

Pen Finish Dipping Method

By Les R. Elm © 2012

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I have seen and experimented with many different methods used to apply a flawless finish to a wooden pen barrel. This is one of two methods I use.

The biggest problem with using a "Dipping Method" is to avoid getting a build up of finish on the end of the blank. To avoid this problem I use a "Wicking" method that totally removes any finish build up on the ends of the blank.

The Water based polyurethane dries much faster than the Oil based Polyurethane. *For these instructions I will be using Water Based Polyurethane.*

Materials:

- MINWAX Polyurethane Types:



Water Based Oil Modified Clear Gloss



Oil Based Clear Gloss Polyurethane



Wipe-On Oil Based Polyurethane



Oil Free Extra Fine Steel Wool

- Wooden Dowel - Sized to insert into pen barrel tube
- Play-Doh
- Blue Shop Towel
- 400 Grit Sand Paper
- Oil Free Extra Fine Steel Wool Equivalent to #000/0000
- A tall, small diameter plastic or glass container

Preparing the Pen Barrel:

1. Overturn the barrel 0.001" (1 Mil) to allow for the 4-6 coats of polyurethane build-up to match the pen fittings.
2. With the lathe running at 300-400 RPM sand the wooden pen barrel with 400 grit.
3. With the lathe off sand the blank horizontally with 400 grit and clean the blank with a tack cloth or compressed air.
4. With the lathe running at 2000-2500 RPM buff the blank with oil free extra fine steel wool and clean the blank with a tack cloth or compressed air
5. With the lathe off rub the blank horizontally with the oil free extra fine steel wool and clean the blank with the tack cloth or compressed air.

Finishing the Pen Barrel: *Using Water Based Oil Modified Polyurethane*

1. Fill the tall plastic container with enough MINWAX to cover the blank when dipped
2. Insert a wooden dowel into one end of the blank
3. Plug the opposite end of the blank with a small piece of Play-Doh



Wooden Dowel Inserted Into Blank End



Play-Doh



Play-Doh Plug in Opposite Blank End

4. Lay out a folded piece of blue shop towel
5. Holding the dowel, dip the blank into the container of MINWAX to cover the full length of the blank



Dipping Blank Into MINWAX

6. Remove the blank from the MINWAX, hold over the container and let some of the excess MINWAX run off the end of the blank.
7. Place the end of the blank onto the folded blue shop towel to “Wick Off” the MINWAX as it runs down to the end of the blank.
8. Continue to move the blank end to dry areas to all allow the MINWAX to “Wick Off” the end of the blank.



Wicking MINWAX From Blank End

9. Once there is no more “Wicking” onto the blue shop towel, rotate the blank horizontally for a few minutes then lay horizontally to dry for minimum of 20-30 minutes depending on ambient humidity.
10. After the blank has dried, rub down the blank lengthwise with oil free extra fine steel wool equivalent and clean with tack cloth or compressed air.
11. After 2-3 coats, remove the dowel and the Play-Doh, reverse the blank, install the dowel and plug the opposite end with Play-Doh. This will allow for an even thickness of finish along the whole length of the blank.
12. Repeat steps 5 thru 11 to apply as many coats of MINWAX desired.
13. Allow to dry 24 hour after final coat.
14. Clean up the blank ends.

Finished Results:



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Black Palm Gun Metal Click Ballpoint



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Stabilized Manitoba Maple/Gold Longwood Click Ballpoint