

One user's method of using the Triple Mop Buffing System.

I normally sand down to 240 grit, using rotary sanding where possible to reduce visible scratch trails, maybe 320-400- on a very odd occasion but that is when getting in little details and not wanting to risk wood removal. Apply Cellulose sanding sealer, I normally diluted about 10-15%, just suits my application methods and I don't produce as many build up streaks on larger items as when I use it neat. Basically slap it on, wipe off the surplus after a few seconds and burnish with cotton rag. Do not dilute too far on the more porous woods as you need a sealer 'shell' to work on. If you use diluted sealer to 'harden-up' a softer wood then just use multiple coats as normal.

Wait a few minutes for solvents to disperse, often not longer than it takes to mount the appropriate chuck and mops. No need to bother denibbing any raised grain or minor dust blemishes or sealer streaks.

(Acrylic sealer works just as well if you don't like solvents, just extends the drying time somewhat being water based.)

Set lathe to approx 1200 rpm, spin up first mop (A) and apply just enough Tripoli to colour the mop.

Apply enough pressure to be able to feel a slight temperature rise in the wood surface and work around until any sealant streaks or raised grain blemishes have been eliminated, usually about 20-30 seconds at most for my small boxes, up to 2-3 mins. for a larger bowl.

Change to white wheel (B) and likewise just a low loading of white diamond, once again just enough pressure to feel some warmth in the wood. This removes any surplus brown carrier wax and refines the surface to add a little extra gloss.

Change to final mop (C) and apply small amount of carnauba wax to mop and go over all surfaces, with just enough pressure to melt and spread the wax, gloss level should now hit you hard.

Alternate is to wipe abraded surface with Micro crystalline wax, just the merest smear and wait 10 minutes or so for solvents to disperse and then buff.

Regarding Mop Speed, slower speeds down to 6-800 rpm. or so can be very useful for getting in nooks and crannies allowing the mop to flow in with reduced risk of snatching a piece out of the hand.

Likewise taking speed up to 1500 rpm. or so will stiffen the mops up which may be an advantage if you need to force some weaves into a particular cove or be more aggressive with the Tripoli.

At all times the piece should feel slightly warm to the touch as it passes through your hands.

Having seen some used mops I would say that many users of buffing mops apply far too much abrasive and the mops end up saturated in the wax carrier which to my mind is counter productive to the cutting action of the abrasive.

Here are some images of my well used Mops to show abrasive loading levels and a little Walnut Bowl buffing example, it's been on a sample shelf and all I've done is run 240 grit sanding disc mounted on a slow speed battery powered hand drill to remove any sealer from the patch I'd treated before.

If you wish to 'Gloss-up' an Oiled surface make sure that you have allowed enough time for the surface oil to have cured and any solvents to have dispersed otherwise you may just strip the oil coating from the surface or be faced with a blotchy finish as un dispersed solvents come to the surface. For those of you who produce natural edge and 'bark-on' pieces try finishing a sanding sealer applied bark with a bristle brush to apply a glossing wax as a complimentary finish to the buffing wheels, maybe even a domed one adapted with an 8mm bolt to fit the buffing mandrel.



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For those who produce Bowls with smaller or undercut internals where the large mops won't fit or risk catching too easily and those producing small boxes etc. then the complimentary sets of Domed Mops come into play, only difference in use is to up the RPM to increase the peripheral speed.



If you are not seeing a high gloss try and make sure you get good sealer cover, although the following is by no means essential, if you harden up the sealer surface by buffing as it dries with a cotton or poly/cotton rag you should see a polished 'shell' surface on the wood from this alone. You'll probably end up getting streaks when you first try, it's a matter of experience to catch it just right to burnish. If you get excessive streaks you have two options, blend them out with a drop of thinners on a rag or sand them out, the former's the easier; buffing big build up streaks out is a waste of time and effort, best to not have them in the first place.

You can produce a high gloss finish on un-sanded rough wood, the 'gloss finish' is largely independent of the wood preparation, however just like any finishing method or routine if you do not prepare the surface correctly and leave visible unwanted scratches deeper than the Tripoli abrasive can eliminate then 'glossing up' the surface will enhance their visibility



The mops have never been washed or cleaned in 3+ years use.



Bowl as Sanded.



Sanding sealer brushed on and burnished with the cotton cloth used to wipe off surplus. Note: - This is the point where any sanding scratches will most likely make themselves known.



Shine brought back by White abrasive clean-up and polish.



Slightly duller surface from Tripoli abrasive.

P4



After a light dressing of Carnauba Wax.

P5