

Choosing a Finish for Your Wood Antique Pieces

Product	Varieties	Appearance	Durability	Application	Removal
Polyurethane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water based • Oil based • Wipe on 	Dries yellow to clear depending on brand (oil based tends to be yellow)	Very durable finish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paint brush • Roller • Spray • Lint free cloth 	Paint stripper
Varnish	Many varieties with different combinations of resin, drying oils and solvents	Dries yellow to clear depending on brand	Very durable and has UV resistance properties (good for outdoor furniture)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paint brush • Roller • Spray 	Paint stripper
Lacquer	Solvent used to dissolve lacquer may vary	Transparent	Can be scratched	Spray only (quick drying)	Lacquer thinner will dissolve
Shellac	Flakes French polish Different premixed colours	Amber/ Orange to yellow in colour depending on variety	Will dissolve in alcohol, can be scratched and will darken over time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spray • Paint brush • Roller 	Methylated spirits/ denatured alcohol will dissolve
Oil finish	E.g tung oil/ hemp oil/ boiled linseed oil	Various shades usually with yellow tinge	Durability improves with extra coats. Will need to be recoated regularly to maintain finish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paint brush • Roller • Lint free cloth 	Will need to be sanded out as oil penetrates timber
Wax	Many varieties some finished with solvents	Transparent and can be buffed to shine	Needs frequent application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brush • Lint free cloth 	Removed with solvents