

A fast and effective finish for woodturnings

by Thomas Irvén

The one finish I often use is a lacquer sanding sealer undercoat followed by a wax with a high carnuba content. The lacquer sanding sealer is reduced with lacquer thinner in a ratio of 2 parts sealer to 1 part thinner. This mixture is kept in a tall glass jar that can accommodate a brush inside with the lid closed.

Before applying the sealer, put a paper towel under the turning to protect the lathe bed.

Use the brush to first stir the sealer.

Brush on a very wet coat as quickly as possible, and immediately wipe off the excess sealer with a dry paper towel. Do not turn on the lathe at this point to friction dry the sealer. Lacquer sanding sealer is not a friction polish. The sealer is used to fill the pores in the wood and create a smooth surface on which a topcoat is applied. It is meant to be sanded smooth when dry and top coated with a lacquer finish.

It is not necessary to wait for the sealer to fully dry to cut it back. Use 0000 steel wool dipped in paste wax to sand the sealer coat. Dip the wool into the wax and with the lathe running, apply the wax filled steel wool to the turning. Be sure to use wax or another lubricant when doing this step if the sealer is not dry. If you use a dry abrasive on your turning before the sealer has dried, the heat will cause the sealer to be pulled from its position making nasty streaks all over the turning.

Use a paper towel to wipe off the excess wax and buff the turning.

The topcoat of wax can now be applied. This can be a paste wax or a wax stick that has a high percentage of carnuba wax. Apply the wax to the turning while it is on the lathe and buff with a piece of terry cloth. If the piece is removed from the lathe, apply the wax with a buffing wheel. Do not use a paste wax on a buffing wheel, because it can get messy.

This is not a food safe finish.