



Ladies Have You Heard?

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Think about living trees when you consider the care of wood furniture. Under the finish of wood furniture is a natural material which reacts to light, heat and humidity.

Proper wood furniture care depends on how the piece is finished. Although the finish is only a few thousandths of an inch thick, it helps protect the wood underneath from stains, scratches, spills and other mishaps.

Natural wood finishes fall into

four categories: high gloss, low gloss, painted oil. Most of today's furniture finishes are in the glossy category, which means they have a durable lacquer or synthetic finish that preserves and enhances the wood grain. Paste wax offers excellent protection on frequently used surfaces and brings the shine to a high gloss. Paste waxes must be thoroughly buffed because thick, underbuffed wax will collect dust and dirt. If your furniture has a low-gloss finish, use a lower-

luster emulsified cream wax or cleaning wax.

Painted finishes that have been sealed can be cared for with paste wax or any liquid cleaning or dusting wax that will give the desired amount of shine. Read the label of any product before you use it to be sure that the wax or polish won't discolor the paint finish. Oil finishes should be washed periodically with mineral spirits, then treated with an application of boiled linseed oil. Use a pad, rub vigorously and wipe away all excess oil with a clean, soft cloth. Remember that an oil finish has no gloss.

There are three basic rules for proper furniture care: dust frequently, wax and polish as necessary; and be prepared to give first aid to furniture for minor accidents.

Dust is an abrasive and can scratch or become ground into the finish. Use a few drops of quality furniture polish on a clean, lint-free, absorbent cloth to help pick up the dust instead of just pushing it around. Always wipe with, not against, the grain.

Wax and polish furniture only as necessary. The purpose of waxing is to protect the finish, not the wood. Too frequent waxing simply waxes the wax and can dull the finish. Frequently used surfaces, such as table tops, need waxing only if they appear dull. Seldom used surfaces need rewaxing only two or three times a year. A thorough cleaning, including removal of old wax with a mild solvent such as mineral spirits, should be done at least once a year.

LAUNDERING INVOLVES TRADE OFFS

If the family laundry hasn't been coming as clean as it used to, the culprit may be energy conservation.

Water heating accounts for about 95 percent of all the energy used in washing clothes, and many people have been turning down the thermostats on their hot water heaters, and using more warm and cold water washes. While this is a smart thing to do, in some cases the water is not as warm as you think, and the clothes don't get as clean.

The problem is that actual water temperature in the home depends on the season, where you live, and even the location of the washer and how far it is from the water heater. So, warm water, a mix of hot and cold, might well be below 80° or up to 120° Fahrenheit, depending on the temperatures of the cold water

in the water line and the hot water in the water heater.

To further complicate matters, the mixing inlet valves in newer washers have reduced the warm water temperature setting from 60 percent hot/40 percent cold to 50 percent hot/50 percent cold, and in some cases even 40 percent hot/60 percent cold.

While some cottons, polyesters and other synthetics wash well and actually wrinkle less when washed at lower temperatures, some types of soil and some wash loads will always wash better in hotter water.

Using extra detergent may help, but too much detergent may lead to over-sudsing, or to poor rinsing which results in dingy looking clothes.

Your best bet, generally, is to use a warm wash, moderately increase the amount of detergent, and use all cold rinses. Since rinsing is simply a dilution process, the cold rinse is fine. If you use a hot wash, necessary with some types of soil, the cold rinse will still cut water heating costs by two thirds.



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