



General Finishes  
www.GeneralFinishes.com

## General Finishes 2017 Flippin' Furniture Expo

### **Classic Oil Finishes: Everything You Ever Wanted to Know**

**Presenter: Rob Szwedo, General Finishes**

#### **Preparing Raw Wood**

Sand with progressively finer grits: #100, #120 and then finishing with #150-grit sandpaper for woods such as Oak, Birch, Maple or Hickory. For woods such as Pine, Cherry or Walnut, start with #120, #150 and then finish with #180-grit sandpaper.

NOTE: Woods sanded too smooth do not stain well. Remove the dust by vacuuming, blowing, sweeping or using a dust cloth. Getting all the dust off is not critical when staining because you'll be wiping the stain off.

#### **Preparing Existing Surfaces**

Always do two things when prepping an existing finish: first, clean or degrease; second, lightly sand or buff with a fine-grit abrasive. To clean and degrease, wash the surface thoroughly using a good cleaner and degreaser, such as a 50/50 mix of denatured alcohol and water, General Finishes Furniture Cleaner, odorless mineral spirits, or Dawn dishwashing detergent and water.

After the piece has dried thoroughly, lightly abrade the surface; this is just a light sanding with either #320 or #400-grit sandpaper or finer, Scotch Brite pads, or super-fine sanding sponges. Remove dust the same as if you were sanding raw wood.

NOTE: Do not get too aggressive when abrading the surface. If you use sandpaper that is too coarse, such as #220-grit or lower, you could sand through the old finish in areas, which may result in an uneven stain color.

#### **Applicators**

- Absorbent Cloth Rags: I prefer cloths with texture.
- Heavy Duty Paper Rags or Wipes: If you use cheap paper towels, they will fall apart and will not remove the necessary amount of stain.
- Foam brushes, great for applying clear coats to flat surfaces and for applying stain quickly.
- Bristle brushes, great for getting stain into and out of cracks and corners.
- Paint Pad Applicators, for applying stain to large flat surfaces.
- Cloth covered sponges, for both apply stains and for applying liquid wipe on finishes.

#### **General Finishes Pre-Stain Wood Conditioner**



General Finishes  
www.GeneralFinishes.com

SIZES: 1/2 Pints, Quarts

This is *not* a thinned down sanding sealer. It is a sealer designed to help soft, porous woods, such as pine, aspen, poplar and cherry, accept stain more evenly.

NOTE 1: Even though Maple is blotchy wood to stain, we don't recommend using Pre-Stain Conditioner on it.

NOTE 2: Pre-sealing wood will lighten the color of your stain. It's important to test the Pre-Stain and color before doing your whole project. A second coat of stain may be applied after the first coat has dried to achieve a darker color.

APPLICATION: Apply Pre-Stain Wood Conditioner with a cloth, brush or spray. Using a clean cloth, wipe off the excess with the grain. Only one coat is necessary. Allow Pre-Stain to dry 30 minutes before applying stain, but not longer than two hours. Do not let the Pre-Stain dry overnight. The stain will not be able to penetrate and you will get very little color.

BENEFITS: Facilitates an even stain application on hard-to-stain woods.

## **General Finishes Oil Base Liquid Wood Stains**

COLORS: 15

SIZES: 1/2 Pints, Quarts

General Finishes Liquid Oil Base Wood Stains are a high-quality stain designed to add depth and richness to wood. Liquid stains will soak into the wood more than gel stains, so there is less stain to wipe off the surface. Here are the main reasons you may want to choose our liquid stains over gel stains.

1. Color
2. Liquids will apply quickly and easily on large surfaces, contoured moldings or detailed carvings.
3. Wiping off the excess is much easier.
4. Liquids can be spray applied.
5. They generally have longer open time, which means you will have more time to wipe off the excess.

APPLICATION: Apply liberally with a cloth, foam brush, paint pad applicator or sprayer. Allow enough time for the wood to absorb the color—usually less than one minute. Using a clean cloth, wipe off the excess in the direction of the wood. Allow the stain to dry thoroughly before either applying another coat or topcoat.



General Finishes  
www.GeneralFinishes.com

NOTE: When trying to achieve a darker color, do not leave a heavy coat of stain on the surface. It is possible that a topcoat applied afterward could dissolve the stain, creating an uneven finish.

DRY TIME: 12 – 24 hours before applying an oil based topcoat. If using a water based topcoat, allow the stain to dry for 48 hours. Non-toxic when fully cured.

Here are some suggestions for achieving a darker color.

- Apply a second coat of stain after the first coat has dried—usually 12 – 24 hours.
- Intermix another stain color. You can also mix liquid oil base stains with General Finishes Gel Stains to create colors.
- Apply a coat of General Finishes Water Based Dye Stain, let it dry 4 hours, and then apply the Oil Base Liquid Stain. Putting oil based stain over the water based dye stain will work fine as long as the dye stain has dried for at least 4 hours.
- Tint Arm-R-Seal Topcoat with your liquid oil base wood stain to create a toner. We suggest adding not more than 25% stain to 75% Arm-R-Seal.

BENEFITS: Low odor, easy to use, will not leave lap marks, and forgiving. Colors may be intermixed to create custom colors. GF Wood Stains can be finished with either oil based or water based topcoats. Clean up with mineral spirits or waterless hand cleaners.

NOTE: GF Oil Base Liquid Wood Stains need to have a topcoat.

### **General Finishes Oil Base Gel Stains**

COLORS: 13

SIZES: 1/2 Pints, Pints, Quarts, Gallons

Gel Stains are formulated with a combination of pigments, oils and urethanes to produce a durable, beautiful hand-rubbed finish. Gel stain is basically a thicker version of a liquid, but with more “guts.” Here are the main reasons you may want to choose our gel stains over liquid stains.

1. Color
2. Gels will stain blotchy, hard-to-stain woods more evenly.
3. It is easier to get dark, rich colors.
4. Gel stains work great on surfaces with an existing finish, fiberglass and even metal.
5. They can also be used for glazing.

APPLICATION ON RAW WOOD: Apply liberally with a cloth, brush or paint pad applicator, then wipe off the excess with the wood grain using a clean, dry cloth. Gel stains can be challenging



General Finishes  
www.GeneralFinishes.com

to wipe out of corners, spindles, or other hard-to-reach areas—a dry bristle brush works great for this. Allow the gel stain to dry thoroughly before applying another coat or topcoat.

**DRY TIME:** 12 – 24 hours. When applying heavy coats, dry times may be up 48 hours. You can test the stain by rubbing a cotton ball on finish after 24 – 48 hours. If no fiber is left, then the product is dry.

**APPLICATION OVER AN EXISTING FINISH:** *Keep in mind this is more of an art form than an exact science. Because the stain is gliding on a smooth surface instead of soaking into raw wood, it will behave more like a glaze.*

Apply the Gel Stain to a manageable area, then manipulate the stain with either a cloth, bristle brush or graining tool for the desired look. Allow the stain to dry completely before applying another coat of stain or topcoat. You will achieve better results by applying several thin coats than one heavy coat.

**DRY TIME:** It's difficult to determine an exact dry time over an existing finish; we recommend 24 – 48 hours. When applying heavy coats, dry times may exceed 48 hours. You can test the stain by rubbing a cotton ball on finish after 24 – 48 hours. If no fiber is left, then the product is dry.

Here are some suggestions for achieving a darker color.

- Apply a second coat of stain after the first coat has dried thoroughly—usually 12 – 24 hours.
- Intermix another stain color. You can also mix gel stains with General Finishes Liquid Oil Base stains to create colors.
- Apply a coat of General Finishes Water Based Dye Stain, let it dry 4 hours, and then apply the Gel Stain. Putting gel stain over the water based dye stain will work fine as long as the dye stain has dried for at least 4 hours.
- Tint Arm-R-Seal Topcoat with your Gel Stain to create a toner. We suggest adding not more than 25% stain to 75% Arm-R-Seal.

**BENEFITS:** Produce a more even color on hard-to-stain woods, such as aspen, pine, alder, cherry and maple. They also have great adhesion over existing finishes. Gel Stains do not drip or run. Gel Stains have more urethane solids in them, so they can be used as a one-can finish on low-use project only, as long as 2 or 3 coats are applied.

### **Arm-R-Seal Oil & Urethane Topcoat**

**SHEENS:** Satin, Semi-Gloss, Gloss

**SIZES:** Pints, Quarts, Gallons



General Finishes  
www.GeneralFinishes.com

Arm-R-Seal is a clear, protective, wipe-on oil finish designed for most interior woodworking projects. It will produce a hard, hand-rubbed finish that is durable and easy to maintain, making it perfect for heavily used surfaces, such as tabletops. It is resistant to water, alcohol and heat. The finish will never chip, crack or peel. Arm-R-Seal may be applied in a dusty environment and still get a smooth finish. Although not generally recommended for exterior use, Arm-R-Seal can be used on exterior doors that are protected by an overhanging roof.

**APPLICATION:** Arm-R-Seal can be applied several different ways. The most common application method is using a clean cloth. Apply a wet coat, making your final passes with the grain.

For that natural, hand-rubbed Danish oil look, apply Arm-R-Seal with a cloth or brush and, while it is still wet, sand in a circular motion with #600 grit wet or dry sandpaper. Then wipe all the excess off with a clean, dry cloth.

The final way to apply Arm-R-Seal is with a foam brush. Take care not apply too much or you could cause runs.

**DRY TIME:** 12 – 24 hours. Non-toxic when fully cured.

**BENEFITS:** Easy to use

### **Gel Topcoat Wipe-On Urethane**

**SHEENS:** Satin

**SIZES:** 1/2 Pints, Pints, Quarts, Gallons

Gel Topcoat is a clear, protective finish designed for use over General Finishes Gel Stains. It is formulated to be applied in multiple thin coats to product a soft, silky hand-rubbed finish with exceptional durability.

**APPLICATION:** Apply Gel Topcoat with a cloth or brush and wipe off the excess with the wood grain. It is important to apply feather-light, thin coats and remove the excess so no applicator marks are visible.

**DRY TIME:** 12 – 24 hours.

**BENEFITS:** Easy to use and low odor; you can apply it in dusty environments without the worry of having a rough finish.