

# White oak care

**Nowadays white oak is usually sealed with a matte polyurethane.**

Oil soap cannot penetrate that. It sits on the surface and leaves a sticky haze that attracts dirt.

# How to Clean White Oak: Science-Backed Protocol

White oak is tannin rich and usually sealed with a matte polyurethane. Water and harsh cleaners can discolor it.

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## White Oak Care

DRY-FIRST CLEANING AND FINISH SAFETY

White oak contains tannins that can turn black when exposed to moisture and metal. Modern finishes are often matte polyurethane.

Prohibited methods include oil soap, steam mops, and ammonia. This protocol prioritizes dry cleaning and quick-drying damp mops.

## The science: tannins and water

### Tannin reaction

Water plus iron can react with tannins in white oak, turning the wood black around seams or fasteners.

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### Modern matte finish

Many white oak floors and cabinets are sealed with water-based polyurethane for a raw, matte look.

## Part 1: Myth vs. Science

### Myth #1: Use oil soap to feed the wood.

**Science: False.** Oil soap cannot penetrate polyurethane. It sits on the surface and leaves a sticky haze that attracts dirt.

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### Myth #2: Steam mops sanitize the floor.

**Science: False.** Steam forces water vapor into seams, causing swelling, cupping, and cloudy finishes.

## Part 2: The Clean Era Protocol

### Step A: The dry clean

**Priority:** Vacuuming is more important than mopping.

**Method:** Use a soft bristle attachment without beater bars.

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### Step B: The damp clean

**Agent:** Residue-free hardwood cleaner or water with a drop of pH-neutral soap.

**Method:** Mop should be damp, not wet. The floor should dry within one minute.

**Cabinet rule:** Spray the cloth, not the wood, wipe with the grain, and dry immediately.

## Summary for your home

### NEVER USE

Oil soap, steam mops,  
or ammonia cleaners.

### ALWAYS USE

Dry vacuuming, a  
barely damp mop, and  
residue-free cleaners.

### GOLDEN RULE

If it stays wet longer  
than one minute, it is  
too wet for white oak.

## FAQ

### **Is oil soap safe for white oak?**

No. Oil soap leaves a residue on modern finishes and attracts dirt.

### **Can I use a steam mop?**

No. Steam forces moisture into seams and can cause swelling and finish damage.

### **Why does white oak turn black around water?**

Tannins react with water and metal, especially on raw or poorly sealed wood.

## **Clean Era standard**

Clean Era uses manufacturer-compliant, science-backed protocols for hardwood floors and cabinetry.