

Applying the Sam Maloof Poly Oil Finish

After my chair is together I like to quickly go over it with a brown or white 3M abrasive pad, just to further smooth things out. On the first coat of finish I start from the bottom of the chair and work my way up, since if you have an isolated splash of finish on your piece it may show faintly after you are done finishing. I don't worry about dust on the piece of furniture, it doesn't seem to matter. I apply the finish with a foam brush very quickly, just covering everything with a layer of finish. I make sure there is a liberal coat on any end grain. On the first coat of a chair I put some finish on the bottom of the legs. I then take a couple of rags (or "Viva" shop towels) and holding one in each hand, I start wiping the finish off, not touching the chair with my bare hands. I rapidly go over the chair, removing the excess finish. Spend some time getting into any intersections. I like to wipe off the finish on each piece of the chair and then move to the next since it can be hard to keep track for me otherwise on what I've already gone over. I go over the chair a couple of times, using cleaner rags as I go and then on the last wipe down I use two clean rags, rubbing hard, especially in the intersections. I lift the legs up when wiping the bottom of the legs since it's hard to get all the finish off near the bottom of the leg if you don't do this (I don't care about the finish on the actual bottom of the chair). I don't touch the chair without rags in my hands for about 4 hours after applying a coat of finish

and I usually move it to somewhere where dust won't fall on it.

I put finish in the inside of where the upholstered seat goes only once. I like to wait at least 24

hours between coats and apply a minimum of 3 coats. I don't sand between the coats of finish;

I find that if I do a good job of removing all the excess finish on previous coats and rub hard the

wood will be silky smooth with a nice satin sheen. The foam brush can be put in a zip lock bag

and then in the freezer and reused.

Be aware that used rags with finish on them can spontaneously combust! Hang or spread them

out flat and ones that have a fair amount of finish on them I put outside to dry out in the sun

before I throw them away. Rags or paper towels that aren't saturated can be used the next time

as you are removing the bulk of the finish.

You can make your own concoction of finish with pure Tung oil, poly varnish and boiled linseed

oil, but I've never matched the evenness of sheen and the tendency not to bleed out with my

own mixtures, so I use the Maloof oil instead.

If you see a flaw in your work you can still sand this out after you've applied finish. I like to start

with 220 grit, then 320 and then the abrasive pad, sanding the whole face of where the flaw is

so the sheen will be the same and then reapply finish and wipe off. If you see glue squeeze out

after you apply finish, just carefully chisel the squeeze out off and then reapply finish.

It takes me about 35-40 minutes to apply the initial coat of finish on the chair and about 25

minutes to do the subsequent coats.