

Sutherland Welles Ltd.®

Sustainable, natural & earth-friendly Polymerized Tung Oil wood finishes.

General Instructions



Wiping Varnish

Best Uses: Kitchen & Bath Cabinets, Wood Turning, Furniture & Built-Ins, or on Plywood & Veneers

The Wiping Varnish is a good option when you want the soft, surface feel of an oil finish, but you need increased protection from a resin. The open working time is great for intricate surfaces, but the excess must be wiped off for even sheen results on surface coats. Wiping Varnish can also be used in place of an oil-only option to create a finished surface using fewer coats on special surfaces such as plywood & veneers.

Before You Get Started

Applicator Options

- *Rag:* Scott® blue paper shop towels or non-treated, lint free cloth
- *Brush:* Natural white china bristle brush
- *Spray:* HVLP compatible (no dilution necessary)

Other Tools For Project

Sandpaper (or Steel Wool & Pad Equivalents)

- 220 (Max before first coat)
- 400 & 600 (Between coats)

Mineral Spirits or Di-Citrusol™

Tacking Cloth: Scott® blue paper shop towels

Helpful Tools: Vacuum, Dust Brush, & Fan

Optimal Finishing Conditions

- Weather conditions 55-75°F
- Humidity: 65% or less

Working outside optimal conditions is possible, but can lengthen curing time between coats and overall. Air flow helps finish the cure. **Tacky surfaces are NOT cured.**

Do I NEED the Sealer?

We recommend the Sealer when working with the Wiping Varnish as it is formulated to better penetrate into the wood and will build a more even sheen when applying the top lustre coats.

Application Instructions

Wood Preparation: Wood surface should be free of lint, dirt, grease, wax, oil, and old paint. If refinishing old wood, make sure to remove any loose old finish or results may not be even.

Before Applying FIRST Coat: Sand the wood up to 220 grit paper. Avoid higher grits as they close wood pores, interfering with maximum penetration in the initial coat.

Strategy: THIN coats with NO puddles. Sanding in between coats using decreasingly light pressure as you build. Wipe off excess with a clean, dry blue shop towel.

Step 1:

- Apply Wiping Varnish Sealer.
- Don't wipe off excess.
- Let cure 24 hours minimum.

Step 2: Cure Test

Finger tips gliding easily against the grain & a fine, white powder from sanding indicate that you can safely apply another coat. Give the finish more time to cure if the coat has not passed this test.

Step 3:

- Lightly Sand with 400 grit.
 - Vacuum & tack surface.
- (use Mineral Spirits on a blue shop towel to clean surface)*

Step 3:

- Apply Wiping Varnish Sealer.
- Wait 25-30 minutes. Gently wipe off excess finish.
- Let cure 24 hours minimum.

Step 4:

- Cure test.
- Lightly Scuff with 600 grit.
- Vacuum & tack surface.

Step 5:

- Apply Wiping Varnish *Lustre of Choice*.
- Wait 25-30 minutes. Gently wipe off excess finish.
- Let cure 24 hours minimum.

Step 6:

- Cure Test
- Lightly Scuff with 600 grit.
- Vacuum & tack surface.

Step 7:

- Apply Wiping Varnish *Lustre of Choice*.
- Wait 25-30 minutes. Gently wipe off excess finish.
- Let cure 24 hours minimum.

Repeat steps 6-7 for higher sheen or for maintenance coats.

Gentle touch after 24 hours. Light use after 72 hours. Do not cover from airflow for two weeks minimum. Resin & full Polymerized Tung Oil cure through after 30 days (+/- based on local humidity/elevation/temperature)

Frequently Asked Questions

General Application & Troubleshooting with Wiping Varnish

Can I skip wiping off the excess on the top coats of the Wiping Varnish?

For uniformity of sheen, we recommend that every coat after the first coat should have the excess removed after the 25-30 minute window described in the instructions. Skip at your own discretion.

Can I make the Sealer from my topcoat finish by adding mineral spirits?

Because of the resin we add to the Wiping Varnish, you cannot accurately create the Sealer by adding mineral spirits. If your project is small, you could add mineral spirits to dilute the top coat, just know that it will not mimic the effects of the Sealer in quite the same way.

Why am I having bubbles in my finish?

Too much finish is being applied. Use less finish on your applicator and move the finish around to make a very thin coat. Oil finishes stretch far, especially on top layer coats.

What should I do if bubbles dry in the cured finish?

You need to lightly sand them away with fine sand paper (600 grit should work). If that doesn't work, switch to the next coarser grit of sandpaper using even pressure across the entire surface. Wipe the dust off with a mineral spirits dampened cloth to see if they are gone. Bubbles must be removed before applying more finish.

Why does my finish have tiny spots after the first few coats are cured?

This usually only happens when using a wiping technique with the first couple of coats. It's known as *speckling* or *bleed back*, which is when the oil seeps back out of the wood and cures causing small spots or dots. Typically, this happens on open grain woods, like Oak and Walnut, and most often with the first couple of coats if they are being wiped. The friction of wiping speeds up the evaporation of the solvent in the finishes and makes the Polymerized Tung Oil very thin. As such, the oil migrates to the surface as the solvent off gases. This can be avoided by NOT wiping the excess off your first coat. Apply a thin layer and let it soak into the wood and cure. This almost always will eliminate these spots from happening in the first place.

How do I get rid of tiny speckles of glossy oil cured on the surface?

See above for how to keep that from happening. It's important to deal with them as soon as you notice them. They aren't going to disappear with adding another coat. Sand the surface lightly with 400 grit sand paper. Wipe the surface down with mineral spirits on a cloth. Let dry and observe the surface. If it's a large surface area, but not all areas have the spots, you should still sand the entire surface. You can't spot sand and have the end result be uniform.

Why do I have uneven sheen with streaks of dull and shiny areas?

There are two possibilities for what could be happening. When there isn't even surface build on the wood itself, the wood has deeply absorbed the finish. Keep "feeding" the wood more polymerized tung oil by building coats up until it all evens out on the surface coats. This is common with "thirsty" woods like Walnut. If you have an even surface build and this is happening WITHIN the finish coats, then you have streaking and flashing. This happens when a prior coat of finish didn't dry properly, most likely due to humidity shifts, before another coat was applied. Moisture is trapped under the surface of the finish creating the streaks. This will need to be sanded back down to that layer and allowed to dry and re-coated.

Why am I seeing scratch marks in the wood?

First clean the surface and view at an angle in good light. If the scratch marks are still there, you did not effectively sand out these marks before application. Oil finishes will absolutely highlight improper sanding marks. You will have to sand them out with a courser sandpaper, properly vacuum and tack the surface, then rebuild from there. Do not add another coat until the marks are removed.

What if I want to stain this project?

Please refer to our Staining Instructions for more information and staining techniques with the Old World Concentrated Stains and Wiping Varnish. If using another brand of oil based stain, follow their curing instructions before applying Wiping Varnish over. Only mix with oil based stains/paint if tinting Sealer.

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Frequently Asked Questions

Care Instructions for Wiping Varnish

How Do I Care for a Sutherland Welles Ltd.[®] Wiping Varnish Finish?

- **CLEAN:** Use *Sutherland Welles Ltd.[®] Wood Cleaner* OR 1 cup white vinegar (5%) or ammonia to 1 gallon warm water* with a soft, clean cloth. Do not use any cleaner with a SOAP base (Murphy's Oil Soap/Bona etc.) under any circumstances, as they will leave a film that will gum up the surface of the oil. Do not use a steam cleaner. *Ratio is 1 part vinegar or ammonia to 16 parts water to scale up or down as needed.
- **REFRESH:** Apply *Sutherland Welles Ltd.[®] Tung Oil Polish* and buff with a clean dry cloth. This will help with the longevity of the finish, delaying the need to re-coat.
- **RE-COAT:** Scuff lightly with fine steel wool (#0), or sandpaper/pad equivalent. Vacuum & tack surface with mineral spirits, then re-apply finish for as many coats as needed.

Can I spot repair a Wiping Varnish finish?

Yes, you can if there is a scratch or blemish on the finish. Sometimes wiping our Wiping Varnish over a scratch will make them disappear and blend in. Blemishes or marks in the surface layer of finish will need to be removed by lightly sanding with fine sandpaper first. Sometimes the entire board will need to be refinished to have it blend in with the entire surface of a counter top or table.

Can I use a wax over your products?

If you choose to, we recommend using Teddy's Polymerized Tung Oil Paste a week after the last coat is applied. Keep in mind that wax has a tendency to "halo" or leave rings on a dining room table under hot drinks/food. It will also need to be removed before any re-coating can occur. We suggest not using wax on dining tables, counters, or coffee tables if wet drinks will be placed there. Sutherland Welles Ltd.[®] also has a Tung Oil Polish that is a great alternative to paste wax. It can be used as extra protection and as a maintenance product.

Storing Wiping Varnish

I have an unopened can of finish. How long is it good for?

With the exception of our Exterior line of products, any unopened can of our finish has no shelf life.

What's the BEST way to store an opened can of finish?

The most reliable way to store residual finish is to use the StopLossBags[®] available on our website.

Other methods:

- Use a product like Bloxygen, which is a spray of Nitrogen gas that puts a gas layer on the oil to protect the finish from oxygen in the partially full can.
- Clean the inner rim of the can well so the plug seats uniformly and firmly in place and store it inverted.
- You can also pour it into a smaller container (metal or glass) leaving little air space- make sure to label it properly. Perfect way to reuse old sauce or jam jars!
- Marbles or clean rocks can also be dropped in to take up the airspace.
- *Do NOT store excess Wiping Varnish in a LINED can! The resin will react to the chemicals on the lining.*

What can I do if my finish gels up in the can after I have opened it?

This only happens in a partially full can that has been used. If the finish is thick and gel-like, the finish has oxidized in the can. You can attempt to thin it down by adding mineral spirits or our Di-Citrusol™ and stirring it gently to see if you can coax it back into solution. You may need to pass it through a fine paint strainer to remove any small globs.

For more tips & tricks, visit our YouTube page for video tutorials:
youtube.com/@sutherlandwellesltd