

# Wood you believe it?

## Essential advice from Philip Dono of Focus Flooring

Look in any glossy 'Homes' magazine and you'll find stunning photos of wooden floors. Scan the Yellow Pages and there's more than 100 companies advertising new wooden flooring and floor-sanding services. A quick search on Google for 'wooden floors' produces nearly three million web pages. So what are the real options if you're thinking of real wooden flooring? There's two ways you can go: have a brand new wooden floor fitted or sand and restore your existing floorboards.

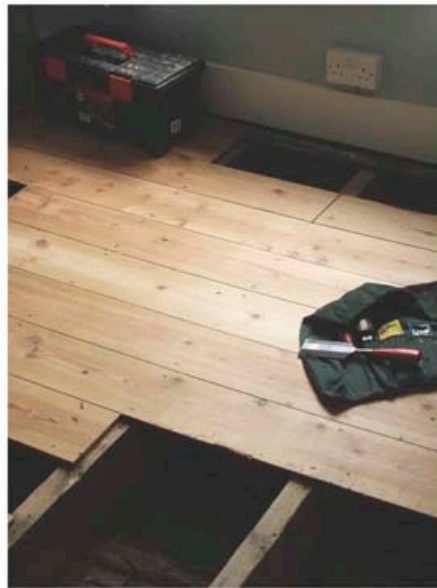
Floor sanding, staining and achieving a professional finish is not as simple as you might imagine. Plenty of time should be allowed to weigh up the different options. Even having a brand new floor fitted professionally can turn into an expensive hassle.

Many people choose floor sanding and staining rather than a new wooden floor. The reason for this usually comes down to budget – a good quality wooden (planked) floor costs about twice as much as restoring an existing floor. However, with the right approach, it's possible to achieve superb results with the 'sanding and restoration' route.

Whether you hire the equipment and do it yourself, or use a professional sanding company, be warned, there are a number of things that can go wrong. 'Stress and added cost' factors, caused by unforeseen complications and shoddy workmanship, include:

- finding matching replacement boards;
- sanding swirls engrained in stained boards;
- a 'stripey' finished effect;
- corners and sides that don't match;
- a house full of dust; and
- shoeprints sealed into boards.

I'm often called in to 'rescue' jobs; in every case the property owners could have saved themselves a lot of hassle and expense if they'd known what to check out before letting



anyone loose on their floor. Unfortunately, you only find out what your finished floor will look like after it's finished.

My best advice is to spend time planning the project and talk to the professionals. If they haven't got time to answer all your questions, find someone who will.

**Philip Dono is the founder of Focus Flooring. His free guide 'Floor Sanding Trade Secrets' is available by calling 0800 085 9858.**