



HOW-TO BOOKLET #3032

FINE FINISHES



TOOL & MATERIAL CHECKLIST

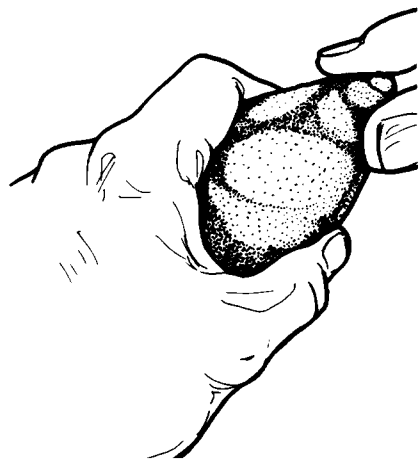
- Shellac/Enamel/Alcohol
- Sandpaper Assortment
- Stencil Brush
- White Glue/Cotton
- Boiled Linseed Oil and Household Oil
- Lintless Cotton Cloth and Bandage Type Gauze
- Stain/Stain Brushes
- Sanding Block
- Razor Knife
- Rottenstone Abrasive

Read This How-To Booklet for Special Tools and Materials Not Included in Basics Above.

Two of the most popular “finishes” for wood are French Polish and Decoupage decoration. Others include stenciling, antiquing, and the surface type finishes such as highlighting, mottling, pickling, and graining. This How-To Booklet involves French Polish, Decoupage, and stenciling. Read the Booklet before you purchase materials for any of these projects. Often, you can save money on materials in “kit” packages—such as antiquing kits that include the base coats of paint, abrasives, finishes.

FRENCH POLISH

This special finish is a shellac base applied in multiple layers with a soft, padded cotton “rubber.” After each coat of shellac has dried, the surface is smoothed with oil and an abrasive before a new layer of shellac is added. The finish is very time consuming, so you will need patience as you follow these detailed steps:



Fad is the foundation of the French polish finish. It is the cotton or gauze wad inside a cover of cloth. The fad holds the charge of shellac that will be applied to the properly prepared surfaces.

The wood must be mirror-smooth to create the finish, which is shellac.

- 1 Sand the wood, raise the grain with water, and resand until the wood does not rise when moisture is applied to the surface. Start with medium-grit abrasive and work to fine grit.
- 2 To prevent any possible raising of grain after the polishing process starts, apply a sealer to the wood. The sealer coat is a thin application of shellac. Use a wad of cotton gauze wrapped in a lint-free cotton cloth. The cloth wrapped around the gauze wad should be free of wrinkles and very smooth.
- 3 Use a wood filler tinted to blend with or match the wood, if you want the pores of the wood filled to match surrounding surfaces. A plaster filler does a good job. Apply the filler with a cloth, rubbing the surface with considerable pressure to force the filler into the pores. Let the filler dry completely.
- 4 Sand the surface with a very fine wet/dry abrasive moistened with boiled linseed oil. If you can, use an old, soft piece of sandpaper. Use only enough oil to moisten the paper and keep it soft.

Cover the Fad with a lintless cotton cloth. Cloth must be soft but firm so it can be wrapped around the fad without wrinkles. The applicator must be smooth or the shellac will ridge.



- 5 A piece of furniture given a French polish should have an even color finish. There should not be any noticeable variation in the intensity of the color on the wood.

Apply the stain with care, and before you apply it, test the stain on a piece of scrap wood until you are sure of how much stain to apply, how long to leave it on, and how much to wipe off.

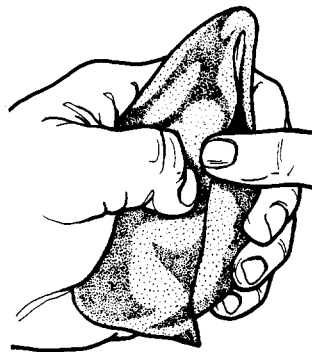
POLISH APPLICATION

You will have to make a “rubber” in order to apply the polish to the wood. Follow these steps:

- 1 The “rubber” is the only tool used in applying the French polish. The rubber is a wadded gauze or cheesecloth covered with a piece of lint-free cotton cloth. The center of the rubber is called a “fad.” To make the fad, fold the gauze or cheesecloth, tucking in the corners and the edges around to one side. Mold the fad into a pear-shaped wad that will fit comfortably into your hand. This is the part of the rubber that will be moistened with shellac.

Cover the fad with lint-less cotton cloth. The cloth must be as smooth and wrinkle-free as possible or the rubber will leave streaks.

Wrap the fad with the cloth and tuck all excess material into a seam. Every time you recharge the fad with shellac, you will have to refold the cloth. The fad and the cloth is called the “rubber,” which is the shellac applicator.



- 2 There are many shellac formulas for French polish. The one below works best for most novice finishers:

Make up a thin solution of one pound of shellac flakes in one gallon of alcohol (a 1-pound cut). If you want the more classic formula, use 1 1/2 pounds of shellac flakes in 1 gallon of alcohol. We recommend the one-pounder; it is easier to apply and has a margin for error.

- 3 Dip the fad of the rubber in the shellac and squeeze out the excess. Then wrap the fad in the outer cloth making the surface as smooth as you can. Unwrap the fad each time you put more shellac on the inner wadding.

To apply the shellac properly, there are three arm motions. The first is circular. The second is a straight motion following the grain of the wood. The third is figure 8s.

The shellac is applied and polished primarily with the circular and figure 8 patterns. The straight strokes are followed by the circular and/or figure 8 strokes. Don't use too many straight strokes or fail to follow the straight strokes with the circular strokes. If you do, the shellac will build up noticeable lines or ridges on the surface. Then, these will have to be sanded out or the surface is ruined.

Start making circular strokes above the surface. Then lower your arm while continuing the motion. Keep your arm moving at all times. Do not apply pressure on the surface when you make contact. Pressure will force the shellac out of the rubber unevenly. Try to apply the shellac evenly, with each stroke identical in pressure to the one before.

When you feel the rubber start to pull lightly on the surface, you should recharge the fad with more shellac. If you lift the rubber

straight up, it will leave a rough spot on the surface. Continue to make the circular motion and move the rubber lightly over the surface so you can lift your arm as the rubber reaches the edge.

- 4** Work until you have applied the shellac polish to one entire surface of the piece you are finishing.

If you stop and try to finish the section later, a ridge will show where the two shellac applications overlap.

- 5** Let the finish dry 3 or more hours. Longer is better if you can wait. Then sand the surface with a fine grit abrasive. Wipe the surface clean with a soft cloth and then with a tack rag.

- 6** Repeat the application of shellac and sanding. You may apply as few as 4 coats or as many as 20 before reaching a point where the wood has taken on a deep and lustrous sheen.

At this point you should add a drop of boiled linseed oil to the fad each time you charge it with shellac. Use fine sandpaper with a drop of oil on it to sand the surface between shellac coats.

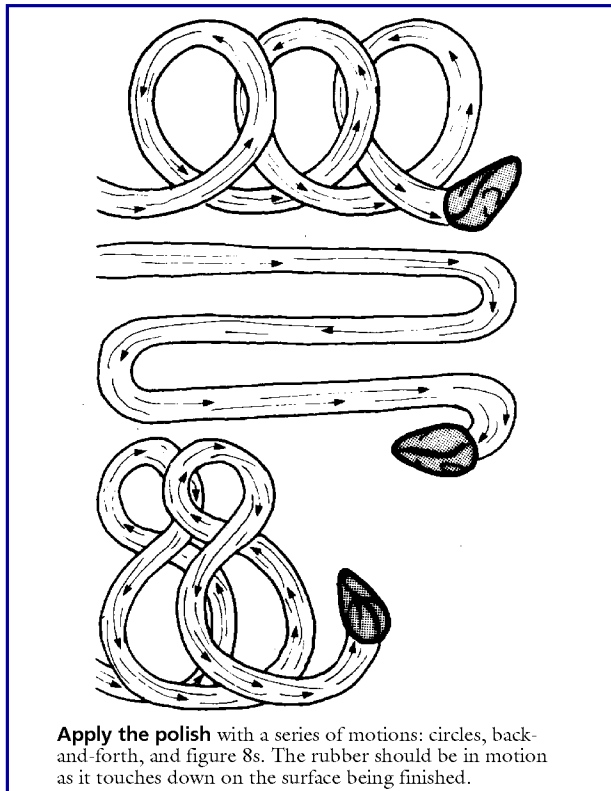
- 7** When you are satisfied with the finish and it has dried, apply a fine lubricating oil to the surface and sprinkle a small amount of rottenstone over the oil.

Use a small amount. Also use a soft cloth or a soft block such as a clean felt blackboard eraser or block of cork, wrapped in a soft, lint-free cloth to polish the surface to its final finish.

DECOUPAGE DECORATING

Decoupage is a process that applies printed material, photos, art prints, and even photos from magazines, postcards, or greeting cards to surfaces of furniture for a special finish. You can use decoupage on ladderback chairs, chests, and tables.

The sealing process involves so many coats of varnish that the resulting finish is nearly impervious and has a glass-like surface.



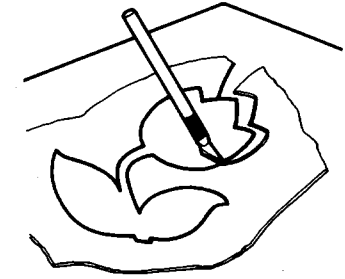
Apply the polish with a series of motions: circles, back-and-forth, and figure 8s. The rubber should be in motion as it touches down on the surface being finished.

You can buy decoupage kits that permit application and sealing of the surface in one or two operations. Although the surface will not resist wear as well as the many layers of varnish, the decoupage kit provides good protection for the surface that will not receive lots of abuse or constant use.

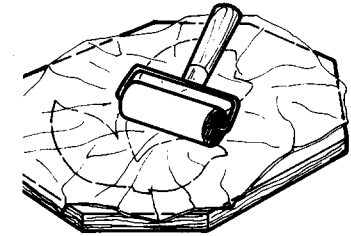
To decoupage from scratch:

- 1** It is possible to use a photo from a magazine; material that is printed on both sides, however, often has a show-through problem. To prevent this, coat the reverse side first with a very thin layer of white glue diluted to 1/2 strength. Let it dry overnight before beginning the decoupage process.

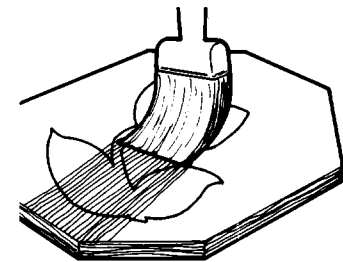
If the picture is on thick paper, you will have to soak some of the layers of the paper off the back. Coat the face with thinned varnish and let



Cut art for decoupage with a razor knife or razor blade. You can use material from books, magazines, posters, and even greeting cards.



Apply white glue to the back of the printed matter, set it in place, and roll flat. Place plastic/wax paper between pattern and roller.



Varnish the surface. Let the varnish dry, and then wet sand the surface. Repeat this process until the surface is level with the print.

it dry. Soak the paper in lukewarm water and lift as much of the paper off as possible without destroying the picture.

For thick paper, you will have to apply extra layers of varnish to bring the finished surface to a flat, level plane.

You can use a sharp knife or razor blade to cut precisely around the outline of the picture. However, other edge treatments are attractive.

2 You can apply decoupage to new wood, stripped wood, or finished wood. Sand the surface lightly to produce a smooth surface. Fill any cracks, scratches or gouges. High-gloss finishes should be sanded with fine grit paper so the glue can grip the surface. The finish should feel smooth to the touch.

3 Put the picture on the wood and mark the desired position onto the wood. Spread a piece of plastic or plastic wrap and lay the picture face down on the plastic. Spread full-strength white glue on the back.

Now transfer the picture to the wood, placing it face up within the marked position. Cover the picture with a new piece of plastic and use a roller to press the picture flat. Work from the center toward the edges. Wipe away any excess glue. Use another clean piece of plastic over the picture and repeat this smoothing process until no glue seeps out.

4 Wait 24 hours. Then check the picture for air bubbles. If you missed any, you will have to repair the bubble in the same way a bubble is repaired in veneer: slit the surface above the bubble and, using a very fine probe, apply white glue to the underside. Then smooth and flatten the bubble.

Apply varnish to the entire surface. Let it dry 24 hours or more. Sand the surface with fine, wet sandpaper, wipe the surface absolutely clean, and apply another coat of varnish.

This process is repeated until the finish is level and the depth sufficient to protect the design and the wood. It could require up to 20 coats.

STENCILING FURNITURE

Stenciling is applying a design with paint through cutouts in a piece of plastic or waxed cardboard. The action of applying the paint is a dabbing, straight up-and-down motion. The proper brushes are short-bristled, thick and short-handled. The paint should be a fast-drying lacquer type. Acrylic paint works well.

Commercially designed and manufactured stencils are available at many home center, art, and craft stores. Designs range from simple to intricate. An intricate stencil pattern will often look like a free-hand design and may combine as many as 12 masks to achieve the final result of the pattern.

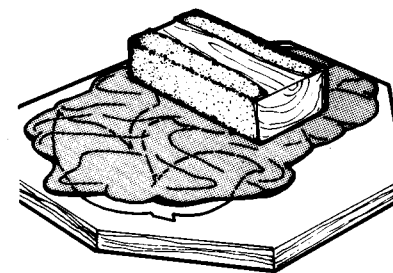
If you have never tried stenciling, it is suggested that you first work with a 1- or 2-mask pattern. You'll like the results.

You can create your own stencil patterns. Sketch the design on paper and do a cutout test on thin paper to see how well the design holds together. Use a soft pencil or charcoal to fill in the pattern. You can also buy stencil board for finished patterns.

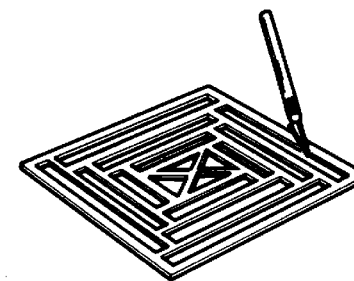
Mark the locations of the design on the piece you are finishing. If the design is to be centered, check the measurements carefully before starting. Tape the stencil pattern in place. Dip the stencil brush in the paint and touch the brush to a piece of paper to remove excess paint.

Move the brush straight up and down to fill in the stencil. It is better to apply the paint lightly and to go over the stencil several times than to load the brush with paint.

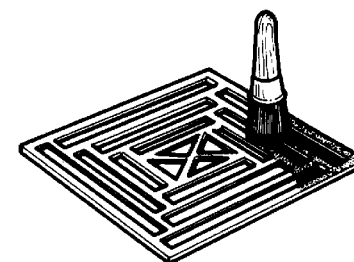
Do not remove the stencil until the paint is dry. Then remove the tape and lift the stencil straight up. If any paint accumulates on the edges of the design or on the underside, clean it off or discard the stencil.



Lightly sand the surface between coats of varnish. Use very fine grit abrasive on a sanding block. Remove all sanding debris.



Cut stencils from commercial stencil cardboard, which has a waxed surface. Use a razor knife and make all cuts as cleanly as you can.



To stencil, dab the stencil brush squarely up-and-down on the stencil. Do not stroke the brush. Remove stencil when paint is dry.