



COVID-19:

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## How to Clean Your Floor Safely and Effectively with a Scrubber

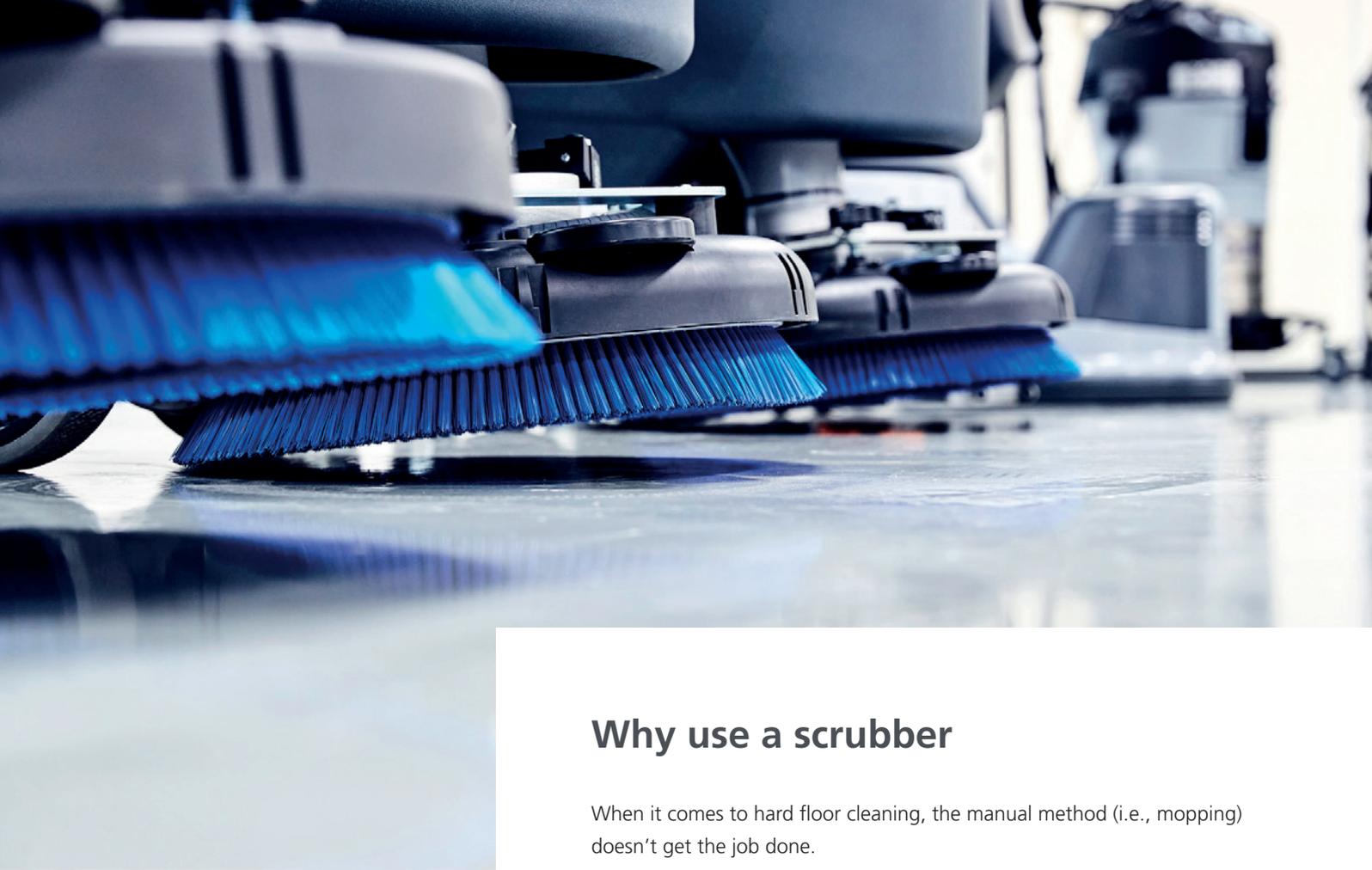
The rapid spread of the COVID-19 around the world has brought hygiene practices into sharp focus. On a personal level, we're all being much more diligent about regularly washing and sanitizing our hands. Meanwhile, in hospitals, grocery stores, and other facilities that provide essential services, teams of cleaners are working overtime to clean and disinfect surfaces.

Even before the coronavirus outbreak, floor cleaning was critical for infection control. While it's unknown how long the virus that causes COVID-19 can live on surfaces, including floors, the World Health Organization estimates that it could be as long as a few days.

Floors aren't as high-touch as many other surfaces (door handles, light switches, etc.), but contaminants on the floor can transfer to these other surfaces very easily. People can kick contaminants into the air

with their shoes, germs can travel on carts and other equipment, and anything that's picked up off the floor can bring contaminants with it.

The fastest, most effective, and safest way to clean hard floors in commercial, institutional, and industrial facilities is with a scrubber. This article briefly reviews why a scrubber is the preferred method, presents best practices for using a scrubber, and answers some common questions about cleaning to prevent the spread of COVID-19.



## Why use a scrubber

When it comes to hard floor cleaning, the manual method (i.e., mopping) doesn't get the job done.

The reasons to use scrubbers boil down to four main advantages:

- 1. Hygiene.** Mop water is only clean the first time it's used. Every subsequent dip of the mop adds contaminants to the water. Scrubbing is the only way to guarantee you're putting nothing but clean water and chemicals onto your floor.
- 2. Effectiveness.** Mopping doesn't remove contaminants; it just spreads them around. After measuring bacterial contamination on mops used in hospitals, a group of [Canadian researchers concluded](#) that mopping was equivalent to "the daily painting of hospital floors with thick suspensions of...organisms." In contrast, scrubbers clean and extract dirt very effectively, ensuring you meet your cleaning standards.
- 3. Safety.** After mopping, the floor is wet, which increases the risk of slip and fall incidents. A scrubber scrubs and dries in one pass so that the floor will not be slippery.
- 4. Productivity.** Even if mopping were a safe, effective way to clean, it would still not be a productive one. Scrubbers can clean many times faster than mops, freeing up cleaners' time for other important tasks.





## Best practices for cleaning with a scrubber

Cleaning with a scrubber is inherently safer and more effective than cleaning with a mop. As long as your cleaning staff follows the recommended protocols for personal protection issued by your national, regional, state and/or local public health authorities (e.g., wearing masks and gloves, washing hands frequently, avoiding touching face), using a scrubber will not put them at increased risk of contracting COVID-19.

These best practices will help you maximize the machine's performance:

- 1. Use a chemical portioning system.** If you don't use enough chemicals, you won't be able to clean effectively. If you use too much, you will not only waste money but also risk leaving residual chemicals on the floor. A chemical-dispensing system will also save your cleaning staff from having to mix the detergent into the water manually and from having to remove and empty the solution tank after each use.
- 2. Keep the machine clean and dry.** You can't clean a floor with dirty equipment. All parts of the machine, including all brushes and pads, should be thoroughly washed and allowed to dry after use.
- 3. Inspect the squeegees and blades regularly.** If the squeegees aren't maintained in good condition, the machine will not be able to pick up the contaminated water effectively. For more information about maintenance, read: ["Maximizing your scrubber's life and performance."](#)
- 4. Keep the recovery tank lid open after use.** This will allow the machine to dry and eliminate odor-causing bacteria.
- 5. Don't go too fast.** Good cleaning results depend on using the right amount of water and chemical and giving the machine time to do its work. Adjust the water flow rate and down pressure to the correct levels for the soil load on the floor and allow for sufficient dwell time.
- 6. Use cylindrical scrubbing when needed.** Cylindrical machines wet sweep large debris off of the floor and scrub it clean in a single pass. For applications where there is a lot of loose debris, a cylindrical machine can save considerable time because pre-sweeping isn't necessary.
- 7. Use a pad containing diamonds or cubic zirconia.** Pads containing microscopic diamonds or cubic zirconia provide excellent cleaning results for certain types of floors. In real-world tests, these pads have been shown to significantly decrease the amount of pathogens on flooring.
- 8. Double scrub as required.** If the area is particularly dirty, double scrubbing may be the only way to remove stubborn soils.



## FAQ about cleaning to prevent the spread of COVID-19

### What chemicals should I use in the machine?

#### Can I use bleach?

You should always follow the guidelines provided by your national, regional, state and/or local authorities and make sure the detergent you use is approved for scrubbers. Some official guidelines may specify detergents for use against the COVID-19 virus.

We do not recommend using bleach because it may damage both the equipment and the floor.

Contact your local Nilfisk sales or service representative with questions about using specific chemicals in Nilfisk machines.

#### Can I use a scrubber to disinfect my floors?

No. Most disinfectants require a dwell time of up to 10 minutes, which is longer than the contact time during scrubbing. The job of the scrubber is to clean the floor thoroughly so you can then disinfect as needed.

### Can I use hot water in my scrubber?

No. You should not put water hotter than 104°F into the tank. While the virus that causes COVID-19 is known to be sensitive to temperatures above [132.8°F](#), killing the virus via high temperature also requires an extended dwell time (at least 30 minutes).

### Does a scrubber need a HEPA filter to keep contaminants from re-entering the air via exhaust from the suction motor?

No. While HEPA filters keep contaminants contained during dry vacuuming, they aren't necessary for wet applications because the particles bind with the water and are not released back into the environment. Our scrubbers are widely used without HEPA filters in the cleaning industry, which has strict requirements concerning the number of particles allowed in the air.

Nilfisk is here to support the cleaning teams that are working tirelessly to fight the spread of COVID-19. If you have any questions about cleaning practices during this time, please contact us at [asknilfisk@nilfisk.com](mailto:asknilfisk@nilfisk.com).

#### Nilfisk, Inc.

9435 Winnetka Avenue North  
Brooklyn Park, MN 55445  
[www.nilfisk.us](http://www.nilfisk.us)

Phone 800.989.2235  
Fax 800.989.6566  
[askNilfisk@Nilfisk.com](mailto:askNilfisk@Nilfisk.com)

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