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Why wood?

The material that we use the most of, by far, is timber – the natural, genuine kind as opposed to MDF or chipboard.

The reason for wood is twofold

First, trust. Our founders, John and Giles, are both enthusiastic sailors and many years ago, said that they wanted to create furniture that was “as safe as boats, not houses.” That means furniture that can cope with the rough and tumble of everyday life, that will endure over the years, and that can cope with the unexpected.

The second reason concerns heritage. Wooden furniture has been used in our homes for centuries. It’s renewable, natural, versatile, insulating and tactile. No man-made attempt feels quite like it.

We don’t use just one type of timber. What suits one design might not be the best suited to another. Our core woods are tulip, oak, hardwood ply and teak, although we’ll occasionally use others such as acacia. Sometimes we use painted finishes, other times we’ll leave the timber exposed, and when we do, know that the grain and colour will vary from piece to piece – every piece of wood has its

own hand-writing. It’s yet another lovely trait.

When you invite wood into your home, you know that with some love, care and attention, it’ll last the course. But, there are a few things to bear in mind to help it live a long and happy life. And that’s precisely what this care guide is for...

Timber: it’s a living, breathing thing

When people talk about natural materials, they tend to focus on the provenance side of things – the fact that it’s grown rather than made. But one of the things that we love just as much about working with a natural material is the fact that it continues to be a living piece, even when it’s in your home.

With timber, this means that it’ll continue to react to its environment – just as it would in nature. It wants to move, to expand, to contract – slightly, but surely. And humidity is one of the aspects that affects it most of all.

As our wooden designs settle into your home, don’t be surprised if you see some movement as they respond to their new conditions. Over time, timber will continue to react to humidity changes, typically as the seasons change and when we turn up the central heating. Sudden warm or

cold spells will likely cause more movement and even little cracks as the wood doesn't have time to dry out evenly. These are all completely expected responses and not a fault. It's simply in wood's nature to react in this way. It's part of its beautiful character.

What is IsoGuard®?

IsoGuard® is a high-performance treatment that we've developed to help protect a lot of the natural timber we use throughout our collections. It adds an almost unnoticeable, protective coating to the wood to help it stand up to spills and marks. Put simply, it makes life better for your furniture, and hopefully for you too.

With IsoGuard®, we've put just as much thought into how the end finish looks as to how it works as a treatment. That's why we've created several IsoGuard® finishes with clever pigments that achieve the exact look we're after.

Almost all exposed (unpainted) timber is finished with IsoGuard®, whether it's indoor or outdoor furniture.

How it works

This bit sounds high-tech, but that's because it is. IsoGuard® penetrates the timber surface and bonds with each wood fibre at a molecular level. The special treatment has been designed to repel stains and marks without creating an unattractive, visible barrier, so the wood can still look natural. It does so much more than coating. It's oil-based, so that it touches every inch that a staining liquid might find its way to.

Our IsoGuard® finishes

Our Natural Oak IsoGuard® finish replicates the original tones of oak, so it appears as though untreated.

We've also created two other finishes: Chalked Oak and Seasoned Oak, Chalked being slightly paler while Seasoned has a beautiful grey tone.

When you come to reapply IsoGuard®, always be sure to use the same finish as the one you currently have. And if you're unsure, simply get in touch and we'll easily be able to let you know.

Living with IsoGuard®

IsoGuard® is tough. It can repel water, and most other household liquids from wine to cordial, and leave the surface unblemished, but only for a time (up to four hours). Nevertheless, we'd recommend you wipe up any spills as soon as you can, as every piece is unique and may stain more quickly than another.

Caring for IsoGuard®

As a general rule of thumb, clean up any stains as quickly as possible with a dampened e-cloth followed by a dry one. Surprisingly, water is the liquid that's most likely to stain your oak. This happens for two reasons, either from limescale staining or mineral reactions with the tannins in the oak. So be sure not to leave damp items on a timber surface – such as when you're unloading the dishwasher and not-quite-dry cutlery and crockery is placed inside cabinetry.

When you do come to clean any IsoGuard® protected pieces, it's tempting to buy supermarket cleaning products and wipes, but quite often they interfere with the wood's

surface and leave a film, which, like furniture polish, can end up attracting more dirt.

Instead, aside from a damp e-cloth, we suggest using our IsoGuard care kit that we've developed specifically and is available to buy on our website. For direct stain removal, use our Stain Remover or LimeSpot Treatment, depending on the type of stain. For a deep clean, our Surface Soap is perfect.

Just note that if you regularly clean your surface with a damp e-cloth, you'll wear away the protection faster. It's not a problem, but you might want to refresh your IsoGuard a little more often.

Refreshing your IsoGuard®

Over time, IsoGuard®'s level of protection will gradually lessen. Friction from usage and day-to-day cleaning will wear down the special waxes, and so to maintain the highest standard of protection, we suggest you lightly sand back your piece every two–three years and reapply a new coat of IsoGuard® following the steps below.

It's worth pointing out that our brushed oak finishes shouldn't be re-treated. The reason being, that achieving

the same brushed finish is almost impossible to recreate once sanded back. Instead, you can simply add a further thin layer of IsoGuard.

1. Sand the wood in the direction of the grain, never across it. The grade of sandpaper you use will have a great effect on the final appearance so make sure you use the same grade throughout to ensure a uniform finish. We suggest a grit of 150–180.
2. To remove all the dust, first vacuum the area with a soft bristle attachment then wipe with a dry e-cloth until there's not a trace of wood dust left. The preparation part is really important, otherwise the dust particles will become trapped, leaving you with a grainy texture and forming a barrier that will prevent the IsoGuard® from working properly.
3. Now comes the application. Stir the IsoGuard® well and use a cloth or non-absorbent sponge to spread it across the surface, moving the oil around and keeping the surface wet for three–five minutes.
4. Remove all excess oil for an even sheen and do so with a fresh, clean cloth. If this part isn't done thoroughly, a layer can be left that won't actually

provide extra protection but instead could make the surface less durable and more prone to marking.

5. Once the IsoGuard® is applied, the molecular reaction happens only a few minutes later. It's an oxidisation process, and to cure properly it ideally needs strong airflow and 'normal' room temperature (that's about 20°C). The initial curing takes three–five days, but the full curing process is somewhat lengthy (21 days).

During this time, you should treat the area with care because it's susceptible to marking. Colder environments and higher humidity will slow the process further.

So, for those 21 days, you'll need to let it be as much as possible. You can of course still use your product after the initial curing, but be sure to use coasters and don't clean the surface with any liquid until the end of the third week, at which point you can use a dilution of our Surface Soap solution if necessary. Be sure to not use washing up liquid though. It's better to do it well every few years than to do it wrong and need to repeat the process much more frequently.

THE IMPORTANT PART

Always throw away your used IsoGuard® cloth by dunking it in water and putting it in an airtight container while it's still wet. Leaving an IsoGuard® cloth unwashed, in direct sunlight, or putting it straight in the bin can lead to spontaneous combustion.

Caring for painted timber

All of our painted furniture uses solid tulipwood. It's incredibly strong and is ultra-smooth with very few knots, which makes it ideal for painting over.

We use a water-based, acrylic eggshell paint that's tough and long-lasting, so you'll find it easy to maintain over the years. Simply dust down with a dry e-cloth, and if you find a mark, it should come away easily with the simple swish of a damp cloth. But, if you've scuffed or chipped your paintwork, a duster won't be quite enough, and you might need to touch it up.

Touching up paintwork

FOR LIGHT MARKS

If your paintwork is marked with just a light scuff, rather than

a chip or dent, lightly sand the area with 320-grit sandpaper (this keeps the finish smooth and helps the paint to grip). Then, wipe away and dust with a damp cloth followed by a dry one. If the mark is tiny, an artist's paintbrush may be all you need. If the scuff is larger, then use a wider paintbrush for more even coverage. Once the paint is thoroughly stirred, use a small amount of paint and spread it thinly over the mark. Allow the paint to dry (you can use a hairdryer to help it along) before applying a second coat. Once dry, decide whether you think a further coat is needed.

FOR CHIPS

If you've taken a deeper chip out of the paintwork, you'll need to do a little more to prepare the area. If the dent is deep, sand the area with 320-grit sandpaper and then you might need to use some wood filler too. Once it's set, be sure to sand it again so the entire surface is level. Then follow the exact same steps as above.

And, if in many years to come you'd like to repaint your furniture, you absolutely can. For best results, we suggest following the steps below put together by our furniture-painting team.

1. First, ensure colour consistency. If you're using more than one tin of any colour, ensure the batch numbers are the same. If they're not, thoroughly mix together the contents of both tins before you start.
2. Now prepare your surface. Remove any sharp edges or flaking paint with fine sandpaper. There's no need to go back to bare wood, just sand enough to create a smooth surface. Then wipe away any dust with a dry cloth so it doesn't spoil the final finish.
3. If the wood has any cracks or dents, buy some wood filler and patch it following the instructions on the packaging. Once it's set, be sure to sand it again so the entire surface is uniform.
4. Our paint needs no primer and can be applied directly onto exposed or painted wood. Give it a good stir beforehand and apply your first coat in the direction of the wood grain or of any existing brush strokes. It should dry within two hours and will be ready to recoat within four hours. Two coats are all you need.

The only other thing to say is to avoid using furniture polish. You just don't need it and ironically, it can actually attract more dirt.

Timber in the bathroom and garden

All of this care information so far covers life with wooden furniture in every room of the home. But it's worth saying a little extra on the bathroom where the conditions are humid, and the garden where your timber furniture has to stand up to the elements.

IN THE BATHROOM

When people hear of timber in the bathroom, sometimes it's followed by concern about moisture. But, because of the high grade of wood that we use, as well as the level of care that IsoGuard® brings, you can rest assured that it'll be safe and sound. Simply follow the instructions for caring for IsoGuard® in the previous section, and be mindful that you'll need to reapply it in a few years' time and that condensation gathering on our oak work surfaces should be wiped dry. And as always, if any spills do happen, mop them up as quickly as you can, because IsoGuard® can only protect your timber for a period of time.

IN THE GARDEN

Outdoors, we tend to use either teak or acacia. Over time, some movement and small surface cracks will gradually

appear, but that's all part of the wood's ageing process, which tends to be sped up when it's kept outside.

We've developed an exterior IsoGuard® formula, which helps to preserve the natural colour of the timber for as long as possible (although natural teak will always silver as times goes by). It also prevents UV discolouration.

But we still strongly recommend covering your wooden furniture in wet weather and wintery months to protect it even further, and never keep it in standing water where it can't dry out.

We've written a garden-specific care guide which has all the advice you need for looking after garden furniture – from timber and beyond.

Timber flooring

Of all the timber in your home, flooring is where it'll have to stand up to the most. Which is why there are a handful more things you can do to keep it looking its very best.

DAY-TO-DAY AND WEEK-BY-WEEK

- Regularly vacuuming or sweeping your floor will remove any grit that might scratch the floor, or dust that could dull its finish.

- Wipe up any spills as soon as possible with a soft, damp cloth followed by a dry one.
- You can mop your floor with water, just make sure it's not too damp. Marton won't need anything else, but if you'd like to give Savernake a deeper clean, we recommend Osmo Wash and Care, which you can find in lots of places online. Other products could damage the finish.
- If you have underfloor heating, it's a good idea to occasionally lift up any rugs to let the wood air out, such as when you're doing your regular cleaning. Otherwise, the heat and humidity that builds up underneath the rug can cause the wood to warp.
- For the same reason, we don't recommend that you use timber flooring in a bathroom, a very warm, humid space, or an especially cold and dry one (somewhere between 15°C and 25°C, and 45–65% humidity is best). A humidifier or de-humidifier can help if you're worried.
- Having mats by your front and back doors can help stop small stones and grit from getting onto your wooden floor, which can scratch its surface.
- On furniture that you move around regularly (like

dining chairs), adding small felt pads to the bottom of the legs can also help stop scratching. Try to pick up heavier pieces when you move them too, rather than sliding them across the floor.

- And, finally, avoid walking on the floor in stiletto-heeled shoes, as they can mark and dent the floor as well.

EVERY NOW AND THEN

There are two types of oak flooring in our collection: Marton and Savernake.

Marton is finished with IsoGuard®, but it also has a water-based coating that's much stronger than most floor varnishes and still leaves the timber looking natural. You won't need to refinish it or do anything other than keep it clean using the steps above.

Savernake has a similar protective coating, but you might want to refresh its finish from time to time. It's best not to sand it, as that can change the colour.

Instead, follow the steps below when you notice that it's becoming scratched, scuffed or stained.

1. First, give your floor a good, deep clean using a vacuum cleaner and then Osmo Wash and Care.

2. Once it's completely dry, add a coat of Osmo Maintenance Oil, following the instructions on the bottle. This oil comes in a few different finishes – we'd recommend the matte one if you have Chalked Savernake flooring, and the satin one if you have Vintage or Dark Vintage.

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Other care guides available

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