

Best Home-made Danish Oil Finish!

(Mike Mahoney's recommendation)

by Mike Thomas

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Are you a fan of penetrating oil finishes? Looking for an alternative to Watco? Want to save money? Well, keep reading.

During Mike Mahoney's IRD for KCWT on August 10th, and more specifically during a discussion about wood finishes, he briefly mentioned that he doesn't make a Danish Oil finish because it's too easy for anyone to inexpensively make it themselves. Now, this got my attention coming from the owner of Mahoney's Finishes, maker of *Utility Finish* but better known as *walnut oil* to most all of us who use it. And he also commented that this little walnut oil side business he has is going to provide him with a well-funded retirement. So, he probably knows something about marketing wood finishes. I blurted out "How?" (my microphone wasn't muted) and Mike said there are plenty of formulations available on the internet, just Google it, but the most common one people use contains equal parts of oil-based gloss polyurethane, boiled linseed oil (BLO) and mineral spirits. I really wanted to try this, having answered "yes" to the three questions above, so I called him the next day to confirm the formulation. Mike told me that's all there is to it and the ingredients are widely available at hardware stores, WalMart and the big box home improvement stores.

I checked my shelf of finishing products and found that all I needed was some oil-based gloss polyurethane so off to Home Depot I went. I returned to compound the ingredients then bottle, label and distribute 8 ounce "samples" to some other members interested in trying it. Those that I have heard back from say they really like this finish and I do too. It has the same consistency and easy application like the original Watco formulation. It dries quickly into the wood leaving a smooth hand-rubbed satin sheen. Look at the before and after photos below of a walnut platter that I just completed with this finish. The cost was also about one third to half of what I paid for my last quart of "reformulated" Watco Danish Oil (\$16.50) in June of this year. Cost range is based on purchasing gallon or quart quantities of the ingredients.

If you want to make a quart of this finish to try for yourself, simply combine 11 ounces of each ingredient below in a quart container (32 ounce) and stir.

Ingredients:

- Oil-based clear gloss Polyurethane - 1/3 total volume
- Boiled Linseed Oil (BLO) - 1/3 total volume
- Mineral Spirits - 1/3 total volume



Directions: Use this just like you would use Watco Danish Oil Finish on any clean bare wood interior surface sanded smooth with dust removed and adequate ventilation.

1. Shake container thoroughly.
2. Flood surface using a brush or clean lint-free rag and apply additional finish to areas that absorb all the liquid. Keep the surface wet and allow to penetrate for 15 minutes.
3. Reapply and work the finish deep into pores then allow it to penetrate for an additional 15 minutes.
4. Wipe surface completely dry with a lint-free rag, old tee shirts work well. This is important because otherwise it can dry tacky, look glossy and be difficult to remove.
5. Allow to dry for 8-10 hours before use. Dry time varies with temperature, humidity and ventilation. A second coat may be applied to increase the sheen and depth of the finish in the wood, if desired. Wait 72 hours before applying a topcoat, like polyurethane, if desired.

Clean up with mineral spirits or paint thinner. Apply a fresh coat as needed for maintenance or to repair surface scratches and remove minor stains. Burnish affected area with fine steel wool or 220 grit sandpaper before application.

Caution: This is a penetrating oil finish that cures by generating internal heat. Rags, steel wool or other waste soaked with this finish may spontaneously combust if improperly discarded so after use unfold and lay rags flat to dry or place in a sealed water-filled metal container for disposal. Use common sense as you would with any of the ingredients and keep out of the reach of children and don't take internally, etc.

Good luck and let me know how you like this finish and if you have any questions. If you don't like it, tell Mike Mahoney.

