

Wipe On Polyurethane - When and How to Wipe

Rules, Tips and Paraphernalia

WHAT YOU SHOULD HAVE ON HAND TO GET STARTED:

Sand Paper – Prior to Wiping on the FIRST COAT your project should be lightly sanded

For a new wood project – start with *120 grit and final sand with 180 grit*

For a re-finishing project - *For high spots, old paint or gouges I would start with an 80 grit and then to 120 finishing with 180 grit sandpaper*

#000-#0000 Steel Wool for sanding between coats

LINT FREE rags – old t-shirt material is fine

A thinning agent - *Mineral Spirits, Turpentine or Paint Thinner for oil-based polys. In areas where you don't have access to those (VOC prohibition areas) you can substitute acetone but be aware it take more effort to mix properly.*

For water based polyurethane use water (I prefer distilled). Never well water.

Rubber gloves

Air compressor or good vacuum for dust removal

Tack Cloth – *available at hardware stores, home centers, or online*

Polyurethane - *available in three sheens Satin, Semi-Gloss, Gloss*

A suitable storage container - *something with an air tight lid so you can save unused poly to next application*

Drop cloth or old newspapers to protect surrounding areas from drips

Patience and determination to get the job done right

RULES:

RULE #1 –Make sure your rags a LINT-FREE

RULE #2 - NATURAL bristle brushes FOR OIL and SYNTHETIC bristles FOR WATER

RULE #3 – Thin 1 part poly to 1 part thinner. Thin 3 parts poly to 1 part water for water based poly.

RULE #4 - Never shake the can

RULE #5 - LAY IT DOWN THIN. Protection comes from thickness. Thickness is achieved by layering.

RULE #6 – Wipe it on and feather once and LEAVE IT ALONE. Don't overwork or over analyze

RULE #7 – Use multiple thin coats to achieve desired surface protection. The THINNER the coat the better

RULE #8 - Let DRY OVERNIGHT

RULE #9 - Sand LIGHTLY with FINE ABRSSIVE PADS or STEEL WOOL

TIPS:

Air causes bubbles. Air is introduced through the application technique or the applicator tool Bad finishes come from bad procedures.

If you are using a water-based finishes you would thin with water not mineral spirits. I recommend distilled water for those of you on a well or with softened water or other highly treated water systems.

There is an indoor and outdoor urethane. Outdoor has UV protectors in it and its resins expand and contract which allow for temperature fluctuations.

The Great Debate: Oil-based polyurethane vs Water-based polyurethane. Both are suspension materials that evaporate and leave the coating resins..

Sand before applying your first coat of polyurethane. Sanding is done in steps and most finishers do the final sanding at 180 to 220 GRIT.

It's important to remove sanding dust and other particles or they become a part of the surface once your poly is applied.

Every coat is the same procedure.

After your first coat of poly you can use a cloth dampened in water if your urethane is water-based. Do not apply water to raw wood.

Tack cloth is an inexpensive dust remover that can be purchased at any home center, paint store or hardware store. It is just a piece of cheese cloth with a slightly sticky additive to pick up sanding dust and particles. CAUTION: Do not rub with cheese cloth. It will leave the sticky resin on your project. A light wipe works fine.

If you will be staining your wood project be sure to check out my YouTube video

Blotch Free Wood Stain Application.

Finishing takes time and patience but it's what people notice. The truth is if they don't notice the finish you've scored. A nice finishing job enhances the natural beauty of the surface below without drawing attention to itself.

HAPPY WOODWORKING!!

Best
paul