

Chapter 1 : Methods to Polish Wood | Home Guides | SF Gate

Finally, using a soft cotton rag or polishing pad, buff the finish to a high shine using automotive paste wax, photo below, which has fine abrasives that polish the finish even further. Apply a small amount of automotive paste wax, working in the grain direction to hide fine scratches.

Wood finishing is practically the final stage involved in making furniture. It involves several phases and techniques with the main intention being to ultimately protect the surface of the wood and also to create a nicer finish. These are some wood finishing techniques commonly used. Sanding Sanding is usually the first stage involved in wood finishing. The technique basically involves using a sanding block to scrape and rub over the wood surface to make it more even and smooth. Instead of doing this by hand a power sander may also be utilized. While sanding, make sure to do so along the grain of the wood so as to prevent any scratches. If holes and other flaws are still present, it is advisable to make use of wood putty to level off the imperfections. Degreasing Degreasing refers to the cleaning process required after sanding. This is thorough cleaning process where the wood is rubbed down with a tack cloth to remove all dust particles that would otherwise remain attached to the wood. Staining The staining technique refers to the application of color to the wood to give it a finished look. You can use a paint pad if the staining has to be done on a large area to ensure better final results. Waxing Wax is a great lubricant for a better looking wood finish. It makes the wood look polished and shiny as well as offering a protective coating. To wax the wood you should dust the wood well first to remove particles and then apply paste wax by using a piece of cloth and rubbing it in the wood. Varnishing Varnishing helps to give a nicer look to the wood by emphasizing the grain of the wood, while also serving the purpose of protecting the wood. Varnish can be clear or colored. If you are going to use colored varnish it is best to check the effect the color will have on the wood by applying it to a small inconspicuous area. Painting Painting wood may involve painting with a brush or by using spray paint. The most important thing is to try to apply the paint evenly to ensure a better result. As with other finishes where color comes into play it is important to check the paint on a small unnoticeable area first. It is also crucial to choose the right brush with which the paint will be applied and to apply the paint in even strokes. Usually an undercoat is required before applying the top coat so as to produce a superior, even look. Polishing Polishing is the final stage of wood finishing. Polishing helps to make the finished wood look glossy and clean, while also helping to repel dust. All these techniques help to make the wood look better while also ensuring its sustainability and preservation. It is important to consider relevant tips when choosing and applying any of such finishes, while also taking into account the type of wood and how to best clean it in the long run.

Chapter 2 : How to Polish and Shine Wood Furniture-Furniture

A finish worth the wait. You can rub out nearly any film finish, including polyurethane, lacquer, and shellac. With the latter two, each topcoat bonds with the one beneath it to form one single layer.

Get your download and learn how to polish wood! How Not to Finish Wood: Finishes have been marketed under so many different names and genres “ for so many years “ that you will never get the right information by simply reading the labels. There is plenty of good stuff out there, but you have to know what to look for. Styles come and go, but painting wood has remained as one of the nicest ways to finish furniture and other wood projects. This is especially true if you are refinishing wood or painting over stained wood. In these cases, stripping is a better option than sanding. And even if you are finishing a brand new piece, you will want to sand efficiently and keep it to a minimum. How to Finish Wood: Do learn the 6 types of wood finishes. Do learn how to use wiping varnish. This may become your favorite type of wood finish. Bob Flexner explains what it is and how to use it, and he even tells you how to make your own homemade wood polish! If you want to know how to polish wood quickly and effectively, wiping varnish is the answer. Do learn the right way to sand. Of all wood finishing operations, sanding is the one we all think we know best. Even if you are going to paint wood, as opposed to finishing it with a lacquer or oil, proper sanding is important. Do organize wood into categories before finishing. There are 5 basic categories of wood, from coarse- to fine-grained. You can save a bundle on furniture by finding antiques and bringing them back to life. Do read this FREE download, from cover to cover! The tips you see above are only scratching the surface of this amazing topic. So the newsletter and community are both great places for us to share what we know with you.

Chapter 3 : Polishing and Buffing a Finish - Canadian Woodworking Magazine

"Best Finishing Techniques" from the Editors of "Fine Woodworking," is a valuable resource filled with tips and tricks for creating the best finishes possible. Cover courtesy The Taunton Press.

To achieve this on open-grain woods oak, ash, walnut, or mahogany, for instance, first fill the pores with a wood-grain filler, photo below. Wood-grain fillers come in different colors; you can choose one to blend with the color of the workpiece for an even appearance, or select one that contrasts for more pronounced grain. Scrape off the excess and let dry. Sand the workpiece to grit. Apply stain and poly Move to a low-dust setting: You can create such an area by hanging an inexpensive vinyl shower curtain in a corner of your shop. With your workpiece wiped clean, apply stain, photo below. Skip the stain if you intend to leave your workpiece natural-color. Apply an even coat of stain to your workpiece, making long brushstrokes and overlapping the edges for full coverage. Wipe off any excess stain. Thinning the polyurethane makes it flow on more smoothly and reduces brush marks. To reveal flaws bubbles, brush marks, etc. Brush on three thin coats with a foam brush. You can use a natural bristle brush with oil-based poly, but keep an eye out for loose brush hairs. Allow each coat to dry fully. To give the subsequent poly layers something to bond to, sand lightly between coats with grit sandpaper wrapped around a hard block. After the third coat, sand with grit, then, and finally grit sandpaper. Sand with the grain on the final pass. Then, wipe off the dust with a rag dipped in mineral spirits. Put on the polish The final coat gives your workpiece its smooth feel and flawless appearance, so give it extra attention. Spray on this coat using an aerosol polyurethane and let it cure overnight, photo below. Hold the spray nozzle 12"–16" from the workpiece and sweep the can across the surface without stopping. Apply only one thin coat. Then, remove any dust nibs with 1, grit sandpaper or a piece of brown paper bag. Finally, using a soft cotton rag or polishing pad, buff the finish to a high shine using automotive paste wax, photo below, which has fine abrasives that polish the finish even further. Apply a small amount of automotive paste wax, working in the grain direction to hide fine scratches. Buff off the excess with a clean, soft rag.

Chapter 4 : How to Finish Wood: 15 Steps (with Pictures) - wikiHow

Home/Magazine/Back issues/December January /Tips/Techniques/Polishing and Buffing a Finish Wood Finishing: With the right tools and a systematic approach, it's not hard to get that gleaming finish of your dreams.

Bare wood has certain needs while finished wood requires a different kind of polishing. There are products and methods for bare wood or finished wood that help them maintain a healthy glow. Chose one that best matches the application you have in mind.

Burnishing Burnishing is a process done by hand to bring a high-gloss sheen to wood. Burnishing can be done on lacquered wood or wood that has been finished with penetrating oil. To burnish wood, cut a 4-inch piece of denim from an old pair of blue jeans. Fold the denim in half and then, using it like a small pad, vigorously rub the surface of the wood, concentrating your efforts on a oval shape no bigger than 4 inches in circumference. Rub hard for one minute, or until the surface of the wood begins to get warm. This makes the finish lay down and blend into the pores of the wood. Visually check the wood. If it is sufficiently shiny, begin polishing another circle, overlapping the first one by 1 inch.

Hand Rubbing This type of finish treatment can be done on gun stocks, or any item where you want a deep, polished look. But you need to start out with bare, unfinished wood. Dampen a cloth with boiled linseed oil. Wipe the oil onto the surface of the wood. Let it soak in and then wipe it off with a dry cloth. Pour a few drops of linseed oil into the palm of your hand. Rub the linseed oil into the wood with your palm, concentrating on a small area no bigger than about a 3-inch circle. Rub the wood until your arm gets tired. Set the wood aside. Rub more oil into the wood at regular intervals, at least once a week for up to six months, concentrating on a different area each time.

Mineral or Lemon Oil Mineral oil polishing works on any type of finish, including modern polyurethanes or shellac. Dampen a cloth with mineral or lemon oil. Wipe the surface of the wood with the oil until it has a wet look and then wipe the oil off. Use the cloth to continue wiping the wood for three minutes, or until it begins to shine. This type of oil softens and reactivates old lacquer or varnish, making it glow again. You can reapply the oil any time you want.

Special Lacquers There are some modern lacquers that do not respond to normal polishing techniques. Nitrocellulose is a super-tough lacquer that is applied to wood items such as guitar bodies. To polish this extremely durable lacquer, use polishing compound. Polishing compound contains extremely small particles that scrub nitrocellulose wood finishes to a high gloss. Rub the surface of the wood with a pea-sized particle of polishing compound on a soft cloth, concentrating on a circle no bigger than 2 inches wide. As the compound begins to dry, check your progress. If the wood is shiny enough where you have polished, add some more compound and move to another spot, slightly overlapping the first, and continue polishing until the wood is consistently shiny.

About the Author
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Chapter 5 : Wood finishing - Wikipedia

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You have two tools to select from: Anything finer than that and the ability of the stain to effectively colour the wood is going to be limited. Then, ensure the stain is fully dry – at least overnight – before applying the top coat of your choice. My final guidance on sanding is this: What is called for here is a film-forming finish that dries hard: And of those, the ones that leave no witness lines those telltale lines left as polishing cuts through successive finish layers are best. Before you start the buffing process, the surface must be flat, with no visible grain. Because thicker coats require more time to dry, more airborne dust will settle on their drying surface. Allow your topcoat to cure for a few days; a full week or more is even better or else the finish will be still too soft to take an effective sheen. Waterborne or oil-based topcoat? I may as well deal with this question right away, as more and more woodworkers are turning to waterborne finishes. The fact of the matter is that I have had equal luck in polishing and buffing both waterborne and oil-based topcoats alike, and the application of them is similar. So, your choice of one over the other needs to be based on other issues. If you have any, then cut them off using a sharp chisel or take out your trusty scraper and scrape them off, being careful not to take off any more finish than is absolutely necessary. My polishing system calls for dry, water-free products and I am especially impressed with the Abralon sanding pads. Mount a grit polishing pad on your sander or polisher and set the speed to low and turn your machine on before touching down on the surface. Start your first pass at the left end, bottom corner and work your way to the right, keeping the machine moving at all times. Depending on the machine, you may wish to increase the speed to medium. Be especially careful at the edges and ensure you keep the machine level or you may cut through the finish. Vacuum the entire surface, being careful not to scratch the surface with the wand; using a brush attachment helps in this regard. Polishing Pads – To polish the surface you will need to use very fine abrasives – grit to grit – for the first step of the process. Opposing Edges – To polish a more intricate edge you will need to use a wood block with the mating edge to get into all the corners and curved areas. To help contour the abrasive surface to the wooden edge profile, you may want to use a piece of thin cloth or paper towel between the abrasive paper and the block. As with any machine polishing, hand polishing calls for careful attention and a steady hand; move the block only with the grain and check your progress frequently. Stop as soon as the finish feels the same on the edge as it does on the flat surface. Repeat this process through the grit pad and you should be seeing reflections showing. Buffing Comes Next This is where the magic begins. Replace your polishing pad with a new buffing pad. Using a kitchen knife, lightly dip into the medium-coarse polishing compound as you would a butter dish and pick up a very small amount then smear it onto and all around your pad. Friction will cause the pad to heat up and become sticky, causing resistance as you move along. If a shine does not begin to appear, you need to smear on some more compound. With this first pass under your belt, look after buffing the edges. Again, be very careful not to get caught up in the process and buff right through the finish, as it can become quite intoxicating to see the deep, mirror-like finish appear. Buffing Pads and Compound – For the second step, pads and compound are necessary to bring out and fine-tune that high-gloss look. Bring the Gloss Up – Starting in one corner, use overlapping passes to buff the entire surface. My all-time favourite is beeswax. Whatever wax you elect to use, choose one free of polishing grit and one that dries hard. Apply it sparingly with a clean cloth, allow it to dry until hard, then polish it using either a fresh cloth or a fresh buffing pad designated for this specific purpose. As the weeks turn into months and small scratches appear, a fresh waxing may be all that is required to renew the surface. Please pass the buffing pads and wax! Like A Mirror – After the two stages and a coat of wax, the surface should be glossy enough to see your reflection in.

Chapter 6 : Wood Finishing Techniques | Woodworkers Guild of America

Wood grain patterns are most distinct under a clear finish when the wood surface is razor flat and literally slices across the cellular structure to bring the color gradations of the annual rings into focus.

Types of wood polishing techniques The natural beauty of wood is enhanced by various polishing and finishing techniques. Among the finishes are waxing, surface coating, natural finishes, penetrating finishes as well as pigmented finishes and there are various techniques like polishing, staining, bleaching, pickling and liming, distressing, glazing and toning etc. There are evaporative finishes like wax, reactive finishes like oil varnishes, coalescing finishes that are water based and polyurethane varnishes. Spray guns are used in automated wood finishes, whereas some finishes follow laborious procedures and are done manually. Natural finishes project the character of the wood as they are clear and form a protective covering, whereas pigmented finishes somewhat mask the true colour of the wood as they are like paint. These come in many colours and may also be glazed or distressed as per individual choice. Penetrating finishes are oil based finishes and as the name suggests, penetrates the surface without leaving any marked coating. Glazing and toning is a method where pigmented liquid transparent is applied over the wood. This gives an even tone to the wood and also adds a slight colour, giving an aged look. The liquid is applied between finishing coats or over the final coat. French polishing is done by applying many thin coats of shellac on the wood by hand, using a rubbing pad. This is a very fine and laborious procedure and results in a stunning and glossy finish. Staining is done to enhance the natural colour or even to alter the colour of the wood and this technique also enables to conceal inconsistencies. Applying wax, drying oil, lacquer, paint, varnish, shellac etc is labour intensive, where it is applied on the surface of the wood and after each coat sanding is done to obtain a fine finish. Waxing also seals and protects the wood and results in a rich look and if done by experts will require minimum maintenance. The procedure where two contrasting colours are used – one base colour and another rubbed into the grain of the wood is called pickling and liming. This process accentuates the wood grain and creates beautiful highlights. The natural colour of the wood may be lightened by the technique called bleaching. This process may precede pickling and liming, thereby forming the base for the latter. Darkening of the wood colour is achieved by fuming it with ammonia and the technique is called ammonia fuming. Distressing is another technique used to achieve beautiful effects and an aged look. This technique involves sanding, rubbing and even randomly striking the surface of the wood with various objects like hammers, chisels, nails etc to create imperfections and dents. These imperfections are filled with wood filler or putty, followed by smoothening and buffing of the surface and polished. Choose the right type of technique that will enhance your wooden furniture – to preserve it in all its glory as well as enhance the aesthetics of your home.

French polishing is a traditional wood finishing technique commonly used on antique furniture. French polish is not a specific material but rather the effect of applying shellac to a woodworking project that produces a tough surface with a very glossy, mirror-like finish.

By Teri Masaschi May These wood finishing techniques can solve any mistakes and still achieve the best looking end product. Photo courtesy The Taunton Press Not smooth enough. Photo courtesy The Taunton Press Smoothing slurry. Wet-sanding with the oil or stain you used helps eliminate swirls more rapidly without ruining the color. Photo courtesy The Taunton Press Uneven oiling. Glue residue on this mortise-and-tenon joint prevents the wood from absorbing oil evenly. Photo courtesy The Taunton Press Touch-up. When removing glue squeeze-out, sand with the grain using Pgrit sandpaper. Keep the block flat against the work to avoid rounding over an edge. Shield adjacent surfaces with a wide drywall knife. Photo courtesy The Taunton Press Overdone. Photo courtesy The Taunton Press Practice patch. Make a similar burn-through on a scrap of the same plywood. Mix touch-up powders with thinned shellac to match the color of the face veneer and hide the sanded-through spot. Photo courtesy The Taunton Press Faux finish. Carefully paint the tinted shellac over the sand-through. Apply a glaze to help blend the patch into the surrounding wood. Photo courtesy The Taunton Press Easy fix. A wet rag rubbed over the dye will even out the color, minimizing blotchiness. Photo courtesy The Taunton Press Sand by hand. To eliminate cross-grain scratches, finish sanding by hand, always moving with the grain. Photo courtesy The Taunton Press Check your work. Wipe on mineral spirits before applying the finish. This will reveal any lingering scratches or patches of tearout. Photo courtesy The Taunton Press Tone it down. Here, black glaze will tame a too-red stain on this oak door. Photo courtesy The Taunton Press Wipe off the excess glaze almost immediately, revealing a better color. Photo courtesy The Taunton Press Sand lightly. Pine is one of several woods that blotch easily. Photo courtesy The Taunton Press To even things out, begin by scuff-sanding. Photo courtesy The Taunton Press Brush on a glaze to help cover up the blotches. Photo courtesy The Taunton Press Wipe away the excess glaze to reveal a much more uniform color. Photo courtesy The Taunton Press Control penetration. A light coat of shellac thinned to a 1-lb. Photo courtesy The Taunton Press No blotching. Stain over a shellac washcoat has much less tendency to blotch. Photo courtesy The Taunton Press Sample board. Test the finish you want to use on a scrap of the same wood used in the workpiece. Photo courtesy The Taunton Press Scrape or sand to remove drips that have dried completely. Photo courtesy The Taunton Press Once a drip has dried completely, scrape it off with a razor blade. Photo courtesy The Taunton Press Or sand dried drips flush. Photo courtesy The Taunton Press Wipe off all the contaminated topcoat as soon as you see it crawl. Photo courtesy The Taunton Press A light spray of shellac will isolate the contamination, so you can reapply the topcoat. Photo courtesy The Taunton Press Witnesses. Sanding too much can produce witness lines, whitish areas exposing earlier coats of finish. Photo courtesy The Taunton Press Burned up. Photo courtesy The Taunton Press Restore the color. Photo courtesy The Taunton Press Seal the color. Brush a light coat of shellac over the stain touch-up. Photo courtesy The Taunton Press Keep sanding to remove witness lines. Using fine sandpaper and a light touch, sand the surface to level it as much as possible before applying more topcoat. Photo courtesy The Taunton Press Add another topcoat. Apply more of the topcoat to the entire surface, not just where the witness lines had been. Cover courtesy The Taunton Press Never fear finishing again! The Editors of Fine Woodworking will give you the skills necessary and confidence to apply finish with ease. Best Finishing Techniques Taunton Press, is an invaluable reference that offers foolproof techniques to guarantee a perfect finish every time. In the following excerpt, Teri Masaschi will teach you a few wood finishing techniques, tips and tricks for fixing finishing mistakes. Back up and start again by milling a new piece, recutting a joint, or fitting in a patch. But finishing mistakes can be harder to overcome—hence the dread many woodworkers feel. Problems can pop up at any one of three points in the finishing process—surface preparation and assembly, staining and coloring, and applying the topcoat. Testing the colors and materials you want to use will alert you to problems before you risk ruining an expensive project. Also, resist the urge to rush through

the finishing process. You can nearly always tell when someone has taken a shortcut. Continue Reading

Surface Flaws The most common surface flaws are sanding swirls and tearout, glue squeeze-out, and sanding through the veneer of hardwood plywood. And you might not see the problem until it glares at you through a freshly applied coat of oil or stain.

Scratches and Tearout Problem: Or, cutting or planing tore out some wood fibers, leaving a divot in the surface. If the first swipe of stain shows vivid swirls or scratches all over the work, stop. Sand the piece again, this time changing paper frequently and working your way systematically through the grits. This method works well with most oil finishes or oil-based pigment stains. If you used stain, reapply it carefully to match the surrounding stained areas. If you used a dye, resand a stand-alone area, such as an entire stile. If it is a large surface, sand the damaged area, feathering the edge between sanded and unsanded parts. Then apply more dye. To eliminate tearout, sand, plane, or scrape the surface. Wipe the surface with mineral spirits to check the smoothness. But stain makes them pop.

Glue Residue

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Problem: You used too much glue, leaving squeeze-out around the joint. Or you got sloppy and left a gluey fingerprint on the workpiece. You can get rid of some fingerprints by wet-sanding with the stain you used, or by lightly sanding and reapplying the stain. Use a sharp chisel to eliminate dried glue from around a joint. Wrap Pgrit paper around a hard block, and sand with the grain, using firm pressure. To avoid scratching adjacent surfaces, use a 6-in. You sanded away some face veneer on a large, expensive piece of plywood after you had glued up everything. Use a scrap of the same plywood to duplicate the mistake and serve as a sample board for the remedy. Apply the same finish you plan to use on the piece, then sand through a portion of the face veneer to give yourself a place to experiment with a repair. Put a piece of glass next to the sand-through on the practice board and begin developing your color see Slideshow. Quickly dip the brush into the shellac, then into one of the touch-up powders. Swirl the brush around on the glass to incorporate the powder and shellac. Dab on more shellac and a different powder to blend the color you need. Work in thin layers, sneaking up on the color rather than painting it in. A glazeâ€”a type of stain used on a semisealed surfaceâ€”brushed on and then lightly wiped off will help blend in the patch.

Color Mistakes By far the biggest finishing problems can occur when you apply dye or stain. A color you thought would look great comes up garish. Or the first coat of color takes unevenly, leaving blotches or streaks.

Uneven Dye Stain Problem: A dye-based stain looks stronger or more intense in some areas than in others. Consequently, you have an unevenly colored surface or lap marks where you wanted uniformity.

Chapter 8 : Power your way to a polished finish

Instead of the glossy finish achieved with wood polish, wax polish will leave more of a glowing sheen. Colored or Pigmented Wax Colored or pigmented wax or polish can enhance the wood color of the finish.

Mmm, not so much. In order to preserve its natural beauty, it is essential to polish regularly because beautiful wooden furniture never goes out of style. Even your oldest piece of wood furniture can look like new if you take the time to read these cleaning tips on how to properly polish your wooden furniture. Important Facts before You Start Only use oil on wood that has an oil finish Furniture oil like Tung and Linseed oil evaporate, get tacky and the remaining residue dries to a hard and protective finish. Wood oil can be applied as needed, but is not appropriate for all wood finishes. A chemical reaction occurs between wax and oil that will degrade them both. The wax will become opaque and attract dirt and dust and will need to be completely removed if you even want a hope that it will look beautiful again. Nuts, vegetable and olives spoil and the oils will go rancid oxidize. You cannot stain or lacquer over silicone. Wood Polishes Wood polish is used to protect against abrasions and gives your furniture a shiny appearance. While polish evaporates more quickly than wood wax, it is much easier to apply. Natural Wood Polish Recipes Mineral oil is used to rehydrate and protect wood furniture from stains, spills and liquids, while vinegar cleanses it. Mineral Oil and Vinegar One cup mineral oil One fourth cup white distilled vinegar Mineral oil repels liquid, while lemon extract cleans and leaves a fresh scent. Simply stir the mixture together and store in a glass or plastic container. Mineral Oil and Lemon Extract One quart mineral oil One tablespoon lemon extract Wood Waxes Wood wax often contains beeswax and creates a protective seal on the wood, which keeps moisture in and repels stains and moisture that could harm your wooden furniture. Instead of the glossy finish achieved with wood polish, wax polish will leave more of a glowing sheen. Colored or Pigmented Wax Colored or pigmented wax or polish can enhance the wood color of the finish. A pigmented wax will conceal any nicks, scrapes, or blemishes in the wood color or the finish. Waxing with a pigment will leave a warm satin sheen. You may also reapply a clear polish or wax over pigmented wax if you desire a more glossy shine. Clear Wax Clear wax is appropriate for all wood furniture, regardless of the type or the color of wood. Clear wax shines wood to a high glossy finish. This is the case where less is definitely more. Too much clear wax applied to the finish will make the wood look dull and lifeless. The key to getting the high shine is to apply one coat of wax and buff, buff, buff. Pine Wax Pine wax works very well on both unfinished and light colored wood furniture. When wood has been finished, it will have a naturally rich and deep color. After applying pine wax to your furniture, your light colored wood and unfinished wood will possess a deep, rich tone that looks natural. You can also use a clear wax after applying pine wax to achieve a glossy shine. You can use either wood polish or wood wax, but now you know the difference between the two. If your wood has a wax finish, stick with a wax polish. If your wood has an oil finish, stick with an oil polish. Gather your tools and supplies: Wood polish or wood wax recipe above Clean cotton rags.

Special Lacquers. There are some modern lacquers that do not respond to normal polishing techniques. Nitrocellulose is a super-tough lacquer that is applied to wood items such as guitar bodies.

Truth is, a silky film finish starts where the label directions stop. After the final coat cures, a savvy finisher traditionally digs out his pumice or rottenstone powdered abrasives and lubricant, and hand-rubs the finish to an even sheen without dust nibs, runs, or a "plastic" look. If that process seems time-consuming and messy, you can see why most guys rub out only horizontal surfaces, such as a tabletop, where light best reflects off the finish. For a faster, cleaner method, try the techniques used by auto-body experts. Instead of oils, powders, and handheld rubbing blocks, they use premixed automotive polishing compound and a foam buffing pad on a dedicated polisher. You can achieve similar results using your random-orbit sander. A finish worth the wait. You can rub out nearly any film finish, including polyurethane, lacquer, and shellac. With the latter two, each topcoat bonds with the one beneath it to form one single layer. Although a rubbed finish solves some problems, it highlights others if you shortchange the surface preparations. See Sources, below. Follow that with three coats of film finish as close to full strength as you can apply. Brush on each coat as evenly as possible close to the edges to avoid sanding or rubbing through the finish there. However, avoid applying extra-heavy coats. Yes, thick coats protect against sand-through, but they also drip and sag more than moderate coats. And a heavy finish takes longer to cure. Rubbing only works on a fully cured film finish. To tell when a finish has cured, sniff it. If you smell solvents, it needs more curing time. Before it was rubbed out, the satin finish top photo, above blurred objects and highlighted surface flaws. After rubbing bottom photo, above, the sheen becomes more even in reflected light despite not being glossy. Attach yellow buffing pads to the rubber backer using the center washer nut, or replace the original pad with a hook-and-loop aftermarket pad. Sand the surface flat. Begin sanding the finish with or grit steared sandpaper to remove dust nibs, brush strokes, and runs or dips, top photo, below. If you use a random-orbit sander with and grit discs, watch for build-up on the abrasive, middle photo below. This can form lumps, called "corns," that mar the finish instead of smoothing it. Stop immediately and clean the disc if you see loops in the surface dust, bottom photo below. Before you rub out a finish, first sand away dips and runs. Then reapply an even topcoat and check for flaws using an angled light. When finish heats and softens, it can stick to itself to form corns on an abrasive. Remove these or change pads frequently. Stop sanding immediately if you notice circular patterns in the sanding dust caused by corns on the sanding disc. Sand with the grain, and clean the surface using mineral spirits and a soft, clean cloth after each grit. As you gain finish-sanding skill using mineral-oil lubricant, save time and mess by switching to a lubricant that lets abrasives cut faster. Make your own from 1 tablespoon of dish-washing liquid in 1 quart of water. Fast-cutting lubricants increase the risk of sanding through the finish. Shine time Place your sanded and cleaned workpiece on a non-skid mat to keep it from shifting as you polish. Then center and attach a yellow buffing pad Sources to the hook-and-loop pad of your random-orbit sander. After shaking the container of polishing compound, squirt a moderate amount directly on the workpiece in an area the size of your polishing pad, photo below. Place the foam pad on the compound and start your sander at its highest speed. Deposit polish in an area no larger than your pad can cover. Then place the pad on the polish and start the sander. Work a roughly 3-square-foot area until the polish thins and dries. Press lightly and polish a workpiece section of about 3 square feet in overlapping circles, photo below. Go easy at edges and corners. Polish these areas just enough to reach the desired sheen, then stop before you polish through the finish. Use a light touch with your random -orbit sander and keep the pad spinning freely. Overlap each pass with the previous one. With polyurethane, sanding or polishing too long in one area can cut through the outer topcoat to the layer below and create a ring. If that happens, clean the workpiece thoroughly with mineral spirits, scuff sand it with grit abrasive, and apply a full-strength topcoat. After it cures, sand as before and resume polishing. The polish forms a powder as you work and the polishing pad will gradually leave a clear, smooth surface, photo below. In the reflection of an angled light, check for an even sheen and repeat for any missed spots. Polishing compound dries to a powder you can easily wipe off the surface with a soft cloth, such as an

old cotton T-shirt. After wiping the surface with a clean, soft cloth, add shine and remove the polishing compound residue by wiping on an automotive cleaner and polish. Wizards Turbo Cut no. DeWalt variable-speed polisher no.