

House Helper Question: September 25, 2007

Question: Our first floor master bedroom floor is squeaky. The house is 12 years old and the floors are carpeted. We tried to get this fixed once, but now its back and its more wide-spread. What can we do?

Squeaky floors are a common problem as homes age. Squeaks generally occur after the house has settled and the moisture content in the wood has dried. As the subfloor or the underlayment directly below the carpet pad dries out, the “grip” on the nails or screws releases and the subfloor is no longer secured to the floor joists. It is the movement of the subfloor or underlayment against the nail that causes the squeak.

If the squeaks are not widespread and the floor is accessible from underneath, the problem is relatively easy to fix. Go under the house to the squeaky area. Have a helper walk on the floor above until you find the squeak. While he/she stands on the floor above, glue and screw a block to the side of the joist and to the underside of the subfloor. Be careful to use the correct screw size to avoid penetrating the floor above.

If the squeaky area is more widespread in the room, a kit called “Squeek No More” is available in home improvement stores and some hardware stores. It comes with detailed instructions for the homeowner to follow. Properly using this kit can eliminate squeaks without damaging the carpet.

One of the best websites we have found to demonstrate this process for homeowners is www.thisoldhouse.com. Once on the website, search for squeaky floors. The articles and video will provide you with a clear understanding of how the product works whether or not you choose to try it yourself or hire a professional.