

Osmo Polyx-Oil / Top Oil Finishing Schedule

Surface prep

After handplaning or otherwise getting the surfaces in good shape, hand sand lightly along the grain with P320 sandpaper (I use 3M Fre-Cut). Follow this up with a light sanding using 320 Norton 3X contour sanding pads. Make sure that any exposed end grain is free of scratches and well smoothed.

First coat

Shake or stir the container, as the wax tends to settle out. Using a disposable foam brush, apply a fairly wet coat to the entire surface. You want to use enough finish that the surface remains wet for an hour. Pay special attention to end grain (you only get one chance to get an even coat on the end grain). After a half hour, go over the surface to touch up any dry spots. After another half hour, wipe off all remaining finish. (I use cotton t-shirt material.) Make sure that all traces of liquid finish are removed. I usually use two cloths, one to remove the bulk of the finish, and another to really make sure that the surface and all the nooks and crannies are dry. The second-pass cloth becomes the first-pass cloth for the next coat, and so on.

If you're finishing an open-pore wood like oak or ash, keep an eye on it over the next several hours and wipe up any finish that seeps out of the pores. If you leave any liquid finish on the surface, it will dry hard enough to be a real pain to remove.

The wiping cloths become saturated with drying oils, and so pose a combustion hazard. Lay them out flat to dry, preferably outdoors. (I lay them out on the ground and put a brick on one corner so they don't blow away.)

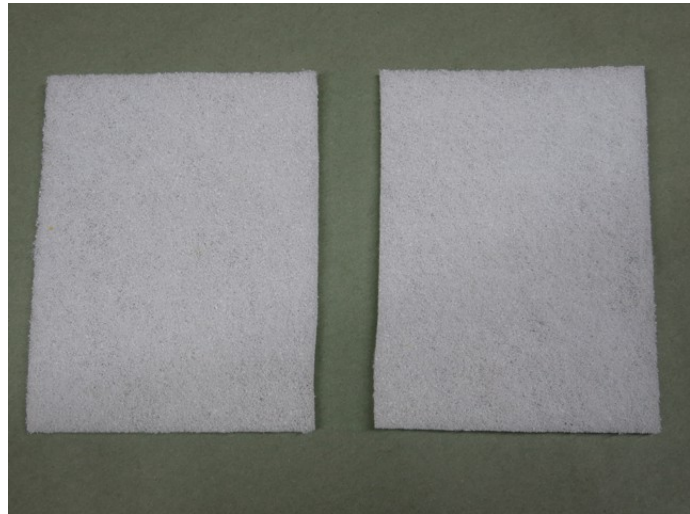
Second (and subsequent) coats

Apply additional coats spaced at least 8 hours apart. The second and following coats use very little finish; most of the effort is expended in burnishing, which I think is why the finish resembles a polissoir-ed surface.

To apply these coats, I use a white synthetic abrasive pad.



I cut the pad in half.



Then fold the half into thirds.



And then once again in half.



This gives me, in effect, an easy-to-hold burnisher with a nicely rounded working edge. For small items, I might cut the pad in half again before folding. I haven't yet used this finish on something as large as a dining table, but if I were to do so, I'd probably come up with some kind of holder that takes a full pad and saves my fingers from cramping up.

Dip the end of the pad into a little finish, then scrub the surface firmly along the grain. You'll notice that the existing cured finish largely repels the new finish; that's why you end up using so little. The pad wears fairly quickly, but you can unfold and refold it to expose new burnishing edges as you go.

Once you've given the entire surface a once-over, wipe it dry. You don't need to wait the way you did after the first coat. You do still have to worry about leaving any liquid finish on the surface. I find that three coats are usually enough, although on a flat horizontal surface I may go up to five or more.

Maintenance

The fully-cured finish stands up well to liquids like water, wine, etc. You can't leave a spill indefinitely, but you do have a few minutes to wipe it up before it leaves a mark. If you do get a mark, the finish is easy to repair; just sand out the mark and apply a few coats of fresh finish, blending the new area into the old using the finish-wetted burnisher.

You can refresh the finish at any time in the future, using the same technique as for the second coat.