



Floor Refinishing: The Products I Use

By Ben Osborne

Floor Refinishing: The Products I Use

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I have written this... Pamphlet? For all the people who have asked me over the years what products I use. But it's not just for them. It's also for the countless more who have never met me or any other professional floor sander. Most of whom will, without thinking twice, march straight into the nearest DIY supermarket and buy whatever over-priced, substandard lacquer is on the shelf.

Why would they think twice, I guess. Where else are you going to buy it from?

Often, when I tell people that I sand floors professionally, they will say something like “oh wow, you must travel across the whole country.” They are then surprised when I tell them I rarely travel further than 15 miles from my house (and no, I don't live in London).

What I am trying to say is that floor sanding is a big industry now, with hundreds of different products that are changing and updating all the time. Doing a little research and finding out what products the professionals use is the clever thing to do.

- 1. Sanding**
- 2. Gap Filling**
- 3. Staining**
- 4. Lacquering**
- 5. Hardwax Oiling**

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Sanding:

36 Grit Belts – Zirconia

60 Grit Belts – Zirconia

80 Grit Belts – Zirconia

100 Grit Belts – Aluminium Oxide

120 Grit Belts – Aluminium Oxide

36 Grit Disks – Silicon Carbide

60 Grit Disks – Silicon Carbide

80 Grit Disks – Silicon Carbide

40 Grit Orbital Disks – Aluminium Oxide

80 Grit Orbital Disks – Aluminium Oxide

Using Zirconia for the courser grits is great because its such a hard material. Zirconia belts can pretty much handle anything. They can flatten floors very quickly and remove tough finishes. The only problem with Zirconia is that they are a bit more expensive than something like Aluminium Oxide.

The reason I use Aluminium oxide for the fine grits is because they are not doing such hard work, they are just smoothing the floor from the previous grits, so Aluminium Oxide does just fine. (Quick note: Aluminium Oxide abrasives are not soft by any stretch, but Zirconia is fake diamond...)

I use Silicon Carbide abrasives for edging. When you are edging the disk spins very fast and is liable to heat up and have material from the floor stick to it. I find that Silicon Carbide doesn't heat up quite as much as other abrasives

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(though this maybe due to the disks I use being more open coated than others, but that's another story).

Just be aware that most of what I have just written is unusable gobbledegook for anyone that is going to be hiring sanding machines from the average tool hire place. They are probably going to just have one type of abrasive, they aren't going to know what it is and you just have to use that. But should you have the choice, you now know what I use.

Related Articles:

[How To Use A Floor Sander](#)

[How To Use An Edge Sander](#)

[Floor Sanding Basics 1](#)

[Floor Sanding Basics 2](#)

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Gap filling - Lecol

Lecol 7500 is a great product, especially for the professional floor sander. It dries extremely quickly. So fast in fact, when you get some on your finger it feels very cold because the fumes are evaporating so quickly. So as you would expect this is a solvent product and you need to take the necessary safety precautions when using it.

Another great product that I think would probably be better suited to the DIY enthusiast is Bona Mix n Fill. It doesn't dry so quickly, so you don't have to keep topping it up and it isn't quite so tiring to work into the floor. The only problem is it really needs to be left over night to dry. I would probably use it myself it wasn't for that fact.

TIP: If you only plan to fill the odd unsightly crack or hole and not the whole floor, you can just use plain PVA glue. Its fairly chewy and problematic to sand off the surface if you do a lot of this so you don't want to use it for mass filling the floor.

UPDATE: I am relentlessly bombarded with emails about how these filler binders are not available in the US and indeed they are very hard to come by. What you want to search for is “Wood Flour Cement.” there are several manufacturers of this, one of which is 'Glitsa'. Hope this helps.

Related Articles:

[How To Fill A Wooden Floor](#)

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Staining – Ronseal Colron

I have been using **Ronseal Colron**, the solvent edition, for coming **up to 10 years**. It's a fantastic product and it has served me well.

One of the problems with staining with such a strong solvent is that you have to **wear a carbon filter mask**. Wearing the mask in itself is not the problem, its when the condensation from your breath drops off the mask and onto the floor. These of course can only be sanded out, a big problem when you are half way through staining your floor.

Unfortunately this product is being discontinued soon and I am looking to jump ship to another product. I have heard good things about **Rustins** for a long time, so I will be testing soon.

UPDATE: The colron stains have indeed been discontinued. The Rustin stains are OK but can be temperamental, allow a longer dry time and perhaps do a second coat.

In the US however it's a completely different story. The 'General Finishes' range of stains and the Bona DriFast stains are both extremely easy to use and brilliant products from what I hear (from many US Professionals).

Related Articles:

[How To Stain A Wood Floor](#)

[Staining Floors Without Sanding](#)

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Lacquering – Junckers

I have been using Junckers products for almost 8 years now. Before I became a Junckers evangelist, I used to use another big brand name lacquer, in fact the biggest brand in the wooden floor lacquer arena. **I had non-stop problems.** When we switched to Junckers, lacquering became much easier, there were no problems during application and no problems with the finished product.

When I am priming the floor I use Junckers Prelak for Pine Floors and Junckers Baseprime on all hardwoods. Baseprime is a brilliant product for bringing out the grain of the floor. It increases depth of color and vibrance of the wood, it's a really great product. This doesn't go so well on pine, sometimes it does go well on pine but often brings it up very yellowy or orangey.

I do occasionally use the Baseprime on pine **if there have been any chemical spills, dog urine or small areas of rot.** Baseprime is a barrier seal, the idea being that you can put it down on anything and you can lacquer over the top with anything. So its great for covering areas that might react with a water-based primer or lacquer.

Once the floor is primed, I'll then lacquer it with either Junckers Strong or Junckers HP Commercial (a 2 component lacquer) depending on how much traffic the floor will receive. Generally Strong is for domestic environments and HP Commercial is for commercial environments like shops and restaurants.

I do not use the softer, cheaper, part-acrylic lacquers. 100% Polyurethane all the way.

UPDATE: Junckers finishes are not available in the US. I recommend Bona (especially Bona Traffic HD) which can be expensive. If you are on a really tight budget and just need to get it done cheap, you should have a look at the 'Basic Coatings' range.

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Hardwax-Oiling – Osmo

I believe there is a conspiracy in the Hardwax Oil industry! I believe that almost all Hardwax Oils come from the same factory and they are just privately branded. There is not much between them.

Which is a little hypocritical considering I use one of the more expensive brands of Hardwax Oil. But I know that if I have a problem there is a respectable company that will talk to me and help me. Also if there are any differences between them I know I'm using one of the better known companies.

Treatex is another good brand I have used and not had any problems.

I'm not sure if Osmo is available in the US, so try the Bona Hardwax Oil.

Related Articles:

[What Is Hardwax Oil?](#)