

Cleaning Trends

Horse-hair Brushes: Back in Style

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Over the past 50 years, floor care has changed a great deal. New finishes have been developed, and floor care equipment has become lighter, faster, and easier to maneuver. Floors that used to take hours to clean and polish now take a fraction of the time.

“A half a century ago, slow-speed scrubbers were used to clean floors,” says David Stanislaw, an engineer and floor care expert at Tornado Industries. “To maintain the finish, natural horse-hair brushes were often attached to buffers. They gently removed scuff marks and restored the floor’s natural luster, cutting labor time and costs.”

Stanislaw says horsehair appears to be making a big comeback, especially now that it can be used on cylindrical brush floor machines. “Horsehair and cylindrical machines are made for each other,” he says. “For instance, when polishing rubberized floors, cleaning professionals get excellent results using this two-punch combination.”

Cylindrical floor care machines have counterrotating brushes on each side and rotate at 1,000 rpm (revolutions per minute) at 3.5 psi (pounds per square inch), which is six times the contact pressure provided by a rotary machine and works well in most floor care situations.

According to Stanislaw, one cleaning contractor who maintained a building with Pirelli floors, a type of rubberized flooring, was really having a tough time keeping the floors clean and shiny using conventional rotary floor machines and pads.

“But using the horsehair brushes with a cylindrical machine [the floors] shined up quickly,” says Stanislaw. “Horsehair brushes may sound like 1950s technology, but when used with a cylindrical brush machine, they can produce a 21st-century shine.”