

Mitch Kohanek  
The Wood Finisher  
[mitch@woodfinishing.org](mailto:mitch@woodfinishing.org)  
[www.woodfinishing.org](http://www.woodfinishing.org)

## **Furniture Restoration, Repair & Refinishing With Mitch Kohanek May 11-15, 2020**

Greetings,

Just like woodworking, refinishing/restoration can be fairly easy or incredibly complex, so it is important to keep in mind that *every wooden object is unique and so are its problems.*

### **Suggestion:**

1. Find an inexpensive “garage” sale piece of furniture to refinish. Learn the procedure of refinishing on something without having the fear of that piece coming out perfect. Make the learning process more important than the outcome of the object.
2. If you do bring your personal furniture, let’s make sure we match the project to your skill level of coloring and coating of wood

### **It is important that:**

1. Please email me pictures of what you would like to work on and an explanation of what you think needs to be accomplished. We want to make sure that your expectations can be accomplished in the time that we have regarding:
  - a. Repairing
  - b. Regluing
  - c. Refinished/restored
  - d. Spot repair
  - e. New parts
  - f. Coloring matching
  - g. Padding, brushing, spraying
2. If the object needs total refinishing, I will need to know what you expect the new finish is going to look like. Example: The new finish has to be color matched to something else. Or, the new finish does not have to match any particular item.
3. Due to the chemical nature of coatings, there isn’t any one stripper that dissolves every coating. So any materials that do not strip off will have to be sanded off.
4. **Opaque painted objects are highly discouraged** as they can be extremely time consuming to strip by hand. A lot of times pieces are painted to hide lots of defects.

### **Outline for the week**

1. Lecture: Restore or refinish?
  - a. How to determine what coating is already on the wood
  - b. Solvent testing and solvent cleaning
  - c. French polishing
2. Structural repairs
  - a. Regluing
  - b. Veneer patching
  - c. Spot repair
3. How to determine what coating is already on the wood

4. Chemistry of furniture strippers
  - a. How to use these varieties of strippers
5. Sanding procedures
6. Coloring the wood
7. Tools for applying finishes, rags, brushes, spraying equipment
8. Sealing the wood
9. Top coating the wood
10. Rubbing out the finish
11. Finishing the Finish

### **Safety and other Supplies**

1. Safety goggles, glasses or face mask used when you are stripping or pouring solvents.
2. Gloves used when stripping furniture.
3. Gloves for when you are staining your project: Nitrile gloves work well.
4. Paper dust masks when sanding.
5. Respirator, if solvents bother you.
6. Apron
7. Zip lock bags for small parts
8. Repair Touch Up supplies if you have any

### **Tools**

The tools you will need are directly related to the needs of the projects you are bringing. This is a list of potential tools that could come in handy while you are here. Bring what you can if you need them.

### **Suggested Tools - if they are needed for your project**

Hammers: Dead blow, veneer, claw  
Hand plane: block, smoothing  
Small hand saw  
Drill and drill bits  
Chisels: for repairing  
Chisels for scraping old glue out of joints  
Scrapers  
Sharpening stones  
Pliers  
Files and rasps  
Tape measure  
Square  
Razor blade or craft knife

### **Brushes**

Size and shape of brushes are determined by the size and shape of the object. You will have to determine what brushes fit your project. One size does not fit all. The choice of what coating you going to use is also a factor on what brush to use.

Marc does have a few shop brushes. You can always email me if you are not sure which ones to choose.

## Here are some suggestions for selection of brushes.

### Shellac

1. Small objects like jewelry boxes, ball and claw feet, routed edges,
  - a. Robert Simmons Sapphire brushes: ¼ inch, ½ inch, ¾ inch, 1 inch
    - i. Three shapes to choose from: Filbert, Oval or Flat. Filbert and Oval works well for curved surfaces such as a routed edge. Flat works well with flat surfaces.
  - b. Dick Blick Mega Brush #30 1 ½ inch
2. Chairs, small book cases, end tables etc
  - a. Dick Blick Mega Brush: (one of these) #30, #40, #50
  - b. And/or Grammercy Ox Hair; One and two inch (thicker brush holds more material.
  - c. The Robert Simmons brushes are also very useful for these types of objects.
3. Table tops
  - a. Grammercy Ox Hair Brush: Two or three inch
  - b. The Dick Blick Mega Golden Taklon Brush #40 or #50 Flat or Filbert works well for table tops.
  - c.

### Vendors for Brushes for Shellac

1. Dick Blick for Mega Brushes – Golden Taklon – Nylon
  - a. : <https://www.dickblick.com/products/blick-mega-golden-taklon-brushes/>
2. Dick Blick for Robert Simmons Filbert, Oval Wash and Flat Wash
  - a. <https://www.dickblick.com/products/robert-simmons-sapphire-brushes-for-watercolors/>
3. Tools for Woodworkers: Ox Hair brushes: three sizes. Thicker brushes that hold more material when brushing larger flat surfaces.
  - a. <https://www.toolsforworkingwood.com/store/item/GT-SHEBRU.XX/Ox-hair?searchterm=brushes>
4. The Brush Guys for Robert Simmons Filbert, Oval Wash and Flat Wash:
  - a. <http://www.thebrushguys.com/cgi-bin/sc-v4/proddisp.pl?client=firesaleguys&catid=1&PRID=1784>

### Suggested brushes to have for brushing Lacquer or Oil Base Varnish

There are not as many choices of shapes and sizes for Oil Base Varnish and Lacquer.

1. Brand names commonly found at paint stores: Purdy, Wooster, Corona for shellac, lacquer or oil base varnish.
  - a. Blond China bristle or an Ox-flo (a combination of china bristle and ox hair).
  - b. Grammercy Brush – Ox Hair - Tools for Woodworkers: 1 inch, 2 inch, 3 inch

**Suggested brushes for Waterbase:** Taklon (type of synthetic bristle) or Nylon

- a. Robert Simmons (name brand) sold at Michaels Art Stores, Dick Blick.
  - b. Homestead finishing: [www.homesteadfinishingproducts.com](http://www.homesteadfinishingproducts.com)
  - c. Grammercy (name brand) found at Tools for Wood Working. They have a white bristle one inch, two inch and three inch.
  - d. Dick Blick for Mega Brushes – Golden Taklon – Nylon  
<https://www.dickblick.com/products/blick-mega-golden-taklon-brushes/>
5. Dick Blick for Robert Simmons Filbert, Oval Wash and Flat Wash  
<https://www.dickblick.com/products/robert-simmons-sapphire-brushes-for-watercolors/>

## **Sanding Blocks**

Sanding blocks come in handy especially for flat surfaces. Bring what you have.

If you do not have a sanding block, consider these. I like the cork block or the felt block for dry sanding. I have two felt blocks, one for dry sanding and one for rubbing out the finish with pumice and oil. Works really well on shellac and oil base varnishes.

The rubber block is useful for wet sanding with solvents or water which is used in the final step of the finishing process on lacquer.

You can purchase these blocks at Mohawk Finishing Products: <https://www.mohawk-finishing.com/products/tools-accessories/sanding-blocks/>

## **Spraying Equipment**

1. If you own spraying equipment, bring it with you.
2. You will have access to MASW spraying equipment.

Mitch