



## Why Is Prep Work Necessary?

*Although some companies promote their products as "no prep", General Finishes advocates that proper preparation is the key to a finish that will adhere well and stand the test of time.*

### 1. Prep Cleaning

- Cleaning an existing finish removes dirt, grime and many common contaminants such as oil from hands. Dirt, grime and oil prevent good adhesion, causing chipping, peeling and flaking - all signs of a failed finish.
- General Finishes recommends a 50|50 mix of denatured alcohol and water because it does not contain phosphates, is inexpensive, readily available and does not require rinsing.
- You can also use ammonia as a cleaner when using oil-based finishes. We do not recommend using ammonia with water-based finishes as it can cause the finish to blush (turn white).
- 50|50 water and bleach or 50|50 water and vinegar solutions can be used as well - be sure to rinse with a warm, wet cloth and let the project dry.
- In cases where the project has a lot of buildup, we recommend scrubbing with a detergent such as Krud Kutter or Spic and Span first, followed by a rinse, and then by the 50|50 mix of water and alcohol. Let your piece dry thoroughly.
- You can use commercial furniture cleaners such as TSP but check the label for phosphates - they will leave a residue behind that requires rinsing.

### 2. Prep Sanding

- The most critical part of finishing a piece of furniture happens **before** you open a can of stain or paint. It starts with sanding. Prep sanding an existing finish further cleans the surface, removing built up dirt, grime and oil from hands.
- Prep sand an existing finish with 400 grit sandpaper.

### 3. Be cautious of contaminants

- Contaminants from dusting sprays (such as Swiffer and Pledge) that contain silicone will also impact the appearance and adherence of a finish. Silicone is almost impossible to remove. Oil soaps (such as Murphy's Wood Oil Soap) and wax finishes can also cause adhesion failures.