

Cutting Edge Furniture Upcycling

Finishing techniques printable

Points to consider when choosing your finish

- Self-sealing paints (Mineral Paint, Eggshell etc) do not necessarily need extra protection unless on 'high traffic' surfaces, you want a different finish or to finish parts that are raw wood.
- The most protective, hardwearing surface to protect and designs is a film-forming finish such as polyurethane top coat which can create one smooth impenetrable surface once the layer are built up.
- Gloss is the most hard-wearing, followed by Satin, Matt and then Dead Flat (This is due to the levels of mattifying particles. A couple of coats of Satin first can assist with this before applying Matt/Flat finishes)
- Oil and Wax are the least protective finishes and can mark and show scratches so best to avoid for surfaces touched regularly. Both require re-application over time.
- Oils and oil-look varnishes enhance the colour and grain of the wood the most but will amber over pale paint colours.
- If you do want an Oil finish and don't want to use an Oil-look top coat, choose a processed oil for a better protective finish like Boiled Linseed Oil over a natural oil like Hemp Oil.
- Pretty much all finishes will deepen the colour of the wood (try wetting it for an idea) If you want to maintain the pale colour of the wood consider a Matt top coat or a 'Raw'.
- Matt finishes will dull down Metallic paints so they won't reflect and catch the light in quite the same way.
- Matt finishes can also appear streaky over dark coloured paint (my best advice is to try a high quality close nap mini roller like Two Fussy Blokes or Harris to ensure it is applied evenly)

Application

- Gently stir your finish to ensure any solids at the bottom are fully mixed through – take care not to generate any bubbles
- Decant small quantities to work with into a wider container to make application easier and avoid contaminating and drying out the product in the can or jar.
- Use a soft, flat brush to coat small areas or micro fibre cloth wrapped sponge / fine, dense sponge to wipe on to larger areas.
- Any non-sealed paints or stain must be top coated separately first by taping off to avoid dragging the colours over other areas.

- Apply top coat in thin layers in the direction of the grain. You simply wet the surface. If the product builds up in places smooth it out and take care to look out all round for drips before leaving it to dry. They can be gently tipped off with a brush.
- Any little visible bits that land in your finish before it dries can be removed gently with the end tips of the filaments of a dry paint brush without disturbing the surface.
- If you have any filler or sanded through veneer that needs to be matched into the wood do this after one coat of top coat or put a little around the area you are touching up first so you can see the wood colour correctly.
Mix acrylic colours to match using artists acrylic paints (Raw Umber, Burnt Umber, Raw Sienna, Burnt Sienna, Yellow Ochre and Black) with a tiny drop of top coat to dilute to match the wood tones and apply using a fine, pointed artists brush. Mimic the patternation of the wood to blend in the patches by continuing down across the filler edge. You can use a craft knife to scratch to mimic the flecks of the wood grain too if that area looks too smooth. Allow to dry between coats and be gentle when doing the full top coat afterwards and sanding so as not to remove the touch up area until fully protected.
- Once touch dry, lightly sand to smooth and 'de-nib' any prickly bits and raised grain of bare wood areas with a super fine synthetic sanding pad and dust with the Tack Cloth ready for the next coat (don't do this on the final coat though!)
- If using Oil to finish, apply liberally with a dry lint-free cloth or foam brush, wait 20 mins then remove the excess. After 24 hours if the wood looks dry in places repeat the process. Boiled Linseed Oil / Tung Oil or Polyx Oil are going to give you more protection than an unprocessed natural oil.
- For a deeper look for very pronounced wood figuration, the wood can be oiled and then left to cure for 21 days before a water-based top coat is added to provide the required level of protection.
- Clean or paint old handles or fit any new handles (drill holes if needed). If metal they will need an adhesion primer (still clean and scuff a bit if you can first)
- Clean or spray any hardware, hinges, closures etc and re-fit
- Put the piece back together carefully

Handle with care (e.g. lift and place items gently into place on surfaces) for the first 21 days until the paint and finishes are fully cured.

