

To refinish the wood in your car the following will be needed:

1. Stripper
2. Paint brushes
3. Sand paper, 400-1500 grit, wet/dry
4. Buffing wheel and polishing compound
5. Paste wax
6. Polyurethane...latex or oil based
7. Spray gun
8. And, LOTS OF TIME!

STRIPPING THE OLD FINISH

Once you have the all the trim out of the car and all of the various pieces removed from it the real work begins. You will find out the finish is very durable and stubborn to remove. The late post war cars with have a clear polyurethane finish on the wood. Over time this will crack and chip.

- ❖ Use a stripper that is made for the removal of a polyurethane coating.
- ❖ Loew's has Jado, which will remove it. It will take several coats.
- ❖ Or go to a real paint store and get Air Craft Paint Stripper.
- ❖ When doing the stripping, have good ventilation, since the stripper will reek badly and the fumes are **flammable**. No flames or sources of ignition should be around.
- ❖ Wearing a mask that is made for trapping organic vapors would be a good idea. The fumes will give you a nasty headache.

Stripping the old finish is most time consuming part of the entire job. Spread the stripping out over several days. Don't be in a hurry. Glop it on thickly and do not let it dry completely.

It will take several applications of stripper to completely remove the old finish.

PREPARATION, PREPRATION, PREPRATION!

Once you have the wood stripped, inspect it for any damage, places where the veneer is lifting, dents, dings, cracks, etc. Lifted veneer can be glued back down using yellow glue under the lifted section and using masking tape to hold it down till it dries.

The factory has done most of work for you, but you may need to sand the piece before applying the polyurethane. **Hand sand** only!

The veneer is only about twenty pieces of paper thick, ~. 019". When sanding, do so lightly. Use 400 grit wet/dry paper. The 400- grit should remove any marks you might have put in the wood when removing the old finish. Inspect the piece after you have lightly sanded it. If you see marks, use 600- grit next. This will remove the marks from the sanding with the 400-grit paper.

When you run your hand over it, it should feel like glass...very smooth no depressions or hills can be felt. Wipe the surface with either a tack rag or a cloth that is moistened with either acetone or lacquer thinner. It should be slightly damp. Do not use compressed air to blow the dust off. This will raise the grain and you will have to start all over with the sanding. Remember, you don't have much wiggle room on the sanding.

If you do sand thru the veneer, it will be very difficult to repair. You will not be able to match the grain or the color of the original.

If you have dented the veneer putting some water on the dented area can raise it. This will cause the wood grain to rise. Then you lightly sand the area. Once again after sanding wipe the area down to remove dust.

It is easier to take the time to do a careful surface prep now before the first coats of finish go on. A high gloss finish will magnify any imperfections. Much like a Mason Black finish on a car. Every dent, ding and mistake will show through for the entire world to see.

FINISHING

Now that the old finish has been removed and the wood has been sanded it is now time to apply the clear coat. The original wood pieces are finished in what's known as a "piano finish". Several layers of clear or paint are applied. Generally, every other coat is sanded with a sanding block, and or a "flattening block". The use of the latter will ensure that you have a truly flat surface and no orange peel.

- ❖ Use good quality polyurethane...either a latex or oil based.
- ❖ The only real difference is in the clean up and amount of stink.
- ❖ Latex based.... easy clean up with soap and water, low odor and it's non-flammable.
- ❖ Oil based.... Paint thinner clean up, smells and it burns.
- ❖ Both can be applied using either a brush or spray gun.
- ❖ Again, the watchword here is **PATIENCE**.

To obtain that glass smooth/mirror finish requires a lot of time and labor. There are no short cuts! The finish on a grand piano is what you are after when you are done.

Yes you can spray four coats of high gloss on the wood and be "done" and it will look like four coats sprayed on the wood.

The real secret to getting that look we all love on the wood in our cars does require a lot of elbow grease and time.

1. Apply a coat of the finish to the wood and let it dry completely, usually half a day, and then apply another coat. Let it dry for a day before you lightly sand it with 600 grit wet/dry sandpaper. With the sandpaper dry.
2. After sanding, use a tack rag to wipe the piece off before applying two more coats of the finish. Let them dry completely before you sand again, using 600 wet/dry sandpaper.
3. This time you want to soak the paper in water before sanding. This keeps the dust down, and helps to lubricate the surface, allowing you to sand much easier. Sand lightly, wipe it off and inspect it. You will see that there are spots that are shiny and others that are dull. The shiny spots are the low areas on the wood.
4. If you run your fingers over the surface you will notice that it feels like glass now. Even so, you may still feel some small bumps from dust getting stuck in the finish while it is drying.
5. After wiping the piece off, repeat steps 2 and 3 again, and again. After the third time switch to 800 grit sandpaper for your sanding. Once again, wipe it off and inspect.

6. We're looking for a uniform "dull" look on the entire surface. This means that you now have a flat surface.
7. Wipe it off and apply two more coats of finish and sand with 800 grit paper, wet. It's just like painting a car. Building up coats and sanding.
8. When you have at least 8 coats, switch over to 1000 grit paper and sand with it wet.
9. After 14 coats, sand with 1500 grit paper, wet. Inspect the piece and it should look uniform. Do not use too much pressure when sanding.

Now the fun starts...**BUFFING.**

After you have sanded with 1500 grit paper you will now use rottenstone. The 1500 grit paper will leave a multitude of fine scratches in the finish.

Rottenstone is very fine pumice and will remove the scratches from the 1500 grit paper. Again, be patience and do not use too much pressure. You do not want to go thru the finish. The surface will begin to develop a shine. Once it is uniform over the entire surface stop.

Next you will use a cloth buffing wheel and Tripoli polishing compound. You can chuck the cloth wheel in either a hand drill or use a drill press. When polishing you will want a medium speed. If you use a hand drill make sure the piece is secure or else it will be flung and damaged. Using a drill press means you will have to hold onto it tightly or the wheel will grab it and fling away from you. Either way, means the piece will be damaged and you will have to start all over again. Do little sections at a time. Just like when you buff your car.

Charge the wheel with the Tripoli by touching it on the wheel and it will begin to turn brown. A little goes a long way.

When you are buffing, keep the wheel/piece moving. Do not stay in one spot for an extended period of time. If you do, you run the risk of developing a "rut" or burning the finish. Both of which are bad and means starting over from the beginning.

Again, not too much pressure when you are buffing. Do a small section, stop and inspect. Once you see the shine starting to develop continue until the piece is done.

Now the real trick here is getting all the pieces to match in the shine department. Once you have done all, say the cap rails, lay them side-by-side and look at them. Pick one that looks the best and make the rest match it.

Do they all have the same luster and shine? If not, it's back to the buffing wheel.

Once they all are pretty much the same, apply a coating of paste wax to the pieces. Let develop a haze and wipe it off...same as waxing your car.

