



**TIMBER FURNITURE REPAIR &  
RESTORATION HANDBOOK FOR MINOR  
DAMAGE & TOUCH UPS**

**STEP BY STEP  
INSTRUCTIONS**



**WHAT PRODUCTS  
TO USE**



**HOW TO USE  
REPAIR PRODUCTS**



**MINOR REPAIR &  
RESTORATION  
TIPS**

• By Chris Green •

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**Disclaimer: These tips and instructions are provided as a guide only and results obtained may vary depending on the expertise of the individual. If you are not confident in carrying out the following procedures call in a professional furniture repairer to carry out the job for you.**

# Timber Furniture Repair Handbook

## for Minor Repairs & Touch ups

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## IDENTIFYING WOOD FINISHES

Knowledge of finishes is very handy when you are working with wood.

**Basically there are five (5) different groups of clear finishes. These are:**

- **Traditional French Polish** – A combination of shellac, linseed oil and spirit applied with a cloth by hand. Most pieces over 50-60 years old would be finished this way or a spirit varnish may have been used which works in much the same way as French Polish.
- **Wax** – Often a combination of different waxes such as carnauba and beeswax. This is not technically a finish on wood, but is commonly used to give the rustic country look or to seal and finish hand painted or raw wood.
- **Oil** – Oiled finishes are more popular with European finishers. Oils such as tung, teak, almond, linseed and Danish oils are amongst the most commonly used.
- **Varnishes** – Either based on natural oil or polyurethane resins. Not as common as lacquers, their use began in the 1950's. The finish is high gloss, satin or matt.
- **Lacquers** – There are two types of basic lacquer. Pre-catalysed or acid catalysed cellulose lacquer. Most modern furniture is finished with one of these types of lacquer. They are very durable and require less upkeep than traditional finishes, but are hard to repair when damaged.

**The following table will help you decide which type of finish your furniture has.**

TYPE OF FINISH	APPEARANCE	FEEL	MAINTENANCE
	WAX	Soft, silky sheen.	Finish feels waxy, smears and scrapes off with fingernail.
OIL	Dark, rich slightly shiny surface.	Feels smooth. Will not smear or scrape off. Soaks into wood.	Re-oil every couple of months.
FRENCH POLISH SPIRIT VARNISH	Very high gloss normally. May be waxed to soften.	Only scratches when scraped. No flaking.	Dust and clean. Wax bi-monthly to keep protected.
POLYURETHANE VARNISH	Gloss, satin or matt. May yellow over time.	If scraped, forms small flakes and dust.	Dust and wipe regularly. Wax polish if protection required.
NITRO CELLULOSE LACQUER	Gloss, satin or matt finish.	If scraped, forms white dust.	Wax polish every 2-3 months. Wipe down and dust regularly.
CATALYSED LACQUER (PART MIXTURE)	Very hard, semi to high gloss finishes.	If scraped, forms white dust.	Wipe down and dust regularly. Keep clean.

## VIEWING A PIECE OF FURNITURE – THE RESTORER’S CROUCH

Evaluating and "looking over" a piece of furniture correctly will allow you to make the right decisions and enable you to obtain a professional finish.

The furniture restorer’s skill with his hands would be useless without the help of his “trained eye”. He must rely on accurate input in a well-lit area to produce a professional job - for the home restorer it is no different. The first requirement in working with furniture is to have a well-lit room with the natural light and shadow.

To view the furniture properly requires something called the “Restorer’s Crouch”. This is a quirky little trick for the amateur and professional alike. Actually it is as simple as bending the knees and circling an object to obtain light reflection and shadow on different areas at different angles.

This action allows you to see any excess wax build up that needs to be polished, a flat spot that needs touching up, fading, scratches, or the correct shade of colour matching; or simply just to bend down and enjoy looking at your prized piece!

It is best if you can accomplish repairs with furniture in its normal position in the room. This allows you to blend the colours to match the wood tones as normal light and surrounding colours from nearby drapes, walls and other objects that affect them.

## STEP BY STEP INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMMON REPAIRS

This easy to use guide will enable you to use the Aussie Furniture Care product range to fix the most common household accidents and mishaps. Just look up the appropriate section and apply that particular advice.

The very first stage of the repair process is to decide on two things. First, is the piece in need of cleaning in order to see its real condition or does it just need waxing to bring its natural patina and lustre back to life?

Let’s assume that you have decided to clean your piece of furniture. Here’s how it’s done:

### STEP 1: CLEANING A PIECE OF TIMBER FURNITURE



First take the [Aussie Furniture Wax Clear](#) and a pad of ["0000" Steel Wool](#) and dab some of the wax thinly onto the steel wool pad. Take the pad in the palm of your hand and keep your palm as flat as possible, begin with a light sanding type motion to rub the piece being cleaned.

**Go with the grain, not in a circular motion. Take care not to rub too hard in one spot for too long! NEVER use your fingertips to hold the pad when you are rubbing.**

Before the wax dries, use some polishing cloth and wipe the area that you have rubbed with the steel wool clean.

(If the built up wax and dirt is very thick, a soft cotton rag that is slightly dampened with mineral turpentine can be used to wipe over the surface. This will remove years of dirt and wax. Then follow up with another clean cloth to pick up the softened old wax, grime and dirt). Allow the surface to dry and then proceed to re-wax the surface.

**STEP 2: WAXING AND BUFFING A PIECE OF FURNITURE**





Once again we take the [Aussie Furniture Wax](#) or some [Aussie Quick Polish](#) and with some pure cotton polishing cloth, rub in a small amount of wax this time using a the circular motion, then finishing with the grain.

Keep rubbing the wax over the surface to make sure that it has spread in a thin even layer. The motto is **“two thin layers are better than one thick layer,”** then wait until the wax has dried.

It will make a squeaking sound when you rub your finger on the surface. Do sections at a time and work all the surface legs, sides, tops and doors before you start to buff using a *clean* wax free [cotton cloth](#).

By cross grain buffing you will create a lovely lustre to the finished surface.

Please refer to the diagrams on how to make a bun and how to do leg and turned areas.

<p><b>DIAGRAM 1:</b></p>		<p><b>DIAGRAM 2:</b></p>
<p>Making the cloth into a bun.</p>		<p>How to use a cloth around turned and leg areas.</p>
		
<p>Fold the ends into the centre to form a pad.</p>		<p>Rap the cloth around the turner piece of wood. Cross the cloth over, pull each end and slide the cloth around the turned piece.</p>

## FILLING GOUGES IN A STRAIGHT CORNERED PIECE

You will need the following to do this repair:

- [Wax Putty Bricks](#)
- [Wax Stick Applicator](#)
- [Polishing Cloth](#)
- [Furniture Wax](#)



The special skills in this section relate to the use of a Wax Applicator and restoring a sharp 90-degree angle. This type of mend is often more applicable to corners of pieces such as picture frames, chairs and mantel pieces and dressing table chair legs.

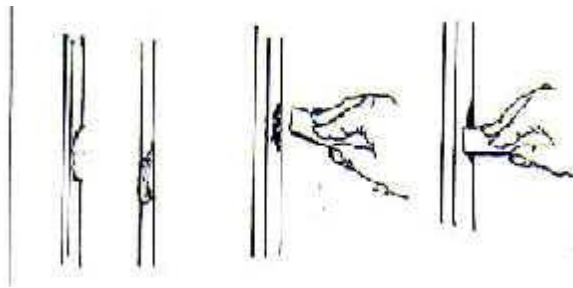
First follow all the steps set out in the wax Stick Application package. Remember to hand mould the wax into the appropriate shape (a rectangle this time) before you push the wax into the damaged area.

Use the applicator edge as a knife to slice the edge to 90 degrees. Carefully scrape the applicator over one of the flat surfaces, being particularly careful not to dig into the wax. Use the existing surface as a guide, keeping the applicator at the correct angle (Diagram 3).

Now run it along the next side of the repair. Repeat this process until all the excess wax is removed. Allow the wax to harden (approx. Five minutes). Then apply Aussie Furniture Wax to smooth and blend level of shine.

**Ensure not to push the repair that you have done out of shape.**

### DIAGRAM 3:



## REPAIR OF HOLES & CHIPS

**Note: You will need the same tools as to repair gouges.**

### PREPARATION:

Wax Putty Bricks work best when the hole or gouge allows the wax to be pushed right into the area to grip permanently. If the hole has flared edges or has wood fibres sticking up above the flat surface, take a small pointed knife and use it to even up the area around the hole.

To choose the correct colour Wax Putty Bricks, take two or three sticks that are close to matching and place them around the gouge or hole. When doing a repair choose a stick that is identical to the colour or choose one slightly darker rather than lighter. (Darker will blend better than lighter).

Assuming that you have a perfect or close colour match for the furniture that is being repaired, take the chosen stick and soften it by placing it in your pocket. (Make sure that the pocket is lint free). Leave in pocket for approx. 5 to 10 minutes. It may be necessary to combine colours to match the specific grain.

## FILLING A HOLE IN A FLAT SURFACE

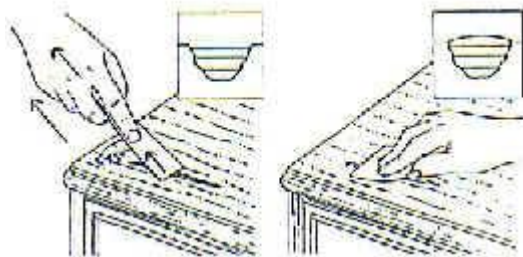
Once the correct colour putty brick has been chosen, take a knife and scrape off a piece of wax slightly larger than needed to fill the hole. ALWAYS scrape the stick away from your body, as the blade of the knife is quite sharp.

Next, push the wax into the hole with your thumb, making sure that you over fill the hole. This will allow you to scrape the excess to a flat finish.

Take the Wax Stick Applicator and begin on the far side of the mend, scraping toward you. Always keep the applicator at a 30-45 degree angle to avoid scratching the surrounding surface. Repeat this step if necessary. A light finer press may be necessary to reposition the wax.

Be careful not to depress the wax lower than the surrounding wood. The job is now finished and ready to be waxed as explained.

**PLEASE REFER TO DIAGRAM 4 BELOW.**





## FILLING GOUGES AND CHIPS IN A TURNED OR LATHED PIECE

The initial process of choosing the correct wax putty brick is the same as mentioned previously, but the application is somewhat different

After choosing the wax putty bricks scrape off a large piece of wax. This time make sure it is very soft by moulding it between your thumb and forefinger.

Once it is soft, approximate the shape of the gouge by rolling and kneading the wax.

Now fit the wax into the gouge and use the applicator along the grain of the wood, being careful not to dig the applicator into the hole.

Most of the excess wax should be removed this way, so you may need to repeat the process several times.

Once you are sure that the wax has cooled and hardened, take the [polishing cloth](#) with [Aussie Furniture Wax](#) to remove excess wax.

## FILLING LARGE CRACKS AND VERY DEEP HOLES

There are cases where the Wax Putty Bricks may be slightly difficult or too time consuming to use. This is where you can apply a special tradesman's trick!

**\*NOTE:** If the crack is likely to keep enlarging, you may need to undertake a cabinetmaker's repair. Simply take the putty bricks and place it in a metal or ceramic dish. Boil some water in a pot and place the dish containing the stick over it to melt the wax. When the stick has melted, take the dish out carefully, and pour the molten wax into the crack.

Next, take the Wax Stick Applicator and scrape along the repair removing the excess wax and allowing drying.

Use the [Aussie Furniture Wax](#) with a cotton cloth and rub the area around the repair to remove any excess, and then wax the whole area.

## FIXING SCRATCHES



Here are some guidelines so you can work out if a scratch can be fixed with a Scratch Fix Pen or not.

- Work out how deep the scratch is.
- If it's a surface scratch that hasn't broken through the lacquer finish then a [Scratch Fix Pen](#) probably won't help.
- If the scratch has broken through the lacquer and you can see raw wood then the scratch fix pens should do the job.



**Keep in mind the scratch fix pen is not a filler** it only colours the damage, so if the scratch or nick is deep you may need a filler. If that's the case refer to Repair of Holes & Chips on Page 7 of this repair guide to workout what you'll need and how to fix it.

## MATCHING PARALLEL GRAIN –TWO TONES

This refers to the colour toning of the mending job to match an existing grain structure. Quite often, a piece of wood possesses more than one colour in its grain. So when you want to fill this area, mix more than one shade. Always begin with the lightest shade of colour and give the entire repair a general base coat.

Next, mix the second colour required and brush along the grain across the wax repair. Use your fingertips to blend the harsh definite edges that you may have applied. This is called feathering. Now step back and have a good look at the result.

**Note:** Have a general over scan of the job, not only a specific intense look.

If you are not satisfied with the job, use ["0000" Superfine Steel Wool](#) and lightly buff the area back and try again. Allow drying for 10 minutes before waxing.

## HANDY HINTS

- Always unroll [Steel wool](#) and tear down the grain of the metal and roll into balls to prevent the metal fibre cutting your hands.
- Always do repairs when the light in the room is at its brightest with natural light.
- Repair furniture in the position it normally sits. E.g. chairs on the floor, sideboard up against the wall.
- Clean brushes in methylated spirits and also clean any Shellac or Polish off your hands with a methylated spirits impregnated cloth.
- When you have a small pile of rags that have been used with an accelerant (methylated spirits, shellac, lacquer, polyurethane or turpentine) always dry each rag separately on concrete in the shade, away from pets and children.
- A pile of rags that have been used with an accelerant can self-combust and start fires through fast evaporation when left in a pile.
- Always put a drop sheet down around the area that you are working in and place a clean cover over any upholstered area making sure no wax or colours are split on to the area.

**Disclaimer: These are provided as a guide only and results obtained may vary depending on the expertise of the individual.**

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE OF REPAIR AND TOUCH-UP PRODUCT RANGE

### SCRATCH FIX PENS

- Felt tipped, oil based staining pen which are ideal for disguising light scratches on wooden surfaces. There are five colours in the range which will suit most timber colours.
- To use, place cap over base of tube during use. Lightly stroke Scratch Fix Pen in the direction of the wood grain over the scratched area. Immediately remove any excess with a clean, soft cloth. Repeat application to obtain a darker finish. Replace cap firmly after use.
- Allow surface to dry completely (about 5 minutes) before waxing with Furniture Wax or Quick Polish to seal and protect the repair.
- [Scratch fix pens](#) will not cover lacquered surfaces. The Stain will only take to surfaces where the scratch has broken through the lacquer finish and the raw timber is exposed.

### WAX PUTTY BRICKS

- The [Wax Putty brick](#) is a synthetic wax with a tinted base which does not contain Beeswax. It comes in a range of 20 timber tones.
- The Wax Putty Brick can be used for filling small holes, nail holes, chips, knot holes, splits, dents and cracks in all types of timber furniture, timber floors, skirting boards and other timber related products used internally.
- The Wax Putty Brick can be re-coated with any type of lacquer, paint or varnish. They can also be coated with the Scratch Fix Pen as well.

### TWO WAYS TO USE THE WAX PUTTY BRICK

- Push the Wax Putty Brick down heavily on the area to be filled. Fill the area by rubbing the wax across the blemish and remove the excess by using a plastic scraper. Lightly sand and re-coat or simply polish off with a soft cloth.
- Break small pieces of wax off stick and mould to shape with fingers and then push into split, hole or damaged area.

**Wax Putty Bricks are not intended to repair severe damage to furniture, such as chipped corners and deep indentations**

#### **The Wax Putty Brick**

- Does not require any drying time.
- Can be used in between coats of lacquer.
- Has an indefinite shelf life.



## FURNITURE REPAIR CRAYONS

The Crayons are designed to be used only on small, fine splits, scratches, nail holes etc. They cannot be used on large splits or cracks, as they will crumble.

**Do not melt the Furniture Repair Crayons.**

The [Furniture Repair Crayons](#) are suitable for Timbers, Veneers and Melamines.



## HOW TO USE REPAIR CRAYONS:

To repair a scratch or split, just press firmly on the crayon and rub in a backward and forward motion until the wax becomes level. (Always rub across the scratch or split, not along it, as the wax will just keep removing itself as you rub. When you rub across the scratch or split, it grabs the wax and pushes it down into the damaged area). When the wax is level, rub lightly with a soft cloth to remove any excess off the surface of the timber.

## FURNITURE WAX

- **Furniture Wax Brown:** This is used for furniture ranging in colour from light brown to dark brown. It will enhance the colour and depth of the grain of the timber. It can also be used for filling fine splits and cracks in the timber surface, as the wax will dry to a point where it's not hard but will still be quite firm.

Furniture Wax Brown will not change the colour of the surface

- **Furniture Wax Black:** This is used for furniture ranging in colour from dark brown to black. It can also be used to fill fine splits and cracks.

**It should not be used on light to medium coloured timber**, as it has quite a strong pigment in it which can change the colour of the timber.

Ideal for imported Asian and distressed furniture.

Will help to cover some scratches and imperfections in the finish.

- **Furniture Wax Clear:** This wax can be used on any coloured timber to give a protective finish.



## HOW TO USE FURNITURE WAX:

- Take a small amount of wax on a clean lint free cloth and rub in a circular motion, finishing with the length of the grain.
- Let this dry until it squeaks when rubbed across the surface with finger tips.
- Buff off with another lint free soft polishing cloth finishing with the length of the grain.
- **NOTE:** It is better to use two thin coats rather than one thick coat.

## FURNITURE REVIVER

[Furniture Reviver](#) is excellent for putting some life back into furniture that is looking a bit “Tired” and “Dry” or has light surface scratching that has not broken through the lacquer.

[Furniture Reviver is available in 250ml Bottle.](#)

**Warning:** There are many different “furniture revivers” on the market and it’s important to make sure you choose the correct type as some are only suitable for dark wood furniture and some are OK for use on any colour wood furniture light or dark.



## HOW TO USE FURNITURE REVIVER

One of the best ways to remove light hazy surface scratching or to rejuvenate wood furniture is with a “0000” Superfine Grade steel wool and a furniture reviver.

Apply the reviver to the surface with the superfine steel wool and spread along the furniture going in the same direction as the grain, “never in a circular motion” always make sure the that surface and steel wool are well lubricated with reviver at all times.

If you are attempting to move light surface scratches rub the surface gently until you see the scratches disappear and then stop and buff off any excess reviver and give the furniture a polish with a good quality beeswax.



The same procedure applies when rejuvenating a “dull” or “tired” looking piece of furniture.

**Handy Tip:** Before starting any job test all products and procedures if possible in an inconspicuous area first, to make sure there are no adverse reactions then proceed with caution.

**Never leave cloths or steel wool that have been in contact with revivers on the surface of your furniture after you’ve finished, as reactions and damage can occur in a very short space of time.**

## Resources

[Scratch Fix Pens](#)

[Wax Filler Sticks](#)

[“0000” Super Fine Steel Wool](#)

[Furniture Reviver](#)

[Furniture Repair Kits](#)

## About the Author

Chris Green the owner of Furniture Care Products has been involved in the furniture industry since 1980 in a number of areas including 20 years Furniture Transport & Logistics, 20 years in selling furniture care and floor care products as well as upholstery cleaning, fabric protection application and leather cleaning.

During his time in the furniture transport business he discovered that customers were having a hard time getting the right advice the right care products to look after their new furniture.

In 1998 Chris started Superior Furniture Care and built the business by sourcing a range of premium quality timber furniture care and repair products. Over time the range expanded to leather care, fabric care, floor protection and floor care products.

In 2013 the business was split into two separate businesses. Aussie Furniture Care for the product range and Superior Furniture Care for the fabric protection, upholstery cleaning & leather cleaning services.

With his knowledge and experience Chris has been able to build up a range of top quality products that he has personally used and tested. No products are added to the range unless they adhere to a strict criteria.

All products must do what they say they will do, they must be safe, environmentally friendly and must produce excellent results for customers.

Every product in all ranges come with a 100% Money Back Guarantee

The [Furniture Care Products](#) website was created in 2005 and since then Chris has also written 6 ebooks available for Free download on the site as well as numerous how to videos which are also available to view on this site.

