

Soft Rub-Out for Penetrating Wipe-On Finishes

The thin topcoat typical of wipe-on finishes lacks the depth needed for a full rub-out but can still benefit from some smoothing out. This “soft” or “simple” rub-out provides it.

Tools and Materials

- Panel with three to four coats of wipe-on finish, fully cured
- 0000 steel wool, preferably in a roll
- Wax or Wool Lube
- Rags

Step 1: Begin by preparing a panel with at least three or four coats of wipe-on finish such as the panel produced in Wiping On Varnish on page 104. Allow the finish to cure for three to four days, or longer if you can.

Step 2: Cut a 10- to 12-inch section of 0000 steel wool from the roll, and refold it to a flat pad that will fit the flat of your hand. If you are using steel wool pads, unfold the pad and refold it into a shape that fits the length of your hand. Pour a dollop of Wool Lube or scoop a tablespoon of wax into the steel wool (see **Figure 5.52**).

Step 3: Begin rubbing with the grain using long strokes and firm pressure (see **Figure 5.53**). Keep the steel wool lubricated, and don't roll over any edges or you will rub right through the finish. For surfaces that aren't flat, form a matching shape of steel wool to rub out those areas. Buff off the Wool Lube or wax with a soft rag. The result is a “brushed steel” appearance, a satin finish.



Figure 5.52. Wool Lube and steel wool, together, produce a soft rub-out.



Figure 5.53. Long strokes and firm pressure produce the best results.