webpage](#) to find more information on the following products

**Hi-Trac**, and **ProFloor Extreme Gym Floor Finish**.