

SANDING – FROM THE WOODS PERSPECTIVE

We sand wood not just to level surfaces; we sand to create an even texture on the wood's surface. This texture is the "tooth" that your stains and finishes grab on to. We have to remember that we have to sand from the perspective of your finishes and not your fingers. So let's look at sanding from the woods point of view.

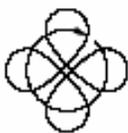
When you sand you are scratching, or cutting through the sides of the straw bundles and again exposing the hollow insides of the straws. The larger the piece of grit on your sandpaper, the deeper the cut, and the greater the number of layers of straws that are cut through. This translates into more openings and more stuff that gets in there and stays in there. A fact that end-grain or a cross grain scratch easily confirms. The deeper the cut, the darker the color.

In sanding we try to scratch an "even texture" onto the wood. This will help us obtain an even color when we stain. Here are a couple of keys items.

SANDING GUIDELINES

- Your sander or hand block should have a medium to soft pad. This will compensate for minor irregularities in the wood and will allow a more consistent contact of the grit with the surface it is sanding.
- If you sand by hand, you should duplicate your style and movements consistently from piece to piece, edge to edge.
- When using a sander, let the weight of the machine do the work, this will do much to insure a consistent depth of scratch from piece to piece.
- Pressing too hard on a random orbital sander will stop the random movement and create an orbital pattern. Swirl marks will surely follow.
- The particles on your sandpaper wear down or break off as they are used. A worn out 120 grit paper will polish a board smoother than a 400 grit paper. By replacing sandpaper before they get too worn you will maintain a more consistent scratch pattern and depth thus insuring even stain color.
- Break edges. The finish film shrinks as it dries. Sharp edges will rip the film and allow water and oil to eventually get in. Think of it as stretching a piece of Plastic Wrap over a knife blade.
- The day that you sand your wood is the day that you should stain and seal it. Simple things like changes in the humidity level can cause the wood to swell and you will lose the tooth you were trying to create.
- For the absolute best adhesion between coats, recoat pieces within 2 hours of being sanded. All pieces must be recoated within 8 hours of being sanded. In the early stages of curing, as the solvents evaporate, the film shrinks and hardens. If you wait too long before recoating, the sanding scratches may shrink and the surfaces re-harden. This reduces the tooth that you worked so hard to create.
- Washcoats usually only require scuffing with a fresh ScotchBrite or a 320 paper.
- Avoid burn thru's. Give a burn thru extra drying time before recoating. This will reduce the chance of wrinkling.
- If you are going to glaze, remember that the glaze will stick in your sanding scratches. When hand sanding observe grain direction.
- When spot sanding by hand, avoid deep localized scratches.
- Always remove sanding dust before recoating.

Random Orbital Patterns - The larger the orbit the more aggressive the cut



3/8" Orbit

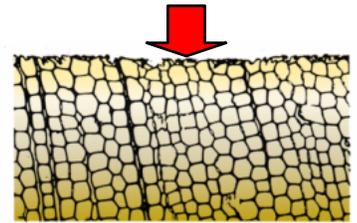


3/16" Orbit

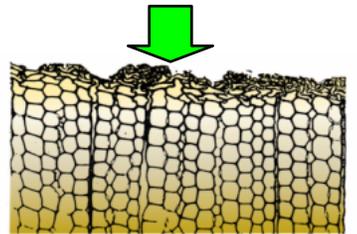


3/32" Orbit

You need a good wood profile for proper finish adhesion



Sanded with 240-grit paper



Sanded with 120-grit paper

Proper sanding gives the surface an even texture to insure uniform stain absorption



Sharp edges lead to finish failure

