

FURNITURE CARE AND MAINTENANCE

A GUIDE TO GETTING THE BEST OUT OF YOUR
HOMEWOOD FURNITURE



HOMEWOOD

crafted luxury

HOMEWOOD - CARE & MAINTENANCE

A guide to getting the best out of your HOMEWOOD furniture.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

We hope you are pleased with your choice of HOMEWOOD products - we want you to enjoy our crafted luxury for many years to come. Having chosen a solid hardwood product, understanding the nature of the material it is made from, and how to use and care for it will ensure that you do.

The information given in this guide is provided as a service to HOMEWOOD customers. Advice is general in nature, and no comment or content is to be construed as a guarantee. For our warranty provisions please refer to the HOMEWOOD Limited Warranty, available for download on our website.

The information in this booklet is not about restoring or repairing furniture; it is about caring for and preventing damage. Understanding and dealing with the causes of damage are well within the abilities of nearly all. The aim of this booklet is to explain how to minimize the preventable damage to your furniture.

If you have any further questions regarding care of your furniture, please contact your sales consultant, our nearest showroom or e-mail us at sales@homewood.co.za.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.

Information given is correct as at January 2015, but is subject to change without notice.

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A FEW WORDS ABOUT WOOD AND WOODEN FURNITURE

Wooden objects and furniture have become part of our lives. Whatever their nature or purpose, if they are important to us they deserve the best care we can provide for them. While all living things age and degrade, the process can be slowed through the application of principles of care and maintenance based on understanding the nature of wood

Wood is a living material. It breathes, it gives off aromas, it moves, it changes colour, it sweats and gets thirsty, and it needs nutrients.....

We have different expectations of wood used indoors and that destined for outdoor applications. However today's lifestyles, with the use of living areas segueing from indoor to outdoor living spaces mean that these boundaries are not as clear as they once were. Our HOMEWOOD designs are done with this in mind, but not all of our pieces suit all spaces. We have derived a usage Matrix for our woods and furniture ranges. Ask your consultant to confirm that the piece you have chosen is suitable for the use you have in mind. As a general guide, the closer your space gets to outdoor conditions the higher the expectation you should have that the effects of age seasoning will manifest sooner rather than later.

ACCEPTABLE DEFECTS

Whilst we acknowledge that open cracks and fissures in your furniture are not acceptable, there are certain characteristics of wood that whilst strictly categorised as defects, are deemed in the furniture industry as acceptable (and to some degree even desirable).

These are checks, shakes and knots....

Checks - are hairline to small cracks that appear in surfaces, often as a result of seasoning and age drying, and are prevalent in certain timbers (particularly cross grained varieties). Checks do not usually go right through the thickness of a plank to reveal visible light. They will tend to disappear during the warmer and wetter months and reappear during the drier cooler seasons. Because maintenance products will often fill these when open, as they close the compression of the solidified product will frequently form minute ridges on the surface evident to the touch. Should these worry you they may be removed with a light rubbing of grade 0000 steel wool, soaked with your regular maintenance product.

Shakes - manifest as natural splits or separations of fibre (vertical and horizontal or both) in the structure of the wood. They are caused by growth defects, shrinkage, stress or compression often caused during wind storms and sometimes with felling. Shakes can also manifest during age seasoning. There are different types (heart shake, cup shake etc) and they are most frequently internal, but may be exposed on one surface in sawn timber. Wood with shakes often has the most interesting grain patterns, and for this reason we do not reject such pieces outright. Aging can however cause shakes to develop into cracks, and should this occur, we will service your piece under guarantee.

Knots – probably the most well know of the acceptable defects, they are the remains of a branch in timber. A branch sawn off close to the trunk naturally forms a sound or live knot (acceptable). A broken branch stub that becomes surrounded by new growth produces a loose or dead knot (not acceptable). As with shakes knots can produce the most attractive graining in wood surfaces, and many collectors seek knotted pieces for their beauty.

PREVENTABLE DAMAGE

We use the term "preventable damage" to describe those conditions and events over which we have most influence. By far the most predominant damage we see to furniture is caused by the poor choices users and owners make through misunderstanding the nature of wooden objects.

Consider the major causes of preventable damage:

- Poorly controlled or incorrect ambient environment (especially relative humidity, temperature and light)
- Careless use and handling
- Inadequate (or no) maintenance
- Inadequate packing for storage, transport or shipping

Expectations of changes, and preventive measures taken will depend on the area in which your furniture is used

THE IDEAL ENVIRONMENT

There is never a "perfect" environment for anything - only conditions contributing more or less to the deterioration or preservation of a piece.

WOOD IS HYGROSCOPIC

It responds to extremely dry air by losing moisture and shrinking. It responds to humid air by absorbing moisture and expanding. Temperature differences and changes magnify these effects of humidity. This movement can cause degrees of warping and bowing and a tolerance for abnormal behaviour is necessary here (a general guide is 5mm per linear metre of wood surface)

Indoors, wood furniture is best maintained at temperatures between 18° and 25° C. with around 50% relative humidity. Avoid prolonged exposure to heating and cooling outlets and air currents, as exposure to extreme temperature variations can damage any fine wood item. In dry environments, table tops and joined components especially may display open gaps and spaces. These will normally 'correct' themselves as the relative humidity rises and the wood absorbs enough moisture to expand. During humid weather, wood drawer fronts and doors may swell and occasionally will become difficult to open and close but these natural changes do not affect the furniture's overall quality or durability.

WOOD IS PHOTOSENSITIVE

Do not expose furniture to prolonged continuous direct sunlight. With extended exposure, ultraviolet (UV) rays can create hairline cracks in surfaces and cause significant colour change. Irrespective of precautions taken many wood species initially darken naturally with age – a result of both oxidation (exposure to air) and photoreaction (exposure to light). Even with normal ambient light conditions most woods will season over time. To keep the colour as even as possible we recommend rotating furniture every six months so all areas get similar exposure to varying room conditions.

BIOPREDATION

A third and often overlooked environmental problem is biopredation. Wood is subject to attack by micro-organisms, insects and fungi. The best protection against biopredation is to monitor your furniture. Insect infestation, in particular, can destroy a furniture collection in a short time. Termites, ants, powder post beetle larvae, and other insects severely damage wood by eating channels beneath the surface. Digested wood is often pushed out, an important clue in monitoring furniture as the sides of recent exit holes have the colour of newly-cut wood. Immediate treatment or even fumigation will be necessary.

Mold, mildew and fungi are everywhere - on furnishings, walls, and in the air. But spores are usually inactive and fungal infestation will occur only in the presence of an external moisture source or when the fibre saturation point (nearly 100% Relative Humidity) is approached. Still air and high temperatures also encourage the rapid growth of these organisms. Molds and mildew growing on the surface of wood may stain it. Other fungi can completely destroy wood. Fungal damage, or rot, can only occur in areas of extreme dampness at moderate temperatures. Unless your furniture gets wet and stays wet, this type of damage is not normally a severe problem.

FURNITURE HANDLING, STORAGE AND USE

Careless and uninformed treatment of furniture is the second major cause of preventable damage. All it takes to handle and use wood correctly, is a basic understanding of the nature of wooden objects and of what furniture is and is not meant to do - combined with common sense. And this all begins with handling and positioning.

Whether it's going across the country or only across the room, you should take special care when moving furniture. Safe handling and moving of furniture (especially during home relocation) begins with a basic understanding of how a piece is constructed.

Be sure to disassemble multi-piece or assembled units before you attempt to relocate them. Here are the general procedures we recommend:

1. Unpack all stored items in or on furniture. Remove all knobs and castors. Tape them inside a drawer or keep them in an envelope so they'll be close at hand when unpacking.
2. Remove or secure shelves. Wrap adjustable wood shelves separately or reinstall the shipping screws to secure them in place. Number their location so the same piece is returned to its home on reassembly. Remove and separately wrap glass shelves before you move any unit. Glass table tops are easily damaged if bumped.
3. Close and secure all doors and drawers. Cover these with a mover's pad or a blanket, and tie loosely. If possible remove drawers and move them separately. This not only protects them but reduces weight of the main case – always a consideration with solid wood. As with shelving, number their locations.
4. Protect corners, projecting details, and handles. Use padding or foam where appropriate. Where fitted screw external levellers all the way in.
5. LIFT all furniture. Make sure you know where the furniture is its strongest - generally along a major horizontal element - and try to carry it from these points. Sliding and dragging can bend or break legs. Never slide or drag furniture along the floor. The vibration can loosen or break joints, chip feet, break legs, etc., to say nothing of what dragging does to the carpeting or finish on the floor. Whenever possible, use trolleys or dollies for transporting heavy pieces.

Make sure the route is clear and has no obstructions, such as narrow doorways or hanging chandeliers that might hinder the safe passage of furniture and movers.

A FEW SPECIFICS

Tables

If the table is not to be disassembled remember that the strongest part of a table is generally the apron. Whenever possible, lift the table carefully from the apron, never by the top or legs. Lifting on the top rather than the apron may break the glue-blocks that hold the top to the frame or strip out the screws and z-clips that hold the top on. Grabbing the legs, particularly tables with long, unsupported legs, will cause unnecessary stress on the leg and the joint connecting it to the apron. Whenever possible, wrap padding around a table's legs before moving it to prevent chipping or breakage during the move.

Case Furniture

While case pieces, especially large ones, may appear very different from tables and chairs, the same rules apply. Never try to move a large piece alone. A case piece requires at least two people, and wherever possible the use of a dolly is recommended. Examine the piece. Take the piece apart as much as is possible. Remove a cabinet or dresser top from its base; remove the cornice or pediment, if there is one.

If the carcass is sturdy enough, remove any drawers to lighten the load and make the move easier. If the carcass is weak and shifts from side-to-side, leave the drawers in place to provide stability and prevent further damage to the joints. If the piece has handles, wrap them with padding. Padding protects the handles, the furniture surface, the movers, and the surroundings in case you bump up against anything.

Never grab a heavy piece like a chest of drawers or bookcase by the cornice at the top. The attachment of the top to the base may be loosened and pull apart from the rest of the piece. Lift the piece straight up – avoid tilting (and remember when lifting to use your legs, not your back).

Seating Furniture

When lifting a chair, remember that the seat rail is its strongest part, not the chair back. Lifting by the back, especially the crest rail will eventually result in breakage. For small chairs, lift by the side seat rails, one hand near the front on one side, the other near the rear on the other side. When lifting a large chair or sofa, the principles are the same. Grab underneath the side frame. For upholstered chairs or sofas, place your hands underneath the frame to avoid touching the upholstery. For chairs with slip seats, remove the slip seat and wrap and move it separately to prevent its being soiled or falling out during the move.

Levelling

Our furniture is constructed to sit in a level position - doors and drawers are evenly aligned when the furniture leaves the factory. These can be misaligned during transit – our delivery teams are trained to rectify any issues on site. Most homes, though, have floor-level variations that may result in misalignment of your furniture. Over time, you may find it necessary to readjust the levelling or alignment if doors or drawers become troublesome. This also happens when you place heavy objects, such as televisions, crockery, electronic or computer equipment and even books, in or on your furniture – as well as when furniture settles into your carpeting or ‘soft’ flooring.

Moving your furniture will also often require levelling adjustments.

The inclusion of adjustable levellers depends on the design of the piece. Generally they are only used on larger tables. To raise the corner, turn the leveller anticlockwise; to lower it, turn clockwise.

When levelling a unit, you will typically need to adjust ALL of the levellers for proper alignment and to prevent unnecessary strain on your furniture. We recommend that you use a spirit level to confirm correct alignment. When a dresser or chest is set on carpet or a rug, we recommend that you adjust the level so that the piece tilts slightly toward the back to prevent drawers from sliding forward and to provide better overall balance.

Shelving

Adjustable shelves are removed for delivery. They can be easily set, and moved to meet your needs. Check the shelf clips periodically to make sure they are properly seated in the end panel. The shelf should be resting fully on the shelf clip. If you lose a shelf clip and need a replacement please contact your HOMEWOOD showroom for the correct shelf clip. The items you place on your shelves should be consistent with the intended use of the furniture, e.g., heavy objects don't belong on a glass shelf in a curio cabinet. To help keep your unit stable, place heavier objects on shelves closer to the bottom of a unit, rather than the top. Place objects gently on glass shelves.

STORAGE

Furniture is best stored set as it would be placed when in use – i.e do not turn tables on their side or upside down and do not stack or store other objects on it. We recommend that you keep the doors and drawers of cabinets closed when not in use to prevent abnormal and prolonged strain on runners, hinges and frames.

When furniture is not in regular use, during transit and when placed in long term storage consideration should be given to the conditions in which it is kept. As a general guide, simply pay attention to the factors explained in the previous section on damage caused due to environmental considerations. Do not store furniture in damp or hot conditions.

After delivery or when not in use your furniture should not be kept in sealed protective wrapping as this restricts the free movement of wood, which can result in warping, cracking and even complete disintegration of components. Protective covers, when used must allow for free air circulation and not create abnormal microclimatic humid or dry conditions. Always allow plenty of air movement around your pieces.

COMMON SENSE

Here are some common-sense DO and DON'T usage pointers for daily use of your furniture:

Do

- Protect all surfaces from fire and excessive heat. Hot items, such as irons, coffee mugs, skillets and pans, and steaming tureens can literally melt a finish, and cause area dryness and colour change. Using coasters, trivets, (oversized ashtrays for the smokers) and insulated pads can virtually eliminate the potential for damage.
- Be careful about what you place on a piece of furniture. Avoid friction and rough and abrasive objects. Lift and replace objects instead of dragging them across wood surfaces.
- Use felt discs. Place felt pads under lamps and accessories. Plastic, rubber, or nylon feet may contain chemicals that can migrate into the finish, causing indentations, softening, and discoloration. Even plastic toys left on unprotected shelves for extended periods can damage the finish.
- Avoid rubbing on matte or low-sheen finishes, as even through normal use the sheen of matte and low-sheen finishes tends to increase.
- Protect work surfaces when using items that could stain, imprint, or damage the wood such as ballpoint pens, crayons, markers, and glue. Organic solvents, such as nail polish and remover, perfumes, and alcoholic drinks can behave as removers on many kinds of coatings. Ammonia based cleaners not only affect the coating, but will often cause dramatic wood colour changes. Potpourri and scented accessories may contain oils that can damage finishes.
- Sit only on structures designed for that purpose
- Let your furniture breathe. Rotate furniture, accessories and other items placed on the furniture. Allow even oxidation and photoreaction.
- Maintain all exposed surfaces equally. Oiling the top of a table but neglecting the underside creates the potential for warping and cupping as the underside will lose moisture faster than the top.

Do not

- Allow wood to remain wet for prolonged periods.

Water from spills and condensation from vases and cold drink glasses can damage and deface coatings through "blooming," an effect that makes transparent coatings white or milky.

- Lean back or rock on the legs of chairs. Don't stand on seats. Avoid using chair stretchers or table pedestals as footrests.
- Leave plastic tablecloths or placemats on dining tables for extended periods of time, as chemical components of plastic will migrate into the finish, causing indentations, softening, discoloration, and damage
- Store any leather goods on furniture for extended periods of time.
- Cover furniture with impermeable covers for extended periods of time. Finishes need to "breathe" to maintain appearance and durability.

MAINTENANCE

Neglect of maintenance is the third major cause of preventable damage. The guidelines for furniture maintenance are pretty simple. If your furniture is used wisely and handled carefully, it will need very little in the way of routine maintenance. For the most part, maintaining furniture simply means keeping it clean, and nurtured. Wood furniture usually needs to be cleaned only when there is a build-up of wax or dirt. Dry wood is a clear indicator of the need for nutrients.

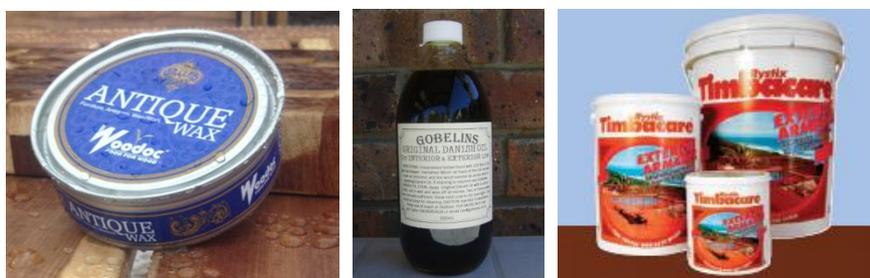
Dust - Loose dust on the surface can be removed with a soft, lint-free cloth, gently rubbed over the surface. Dust is abrasive and can scratch the surface, so be careful. Difficult and uneven areas can be dusted with a soft bristle brush, or with a vacuum cleaner hose held close enough to take in the dust one it is dislodged by the brush. If your cleaner has a soft brush attachment, use it, preferably on a low suction setting. Be careful with feather dusters or hard cloths as these may catch. Don't let metal or hard plastic parts of cleaning equipment bump into the surfaces; they can scratch the finish or wood. Much damage occurs to the feet and bases of pieces knocked by vacuum cleaners.

The more detailed maintenance requirements of your furniture will be dependent on three main factors.

- The area in which you use it
- The finishing coating of your furniture
- The nature and the frequency of use.

AREA OF USE

HOMEWOOD ranges are designed for use in indoor, patio and outdoor spaces. Your choice of wood and finish will largely be governed by the area in which your furniture is to be used



FINISHES AND PRODUCTS

Our finishes fall into three main groupings

- Waxes and polishes – traditional finishing exclusively for indoor ranges and designs.
- Oils – primarily recommended for outdoor use, or where the colour saturating effects of oils are desired.
- Sealants – both indoor and outdoor use where a sealed surface is requested.

Your HOMEWOOD sales consultant will guide you to select the right finish for your needs and lifestyle.

Waxes and Polishes

Our oldest and most traditional finish for indoor furniture - we use a factory blend of waxes to coat the finished product. Waxing retains the most natural colour and matt appearance of raw timber, and used sparingly but frequently it provides an effective barrier to soiling. Surface damage to furniture is easily repaired, with small topical repairs possible, even for the willing DIY owner.

Wax protects against water damage to wood by both barrier action and emulsifying with moisture and preventing penetration into the fibres. The downside of this is that the emulsifying causes typical white blooming in the coating. This is however easily removed by vigorous rubbing to warm the wax and release the encapsulated moisture into a soft absorbent cloth used in maintenance. Stubborn marks can be treated with an application of additional wax; the solvents help the moisture release process, and replace the existing coating. Over time patination will develop and a gentle sheen usually appears.

Excessive use of wax can cause build up and this may need removal from time to time with a solvent based thinner to return to the original softer look. It is relatively easy to convert from wax to other finishes.

Because waxes are exceedingly stable they are the material of choice for furniture conservators and other caretakers of furniture and wooden objects. Once a good waxed surface has developed, polishing should be required no more than twice a year for areas of extremely heavy wear (desktops, chair arms, etc.) and less frequently for table and chair legs, cabinets, and similar areas.

Regular maintenance entails the light re-waxing and gentle buffing of exposed surfaces (we are advocates of underside care on all areas). Light but frequent application when dry areas appear is recommended (a sure indicator of the need for nutrients). Although easy to use, avoid aerosol wax sprays and solvent based wet waxes. We strongly recommend Woodoc Antique Furniture Wax – available at HOMEWOOD showrooms, leading supermarkets, and hardware stores or your local Woodoc stockist.

This is our choice for traditionalists, not afraid of a bit of initial work.

Oils

Another traditional wood finish, Danish oil (a linseed and eucalyptus based blend of oils and urethanes) has long been our offering for outdoor furniture. It also contains UV filters offering a degree of protection against the sun's rays. Oiling wood tends to saturate the colours and hues of the grain, and for this is often also chosen for indoor pieces..

In the category known as drying oils - Danish oils solidify, or "dry" through a chemical reaction with the air. The most frequent customer issue with Danish oil is over application which can result in an unattractive varnish like build up. The rule for their use is "less product - more often". Applied sparingly to dried surfaces with a soft cloth, any unabsorbed residue should be wiped off after about fifteen to twenty minutes. This will keep surfaces nutrified, protected and will preserve the natural wood look of your furniture without a high gloss appearance.

The build-up of excessively applied drying oils can be difficult to remove, requiring sanding. (We do offer this as a chargeable after sales service if required). Oils also tend to yellow and in the presence of acids they are chromogenic (change colour), turning a dark, muddy brown or opaque black.

Outdoors - maintenance requirements will be highly varied dependant on usage and climate conditions. A dry surface appearance is a certain indicator that treatment is required. Once a good even 'skin' has developed, re-oiling for indoor pieces should be required no more than twice a year

for areas of extremely heavy wear (desktops, chair arms, etc.) and less frequently for table and chair legs, cabinets, and similar areas. Remember to treat all exposed surfaces to prevent behavioural problems such as warping and cupping due to uneven surface movement.

Non-drying oils (paraffin, mineral based, and "lemon oil," which is usually mineral oil with colorants and perfumes added) tend to be more benign than drying oils making them a good option for refreshing the appearance of oiled pieces – especially indoor furnishings. Some oil remains as a liquid on (or in) the object and dust and other airborne contaminants will adhere to surfaces – so once again any excess residue should be wiped away.

We strongly recommend Gobelins Danish Oil (drying), and Gobelins Traditional Furniture Oil (non-drying) – available at HOMEWOOD showrooms, and some hardware stores. Where not available a good quality Danish oil should be sought – ask your preferred hardware supplier for advice.

This is our choice for outdoor furniture and for traditionalists, seeking (or prepared to accept) saturated wood colours.

N.B. A special caution for the use of Danish oils – cloths should be rinsed clean or allowed to dry flat before disposal as left crumpled they can cause self-combustion!!!

Sealants

Varnishes, dry gloss polishes and sealants have been used on wood furniture for a number of years. These work best with veneered products - where the movement of wood is minimal, wood nutrition is a minor consideration, and a high gloss or gloss finish is desired. On solid wood pieces French polishing had a wave of popularity. Beware the owner who damages such surfaces – repair is costly and not a job for the do it 'yourself'.

With today's busy lifestyles our customers increasingly want maintenance free furniture. Whilst this ideal is not achievable with solid wood furniture (and probably never will be), we have introduced a finishing option that comes close.

Our designs and the preferred look of modern interiors tend to the natural - and after exhaustive testing of a number of products we are now able to offer a sealed wood finish that eliminates the labour elements and the blooming problems of waxed surfaces, as well as the colour saturation and reapplication needs of oils.

Our objectives in selecting a product were:

To preserve a natural wood appearance

Compatibility with all our selected hardwoods, colours and finishes

Microporosity – allowing wood to breathe

Suited for rag application and fast drying

Eco friendliness (preferably water based)

Low odour, non-toxic.

Suitable for interior and exterior use

Abrasion resistance

Protection against moisture and food ingredient contamination (oil, alcohol, light acids and alkalines)

Protection against insect predation, and airborne spore infestations (mold).

Easy user maintenance and care

Topical refurbishment.

Meet Rystix.

Whilst this finish is new in the world of HOMEWOOD, we have no reason to believe its early promise will not be fulfilled over the long term. Surfaces showing signs of wear and tear may be maintained by re-application of Rystix.

Maintenance entails simply cleaning surfaces with a slightly damp cloth to remove dust and spillages.

This is our choice for customers seeking a low maintenance product – for indoor and outdoor use.

METAL HARDWARE

One never-ending concern of furniture caretakers is for the hardware, including mechanical joining components as well as drawer runners, door hinges, handles, clips and brackets - attached, usually with screws, to the outer surface of a piece. The metal in hardware might be steel, brass, or occasionally bronze or cast metal. Contemporary (non stainless) steel hardware attachments have anti-corrosion plating or even a clear lacquer finish that gives them a protective coating.

In general moving components such as drawer runners and hinges require only a light periodic oiling with a spray on silicone product to ensure their longevity and smooth performance. Use products with a directional small diameter spray nozzle to prevent oil marking wood surfaces. Take care to prevent dripping and seepage onto wooden surfaces.

Should furniture hardware may become dirty and tarnished with use and exposure to the atmosphere it should be removed, cleaned carefully with a 50/50 mix of acetone and alcohol to remove any impregnated dirt and oil residue, scrubbing the piece with a soft bristle brush. After drying, a spray of oil as described above or the application of a light grease paste should have it back in operation.

If the hardware cannot be removed safely from the furniture it can serviced on the object provided the following precautions are scrupulously followed.

First, the surface of the wood and finished areas must be completely protected. Acetate sheets, such as those found in office supply stores, can be notched and slid under the hardware from both sides to form an overlapping barrier. Without this precaution, attempts to service the hardware will likely end in disaster.

Since this hardware cannot be doused in-situ with the acetone and alcohol mixture, cleaning must be done by dipping swabs in the solution, then rubbing the metal surface with the swab. After cleaning, remove all residues. Particular care must be used in applying any solvents or oils when the hardware cannot be removed, to make sure that no product intended for the hardware gets on the furniture piece itself.

MECHANICAL JOINTS

Many of our designs make use of mechanical joining techniques. This includes the use of insert nuts, furniture bolts and threaded cross dowels. The use of these techniques has two main purposes.

Firstly the elimination of glue joints removes a common point of failure with solid wood furniture. Glue is susceptible to changing climatic and weather conditions, stress placed on joints, and natural biological degradation. Mechanical joints are generally stronger and more durable.

Secondly they allow the design of modular components in furniture construction meaning that should a component fail for any reason its outright replacement is considerably easier than with older more traditional joining methods. This is partly why we are able to offer a better than industry standard guarantee on product performance.

Mechanical joints do however require occasional maintenance as the wood in your furniture moves. Our threaded components all have Allen key heads and should your joints show evidence of loosening as wood shrinks (or conversely tightening with swelling) simple adjustment using the Allen key supplied with your furniture care kit will take care of any issues. It really is that simple!

UPHOLSTERY CARE

Although our primary focus at HOMEWOOD is on crafting solid hardwood furniture, many of our seating products include upholstery components, both fitted and in the form of loose cushions. With careful selection of appropriate-to-use materials, a few precautionary measures and the right care for your upholstery our products can provide many years of service.

CHOOSING YOUR FABRICS

Upholstery materials vary enormously in quality and price, and it is true that you will usually get what you pay for. The choice of fabrics and leathers is almost limitless and we will source any locally available material for you. We do carry a selected range of fabric and leather samples in our showrooms, but the performance warranties and care instructions should always be confirmed with the supplying fabric distributor.

Please note that some fabrics have inherent characteristics that are part of their charm—such as subtle colour variations in denim and other washed fabrics, slubs on natural fibre fabrics, shading on Chenille fabrics and textural variations on woven fabrics—and with use, seat cushions will soften and lose some of their initial loft, resulting in ‘comfort wrinkles’ and enhancing the relaxed look and lived in feel of the piece.

Natural leathers, in common with woods, have many acceptable defects, which should be understood before selecting this as an upholstery choice. These include irregular grain markings, thinning, stretching, tick bite and scratch marks and residual scarring. Game skins especially display these defects and are best suited to rustically furnished homes. Some corrected grain leathers can reduce the appearance of markings at the expense of giving an often artificial look. Leather softening (pliancy through wear) and age hardening (through drying) is a natural part of leather goods ownership, and whilst regular care can minimise their effects, they are not totally preventable. Colour variation in leather dyeing is also to be expected.

Generally the colour fastness of synthetic fabrics is better than natural fibre (cotton, wool and silk) products. It is also important that the location of upholstered pieces is considered. For high sunlight and outdoor areas select outdoor rated materials. These will cost a little extra, but the long term saving makes this expenditure well worthwhile.

Once you begin using an upholstered item, you can expect its appearance to change. These changes are considered normal wear. Here’s what to expect:

Fading or Colour Change. While measures can be taken to minimize fading, some change is inevitable. Sometimes, the fading may appear as a colour change rather than an overall lightening of colours. This occurs when a dye is made of two or more colours and one has faded more than the other. For example, green hues are made from yellow and blue dyes. If the yellow dye has faded and the blue has not, the green textile may appear to be turning blue. This colour change is due to dyeing processes that use both natural and synthetic dyes. Many times, faded areas on upholstery are hidden by soil and will not be apparent until after the fabric has been cleaned. Colour change in leather is often the result of use, as the pigmented surface dyes wear through.

Comfort Wrinkles and Compression. Some fabrics and leathers have “give” or stretch. Comfort wrinkles and creases are natural occurrences in these relaxed upholstery fabrics. Even in traditional,

tailored styles, some comfort wrinkles can be expected as the upholstered item is used and adjusts to its normal wear.

Wear and Pilling. Over time, most upholstery fabrics will show wear due to friction. Pilling—the formation of little balls of fuzz on the surface of a fabric—may also occur with normal use. The occurrence of pilling in a given fabric depends on several factors, including the fabric’s weave, fibre content, and way the furniture has been used.

Effects of Humidity. In common with the behaviour of wood, changes in humidity can affect the appearance of certain fabrics and leathers. The comments made earlier about wood cares apply equally to fabric and leather performance. During the spinning and weaving processes of textiles, fibres are kept under tension so that looms function properly. Moisture in the air can cause these fibres to relax, resulting in shrinking, lengthening, or unevenness, depending on the construction of the fabric and its fibre content. Especially before steaming a fabric to remove wrinkles, be sure to test on an inconspicuous area. Controlling the climate in the home will help to avoid these appearance changes.

SIMPLE CARE PROCEDURES

Remove dust. Dust has abrasive properties which, if left, can reduce the life of fabrics and leathers. Vacuum regularly to remove this. Place a soft filtering screen on the surface of vacuum cleaner hoses or attachments to prevent any snagging or abrasion from the aperture tip, and using a low suction setting (with open vents in hoses when available) carefully vacuum the surface. Cleaners with special upholstery nozzles or agitator attachments are ideal.

Clean light spills and soiling. Blot (do not rub) all spills immediately with a clean, dry white cloth. Spot clean according to the instructions given by the fabric supplier. Deeper stains and other damage to upholstery should be referred to an upholstery or leather/textile specialist or conservator for further treatment.

Rotate seat cushions and chair placement. Turn, fluff, and rotate seat cushions and back pillows weekly—regardless of how much the seating was used. Reverse loose cushions where possible. This will minimize premature and uneven wear of the cushion core, control welt slippage, and maintain even fabric colour degradation.

SIMPLE PRECAUTIONS

Effects of Sunlight. Sunlight can damage fibers and cause fabrics and leathers to fade. Arrange furniture away from direct sunlight. The use of lined draperies, window shades, or blinds can prevent sun damage. Protective window coatings that filter out some of the sun’s ultraviolet (UV) rays are also available.

Climate Control. Extreme temperature variations can be harmful to upholstered furniture. Hot radiators or heating ducts can dry leather surfaces, fabric fibres and fade colours. Cold, dry air from air-conditioning outlets can affect both the upholstery and the frame. Arrange furniture so it is at least 500mm away from air-conditioning or heating outlets. Do not store upholstery in a damp basement or a hot attic, nor wrapped in air tight coverings. The dimensional stability of certain fabrics, particularly those made of natural fibers, can be affected by climate changes in the home.

When humidity is high, the fabric may lengthen as it absorbs moisture. This results in a less taut appearance in the upholstery.

Fume Fading. Fume fading occurs when gases and fumes from furnaces, cooktops, chimneys, and cars exhaust gases mix with oxygen and humidity to form atmospheric acid air. This mild acid reacts with fabric fibres and causes it to deteriorate and become discoloured. Always use exhaust fans in the kitchen to help reduce the accumulation of cooking fumes. Be aware that tobacco smoke, heating systems, and auto exhausts may also leave a greasy residue. This type of soiling can be found near heating and air-conditioning vents and windows. To prolong the beauty of your fabrics, arrange furniture away from vents and clean it regularly.

Children and Pets. Children at play can be rough on upholstery and extra care and maintenance may be required for homes with growing lively families. Muddy paws, snagging claws, and shedding are a natural part of pet ownership. If you can't resist pampering a pet, protect your upholstery and be sure to vacuum it often.

Perspiration and Body Oils. Upholstery fabrics and leather can absorb perspiration and oil from skin, hair, soiled hands, and clothing. If necessary protect your furniture by placing cloths where heads, hands and arms rest. Today's trend of decorative throws makes fabric protection not only easy but fashionable too.

Newspaper. Avoid placing newspapers or printed items on upholstered items. The newsprint can rub off on the fabric or leather, dulling the colour and contributing to overall soiling.

Punctures and Tears. Be careful not to snag or puncture your upholstery fabric or leather with jewellery, belt or shoe buckles, or the contents of pockets.

Leather care products. The use of these should be discussed with your leather supplier. In general a soft clear or neutral leather crème should be applied when leather appears to be dry. For suedes and untanned oiled leather finishes specialised treatment products are available from leather goods and saddlery suppliers.

REUPHOLSTERY

One final consideration of upholstery maintenance is reupholstering.

Upholstering, by definition, always causes some damage to wood frames from the tacks, staples, studs and nails driven into it. If repeated often enough, the damage from traditional upholstery methods is eventually destructive to the object. We do use minimally intrusive upholstery methods - dedicated to developing alternative upholstery practices that diminish the damage caused.

HOMEWOOD SMALLS

With an ever extending range of home smalls a few special notes are required regarding those (mainly our boards) designed for use in food environments. For non-food products maintenance will be as discussed previously.

CLEANING

Regular cleaning of boards is recommended. After each use wipe any residual food particles or liquids with a damp cloth. Full submersion in water is to be avoided, and board products are not designed for dishwasher use.

MAINTENANCE

Light oiling with a food, nut or vegetable oil is suggested for items in daily or frequent use. These are wet oils and any excess or unabsorbed residue should be wiped off. Wood has natural antibacterial properties, and the woods used in our boards are non-toxic. A light household anti-bacterial cleaner or utensil steriliser may be used if desired.

The use of food, nut and vegetable oils with boards in infrequent or irregular use is not recommended as these can be prone to rancidity during storage. Food safe oil products (odourless, tasteless and non-toxic) are available and are well worth the price. We stock suitable products in all HOMEWOOD showrooms.

REPAIRS AND SERVICE

MINOR TOUCH UPS AND REPAIRS

Minor damage to wood furniture can be repaired with the right materials and attention to detail. Although some repairs are simple and you may choose to undertake these yourself, please do not hesitate to contact us or a professional for even minor repairs.

Note: Below are suggested methods for minor problems. Your results may vary. Always test your remedy on an inconspicuous area to make sure it does not damage the finish.

Scratches and Nicks. When a minor scratch or nick occurs, especially with colour treated finishes you can use colour matched wood Touch-Up Markers available at specialist wood hobbyist hardware stockists. These felt-tip markers are ideal for touching up minor surface scratches and worn edges. If the scratch or dent penetrates into the surface, seek our advice or the help of a furniture repair specialist.

Water Marks. Water marks will often dissipate over time. If after a month, the mark is still there, apply a little wax or oil to a clean, white cloth and rub the mark, going with the grain. Wipe dry and polish if needed. For persistent marks we offer a chargeable onsite service

Heat Marks. To minimize the appearance of heat marks, rub the wood very gently, going with the grain, with a dry, extra-fine (0000-gauge) steel wool pad (available at most hardware stores), and wipe it clean with a soft, clean cloth containing some of the original finish product.

SPILLS AND STAINS

As careful as you may be, accidents do happen. For most spills, quick action can reduce the likelihood of long term damage. Some spills may be blotted up quickly and easily; others may penetrate the wood in seconds. With hard woods penetration is not usually deep and we offer an onsite chargeable repair surface for persistent worrisome stains.

Here is a guide to immediate care of spills and stains:

Alcohol. Many liquids containing alcohol—cocktails, colognes, medicines, and other household fluids—will dissolve wax and oil finishes on contact. If damage results, seek our help or that of a furniture repair specialist.

Candle Wax or Gum. Harden fresh candle wax drippings with an ice cube wrapped in plastic, and then gently pop up the wax with a non-stick spatula or the edge of a credit card. Remove any residue with furniture cleaner and allow the surface to dry

Food & Liquid Stains. Many foods—such as butter, mayonnaise, ketchup, tea, coffee, wines, juices and acidic liquids—can leave a slight penetrating stain. Artificial colouring found in foods can also leave a stain. Wipe up these spills immediately with a soft, clean cloth.

Nail Polish and Nail Polish Remover. These are dangerous solvents. If a spill does occur, do not rub or wipe it; blot immediately and let the surface dry. If damage has occurred, seek our help or that of a furniture repair specialist.

Paint. Water-based paint spills should be wiped up immediately with a clean, damp cloth. Oil-based paint should be allowed to dry and then gently removed from the surface with a non-stick spatula or the edge of a credit card.

SUMMARY

Please refer to our guarantee document (available on our website downloads section) for what is and what is not covered under guarantee.

We offer a full after sales service to customers and can rectify most problems and damage to your furniture no matter the cause.

Service calls we have made have covered problems from dog gnawed table tops and legs - to artistic children refinishing entire table surfaces. Whether onsite or factory based we will work with you to ensure that your HOMEWOOD furniture receives the corrective treatment and care needed to deliver the lifetime of service you intended when you bought it.

Preserving furniture contributes to the future understanding of our particular time in history. Furniture preservation is not always exotic specialized activities by "experts," but is more often the result of careful use and maintenance. In many instances this care is accidental or happenstance, but that needn't be the case. By adopting informed practices regarding the use, care, and maintenance of furniture, the odds are far greater that it will reach your successors intact and in good condition.

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