



General Finishes  
www.GeneralFinishes.com

## Fundamentals of Water-Based Finishes

Taught by Matt Basford of General Finishes

**Water Based Wood Stains** have a thick, semi-gel viscosity. The new colorant pigments produce brilliant colors that resist fading.

**Colors:** 16

**Sizes:** Pints, Quarts, Gallons

### Application:

Apply a liberal, wet coat with a brush, roller, paint pad applicator, or spray. We do not recommend wiping on these stains with a cloth due to their fast dry time. As soon as you have covered your area with stain, immediately wipe off the excess with a clean soft cloth.

**IMPORTANT:** Water-based stains dry faster than oil-based products. Try to divide your project into sections. For example: top, side, front, legs. Stain each section and then wipe off excess before moving on to the next section.

**Dry Times:** This product dries in 2 hours under normal conditions. If conditions are damp and cool, it could take up to 4 hours to dry. If conditions are hot and dry, stains could be dry in 1 hour.

**Benefits:** Fast dry times, soap and water cleanup, low odor, non-flammable and low V.O.C.s. The biggest benefit is that they stain more evenly on hard-to-stain woods than any other stain on the market, which eliminates the need for pre-sealing. They can be mixed with our water-based dye stains to create custom colors. They also resist “color pulling” when applied heavily, which is a common problem when trying to achieve a darker color. This feature also allows them to be used as “glazing” stains over existing finishes, meaning you can apply them heavily and then manipulate the stain to get different effects using brushes, sponges or rags.

**Dark Colors:** If you need a darker color try:

1. A second coat of stain **AFTER** the first coat has dried.
2. Mixing the “Wood Stains” together with some “Dye Stain”
3. Use the “Dye Stain” first to darken the wood and then apply the “Wood Stain”
4. Make a toner by adding 1 part of either “Wood Stain” or “Dye Stain” to 3 parts water based topcoat. **\*\*\*PRACTICE FIRST\*\*\***

**Water Based Dye Stains** have a thin viscosity. The colorants are pure dyes. They can be applied by hand or by spraying. Dye stains can be used as a spray-no-wipe stain, mixed with our water-based topcoat to make toners, or applied as a base coat under our water-based pigmented stains. They can also be mixed with our water-based wood stains to create custom colors. Dye stains



General Finishes  
www.GeneralFinishes.com

are often used to “pop” the grain in figured woods. They are different from most dye stains because they are formulated in a unique “stain base,” not just solvent or water. A reducer is available to dilute colors or use as a stain base.

**Colors:** 14

**Sizes:** Pints, Quarts, Gallons

**Application:** Apply a liberal, wet coat with a brush, roller, paint pad applicator, or spray. We do not recommend wiping on these stains with a cloth due to their fast dry times. After applying a liberal coat, wipe off the excess with the grain using a clean cloth. If a darker color is desired, allow the first coat to dry thoroughly before applying the second coat.

**IMPORTANT:** Water-based stains dry faster than oil-based products. Try to divide your project into sections. For example: top, side, front, legs. Stain each section and then wipe off excess before moving on to the next section.

**Dry Times:** This product dries in 2 hours under normal conditions. If conditions are damp and cool, it could take up to 4 hours to dry. If conditions are hot and dry, stains could be dry in 1 hour.

**Benefits:** Fast dry times, soap and water cleanup, low odor, non-flammable and low V.O.C.s. Less color pull.

**Pre-Stain Wood Conditioner** is a sealer designed to enable soft, porous woods such as pine, aspen, poplar and cherry accept a stain more evenly. It can also be used to dilute any GF Water Based Wood Stain. Another use for Pre-Stain is as a stain base for making custom colors by adding water-based pigments, dyes or even GF paints to make pastel-colored stains.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Pre-sealing the wood will lighten the color of your stain. It’s important to test the Pre-Stain and color first. A second coat of stain may be applied after the first coat has dried to achieve a darker color.

**Sizes:** Pints, Quarts, Gallons

**Application:** Apply with a brush, paint pad applicator or by spray. Use a clean cloth to wipe off the excess with the grain. Only one coat is necessary. Allow Pre-Stain to dry 30 minutes before applying stain.

**Benefits:** Helps produce an even stain color. Dilutes colors as a clear stain base. Fast dry times, soap and water cleanup, low odor, non-flammable and low V.O.C.s