

Care & Maintenance

A guide to extending the
life of your Artek products



artek



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Intro

This guide will help you care for your Artek furniture. By following our instructions, you'll keep your beloved items in good condition and assure them a long life.

Many Artek products have been in production for decades. Over time, different surface treatments and manufacturing methods have been used. The guide at hand refers specifically to the surfaces and standard materials currently in production. Though many of the instructions will apply across the board, we recommend you seek advice from a restoration professional for older pieces or contact us with questions at info@artek.fi.

All Artek furniture has been designed for indoor use and storage in dry, warm spaces. If a product can be used outdoors, that will be mentioned in its specifications. We advise against placing any item too close to a heat source. We also recommend avoiding strong variations in humidity.





Wood and wooden surfaces

Wood is a living material

Every piece of furniture made from wood is unique. The colour of birch wood, for example, changes according to various factors: the habitat of the tree, the traces of insects, the part of the trunk that's cut, the way the wood is dried while processing.

We strive to select materials that are as uniformly coloured as possible, but some variation is unavoidable in order to keep production ecologically sustainable and material loss to a minimum. At Artek, we see the variability of woodgrain as one of birch's most beautiful qualities. Sometimes, it yields striking flame patterns, which are enhanced through staining, as different parts of the wood absorb different quantities of stain.

Birch and other types of wood are organic, living materials that react to atmospheric humidity. This can cause swelling or shrinking and may change the form and measurements of the item.

All wooden Artek products are manufactured in dry and controlled conditions so that their structure is as quality-consistent and stable as possible. But while we pay close attention to raw material selection, treatment, and storage conditions during production, the products are exposed to variation in humidity after they leave the factory.

In Finland, atmospheric humidity may vary harshly according to the season, and variation occurs indoors, too. It is impossible to completely control or avoid this variation.

Lacquered and stained wood surfaces

Artek furniture is lacquered to make its surfaces more durable; light damage is nearly undetectable on a clear lacquered surface. Before lacquering, the surface may also be stained. Staining highlights the wood grain and evens or intensifies the colour. Due to UV radiation, the colour of a clear lacquered or lightly stained product will change over time.

Protection and care

Wipe the product at regular intervals using a soft cloth dampened with a solution of water and neutral detergent. Keep chemical exposure to a minimum. Dry the surface after wiping to eliminate any remaining moisture but avoid rubbing in order to prevent polishing. If you leave appliances on the surface, replace rubber pads with felt or another material that does not stain. Scratches made by sharp objects are more visible on surfaces with pigmented lacquer than those with clear lacquer.

Stain removal

In case wiping does not clean the surface, you can try to remove unwanted stains using undiluted neutral detergent. Remove colour and water-insoluble stains with mineral spirits or denatured alcohol, proceeding carefully since not all surfaces can withstand this treatment. To be safe, test the impact of the substance of choice on a small area that's not very visible. After removing the stain, wipe down the surface with a damp cloth, then dry it. Dark streaks caused by metal or rubber can often be removed with an eraser (India rubber).

Avoid

- ✘ Cleaning by rubbing. Uneven mechanical rubbing on a surface often causes an uneven polish.
- ✘ Abrasives, including "the magic sponge."
- ✘ Strong alkaline and acid detergents.
- ✘ Strong solvents, such as acetone and thinner.
- ✘ Using wax, which is hard to remove.
- ✘ Hot objects and hot water.
- ✘ Abundant use of liquids and long-term exposure to liquids.
- ✘ Liquids that stain, such as coffee and red wine.
- ✘ Textiles that stain, such as bleeding jeans, especially on light surfaces.
- ✘ Strong skin lotions, such as self-tanning and medicinal creams.
- ✘ Sharp and scratchy objects; grease and dirt may be absorbed by the wood through scratches.
- ✘ Strong variations in temperature and humidity.





Laminate

Artek furniture is made using high-pressure laminate (HPL), a composite, wear-resistant material consisting of paper layered with thermosetting resins. Our IKI White HPL was made to Alvar Aalto's specification using a double layer of paper for extra thickness and a deep white colour.

Protection and care

For daily cleaning, wipe down the laminate with a damp microfiber cloth. Laminate boards can be cleaned with any household detergent that doesn't contain abrasives. After wiping, be sure to dry the surface, particularly the seam where the laminate meets the wood edge band. Beware that leaving unglazed pottery on an Artek surface will wear out the laminate and cause an uneven polish. Window detergents can be used to prevent rings or streaks and to remove them if they do appear. Do not use acidic detergents intended for cleaning ceramic or limescale removers intended for appliances; these will cause permanent colour changes on laminate. Immediately remove any splash of such substances if they do come in contact with your surface.

Stain removal

In case wiping does not clean the surface, you can try to remove unwanted stains using undiluted neutral detergent. Remove colour and water-insoluble stains using a clean cloth dampened with an appropriate solution of water and alcohol, acetone, or mineral spirits. Afterwards, rinse the surface with clean water and dry it with a soft cloth. Note that some solvents intended for use on laminates may damage clear lacquered or painted solid wood edge banding.

Avoid

- ✘ Cleaning by rubbing. Uneven mechanical rubbing on a surface often causes an uneven polish.
- ✘ Abrasives, including "the magic sponge."
- ✘ Sharp objects.
- ✘ Hot objects.
- ✘ Objects that stain.
- ✘ Strong alkaline and acid detergents.

Stain removal guide for laminate

from laminate manufacturer Formica IKI Oy

Cleaning	Common multi-purpose cleaners	Alcohol, e.g. isopropanol, window cleaner	Acetone
Fingerprints	X	X	
Grease, oil	X		
Soot, nicotine	X	X	
India ink, ink	X		
Coffee, tea	X		
Fruit stains	X		
Wax crayons, ballpoint pen		X	
Markers		X	X
Varnish, glue, wallpaper paste*			X
Lipstick, shoe polish	X		X
Nail polish			X

*Two-component glue stains cannot always be removed.





Linoleum

Linoleum is an organic product made primarily of linseed oil, wood flour, granulated cork, and limestone flour. Natural pigments are added for colour. The surface of the linoleum currently in use by Artek has been protected with a thin acrylic layer, which shields the porous surface from dirt.

Protection and care

Wipe the product using a cloth dampened with a solution of water and neutral detergent. Afterwards, dry. Use a microfiber cloth for daily cleaning. Remove grime using an undiluted neutral detergent. Rinse and dry thoroughly. Linoleum manufacturer Forbo recommends using a soapy wax.

Stain removal

Remove unwanted stains as soon as possible. You can try to remove them with undiluted neutral detergent. If that doesn't work, try removing colour and water-insoluble stains with mineral spirits or denatured alcohol. Afterwards, wipe down the surface with a damp cloth and dry completely.

To treat fine scratches, the linoleum manufacturer recommends:

- spreading linseed oil on the surface using very fine grade steel wool (e.g. 0000), then wiping away any excess oil.
- rubbing a walnut on the scratches, then polishing with a cloth.

Avoid

- ✗ Cleaning by rubbing. Uneven mechanical rubbing on a surface often causes an uneven polish.
- ✗ Abrasives, including "the magic sponge."
- ✗ Strong alkaline and acid detergents.
- ✗ Strong solvents, such as acetone and thinner.
- ✗ Hot objects and hot water.
- ✗ Abundant use of liquids and long-term exposure to liquids.
- ✗ Liquids that stain, such as coffee and red wine.
- ✗ Sharp, scratchy objects.
- ✗ Placing pots, glasses, vases, and dishware directly on the surface. Use coasters instead.



Fabric

Artek furniture can be upholstered in a variety of fabrics made by different manufacturers, each with its own unique composition and character.

To ensure a long life for your item, it's important to select a material appropriate for your purposes and to follow the manufacturer's instructions for use and care.

Protection and care of upholstery fabrics

Basic care for textiles means regular vacuuming. This removes dirt and dust from the surface in order to prevent grime build-up, which may weaken the fabric. Vacuum gently on low power using a nozzle designed for textiles. Avoid hard rubbing from different directions.

Protect textiles from direct sunlight, which will fade their colouring. It's a good idea to turn over the pillows on your furniture from time to time in order to wear them out more evenly. Artek padding and upholstery were designed for use in warm and dry places. Avoid exposure to humidity. Some fabrics may be stain resistant; if not, you can buy a protective product and treat the furniture yourself. But check with your sales representative beforehand; not all fabrics need stain-proofing. Wool, for example, does just fine without it.

Washing

Always follow fabric-specific washing instructions. If washing with water is allowed, wash textiles precisely as advised. Test the impact of washing on a spot of fabric that is not visible. Note that the use of zippers in upholstery does not automatically mean the fabric can be washed with water.

Use dedicated shampoos and powders to gently wash sensitive textiles. After washing, manually restore the fabric to its general shape and leave it to dry in an airy place. While it's still damp, put the cleaned upholstery back on the furniture and let it dry fully. If upholstery cannot be removed, try wiping it with a damp cloth using a dedicated shampoo.

We recommend dry cleaning for most fabrics even if they are water resistant. Washing with water will wear out the item more quickly; it may also fade colouring or cause shrinkage. Most fabrics shrink somewhat after washing, and those made of synthetic fibre will shrink less than those made of natural fibre.

Note that many laundry services also accept furniture.

Stain removal

Follow the fabric-specific instructions. Remove dry and loose dirt by vacuuming. Fresh stains are usually easy to remove from synthetic fabrics by wiping with a damp cloth. For natural fibres, it's probably necessary to use a detergent or stain remover. Test the detergent on a spot of fabric that is not visible. You can try removing stains from wool and plush using the following method: choose a cloth that does not bleed or pill (e.g. a light-coloured towel); dip it in a solution of lukewarm water and colourless detergent (e.g. dishwashing liquid); squeeze the cloth as dry as possible; then pat and wipe the stain lightly while avoiding wetting the fabric.

Avoid

- ✘ Bleaching detergents on coloured fabrics.
- ✘ Spinning and tumble drying water-washable fabrics.
- ✘ Extensive rubbing during vacuuming, which will wear out the fabric.
- ✘ Brushing fabrics that pill.
- ✘ Sharp objects.
- ✘ Abundant use of water and humidity.
- ✘ Beating, as that may damage the weaving.
- ✘ UV light, such as from grow lights, and direct sunlight.
- ✘ Cold and humid conditions that may cause mould.

For more information, please contact the manufacturer or importer of the fabric.

Care instructions for fabrics manufactured by Artek

	Cotton	Acrylic Coated Cotton	Cotton Canvas
Material	100% Cotton	100% Acrylic Coated Cotton	100% Cotton Canvas
Weight	180 g/m ²	220 g/m ²	280 g/m ²
Width	150 cm	145 cm	150 cm
Lightfastness	Type 6-7 (On a scale from 1-8)	Type 6-7 (On a scale from 1-8)	Type 6-7 (On a scale from 1-8)
Fastness to rubbing	Grade 4.5 dry and wet (On a scale from 1-5)	Grade 4.5 dry and wet (On a scale from 1-5)	Grade 4.5 dry and wet (On a scale from 1-5)
Washing instructions			
Info	Not recommended as upholstery fabric.	Not recommended as upholstery fabric.	Not recommended as upholstery fabric.



Washing: Wash at or below 40°C. Single bar indicates medium agitation.



Chemical cleaning: Dry clean, tetrachloroethylene (PCE) only.



Bleaching: Do not bleach.



Tumble drying: Do not tumble dry.



Ironing: Iron at medium temperature (150°C).



Ironing: Iron at high temperature (200°C).



Leather

We use various leather qualities to upholster Artek furniture. Most are finished with a protective surface treatment, but we may also use untreated (or only coloured) leather. The most common leathers used by Artek – Sørensen's Prestige and Elegance – feature a protective surface finish that makes them more resistant to dirt, water, and grease. Like all high-quality, naturally treated leathers, Artek leathers tend to feature anomalies, such as scarring and colour variation. These highlight the genuineness of the material. The strongest variation can be seen in the aniline leather (e.g. Elegance by Sørensen).

Protection and care

To clean your item, use either a mild soapy solution or cleaning products made specifically for upholstery leather. Multipurpose cleaners may severely damage the leather, and wax or similar surface treatments may block its pores and prevent natural breathability. Vacuum regularly. Wipe dust from leather using a damp cloth or soft sponge. Protect leather from direct sunlight and heat. Do not place the leather-upholstered item too close to a heat source.

Stain removal

Pat stain using a sponge or cloth dampened with a mild soapy solution; do not rub. Finish by wiping area with a water-dampened cloth and drying with a clean towel. The leather manufacturer Sørensen, from which Artek leathers are largely sourced, recommends cleaning with a foam whipped from soap flakes.

Avoid

- ✗ Solvents and solvent cleaners.
- ✗ Basic and acidic cleaners.
- ✗ Abrasives.
- ✗ Dry, hot air and direct sunlight.
- ✗ Clothing that may bleed on light leather.
- ✗ Grime from scalp and hands.
- ✗ Wetting the leather and rubbing wet leather.



Webbing

The webbing used by Artek is 100% linen. In early 2019, we improved its quality and longevity and updated the colour range. Whereas earlier webbing underwent anti-stain treatment, our new standard quality is not treated with any chemicals. Products with webbing can be re-upholstered.

Care

Vacuum gently using a nozzle designed for use on textiles. Wipe with a damp cloth that does not pill or stain. Shampoo using a neutral detergent.

Avoid

- ✗ Exposure to direct sunlight.
- ✗ Extensive rubbing.
- ✗ Stretching the fabric when it's moist.
- ✗ Using recently cleaned furniture before the belt fabric has completely dried.

For more info,
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