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# WATER RINGS

The Kollektion Blog



## How to deal with water rings in your wood finish.

by Justin Dick

We've all heard it a million times, especially from Grandma. USE - A - COASTER! But no matter how many times we've been told, we seldom do it.

And now your treasured piece of furniture is adorned with a water ring or two. You google the question "how to remove a water ring" and wonder to yourself, is mayonnaise really the answer?

The first step in determining the appropriate fix is to understand the problem. What is a water ring? The cloudy appearance is what is known as blushing. It is a common occurrence when applying shellac and lacquer finishes on humid days. Moisture gets trapped in the finish and the finish dries before the moisture can escape, causing the cloudiness. A water ring is blushing concentrated in a circle where the water collects around the bottom of the glass.

# So what are my options?

There are typically three methods you can use to remove the water ring.

1. Let the moisture escape on its own
2. Abrade the area to allow the moisture to escape
3. Use a solvent to dissolve the surface of the finish and allow the moisture to escape

Sometimes you get lucky. Leave the water ring overnight and low and behold, the next day it is gone! Fantastic.

If you aren't so lucky, you'll have to try a different method. Have you ever heard toothpaste recommended as a fix for water marks? That's because toothpaste has mild abrasive qualities, similar to baking soda. You can remove a small amount of the finish by rubbing it with an abrasive, and this may release the moisture. We recommend something like super fine steel wool, or very high grit sand paper. The downside of this method - assuming the ring is shallow and it works - is that there will be a sheen difference in the area where you abraded the finish. Therefore, unless you are going to rework the whole piece this probably isn't the way to go. You trade one unsightly thing for another.

The last method relies on dissolving the finish with solvents so the moisture can escape, before the finish dries once again. Padding is often used for shellac, while blush retarder in aerosol form is used for lacquer finishes.

Sometimes adding another top coat will accomplish the same thing. With shellac and lacquer finishes each coat will partially dissolve and melt into the last. As this happens, the moisture can release while the finish dries once again.

You may be wondering how to resolve dark or black water rings in your furniture. Dark rings are when the moisture has completely penetrated the finish and made its way into the wood, damaging and staining it. This repair will require a complete refinish, and special techniques to repair the wood and/or remove the discolouration.

As with most furniture repairs, a professional can be a valuable resource and will have the proper tools and methods to assess and fix the problem. Hopefully this has helped you to understand what causes water rings, and the options to fix them.



*Marks like these can be prevented with table cloths and coasters.*