

# How to Finish a Floor with Pure Tung Oil

The finish technique can be used in many applications such as decks, concrete floors and porous surfaces.

## Preparation

The biggest key to application of a finish is preparation. The surface should be free of oil, dirt, grease and any other contaminants. [Pure Tung Oil](#) can not be applied over another type of finish. It can only be applied to a previous coat of [Pure Tung Oil](#).

If the surface is not clean or has recently been stripped of its finish; it should be cleaned with [TSP](#). [TSP \(Trisodium phosphate\)](#) is a powdered heavy duty cleaner that will leave the surface free of contaminants. If you have a wood surface, which is old, and case hardened, it should be scuff sanded lightly with 150-grit sandpaper, to open up the wood to receive the oil. Sanding with too fine sandpaper will case harder the surface.

## Finishing

Following is the technique, which I found to work well, although there are many others who may have variations which work just as well.

The objective with [Pure Tung Oil](#) is to saturate the surface with as much oil as fast as possible to get maximum penetration but without leaving a film build on the surface.

## Day 1

For the first coat thin the [Pure Tung Oil](#) 1 to 1 with thinner. Thinner can be mineral spirits (paint thinner), [citrus solvent](#) (all natural thinner) or turpentine. I prefer not to use Naphtha, as it seems to dry too fast. If the surface seem to be very hard and non-absorbent, you can thin the oil down even more. 1 to 1 is the ratio I found works best for the first coat. You can use a brush or apply the oil with a sponge mop wrapped with old nylon stockings. The nylon stops the mop from tearing upon the floor. On floors start at one corner and work your way to the other side with a liberal application of the one to one mix.

If the room is fairly large you will notice most of the oil soaked in where you started. Go back to the beginning and apply another coat. Continue to apply the oil from beginning to end in this fashion. You will do this until you have a uniform glossy surface for 20 to 40 minutes. If the room is not large, you should wait 10 to 20 minutes between applications. The [Pure Tung Oil](#) should stand on the surface for 20 to 40 minutes and stay glossy without dry spots appearing. You may have to apply 3 to 7 coats of oil one on top of the other until it stays glossy.

After all coats are applied and you waited 20 to 40 minutes you are now ready to wipe down the surface. Wipe all excess oil from the surface with lint free "T-shirt" type material. Hang rags out side to dry. Allow floor to dry over night.

## Day 2

For the second application on the following day, mix a ratio of 2 parts [Pure Tung Oil](#) to 1 part thinner. If the wood is very dense and non absorbent you may find the 1 to 1 ratio will work best for all the coats. If it is an old floor and absorbing a lot of oil on the second day, the 2 part to 1 part thinner will work better. The ratio of thinner to

oil can be varied, use your own judgement. Multiple thinner coats are always better than a few thick coats.

[Pure Tung Oil](#) works by oxidation with the air and polymerizes. So you want to get as much oil in the floor as soon as possible, but you do not want to apply the Pure Tung Oil with out thinning. It takes too long to dry and will sit on the surface and dry leaving a frosted appearance. Pure dry tung oil left on surfaces will also scuff leaving white marks like dry skin. So always thin Pure Tung Oil in floor applications and wipe off the excess.

Using the 2 parts [Pure Tung Oil](#) to 1 part thinner, apply the same way as the first application with a brush or sponge mop. Apply the oil in several coats one after another till you get a uniformly glossy surface that stays glossy for 20 to 40 minutes. After the waiting period wipe the oil off the surface, with a "T-shirt" type material. When wiping you do not need to scrub the surface. Just gently and evenly wipe excess oil from the surface.

### **Day 3**

When doing the third application, use a mixture of 2 parts [Pure Tung Oil](#) to 1 part thinner. Apply same way as before. After waiting period wipe down with "T-shirt" like material.

You will probably start to notice that the floor did not absorb much oil. Maybe one or two coats before it stayed glossy for 20 to 40 minutes. The floor is pretty well sealed at this point. You can however apply another coat, the following day in the same fashion if necessary. When the floor does not want to absorb any more oil you are done.

At this point the floor should dry for 7 to 10 days before you can walk on it with soiled shoes. During this time you can put down wax paper to walk on the floor. Do not use cardboard, newspaper, paper or plastic. Wax paper will allow the floor to breath and dry. If you absolutely must move furniture onto the floor before it is dry, nail plastic furniture glides to the bottom of the feet. With these on the bottom of the feet and the end grain of your wood furniture legs will not absorb the oil from the floor and leave a mark.

The [Pure Tung Oil](#) will dry to a matte flat finish and look as though there is almost no finish at all. You will find however that water spills bead like a waxed car on the surface and do not absorb. In high traffic areas such as doorways you may want to do a maintenance coat once a year. Use thinned down oil 1 to 1 with a nylon stocking bunched up to apply a thin coat over night or for the weekend if possible.

[Pure Tung Oil](#) will provide a deep rich color to wood floors. It does not however, provide a gloss or even semi-gloss finish. To make a semi gloss surface you would need to wax the surface or buff when the floor is dry. Any type of oil base finish can go over [Pure Tung Oil](#) at a later date.

### **Care and Maintenance**

To clean your floors after the finish is cured a mild detergent such as "Ivory Dish Soap" or "Simple Green" will work. I am not fond of Murphy's oil soap as it seems to break down a finish over time. Stay away from harsh oil base cleaners and ammonia. You can use a "Scotch Bright" pad to clean tough spots every so often but try to

avoid abrasion unless necessary. To clean black heel marks or paint splatter, "Goof Off" or "Opps" work well. These products will not effect the cured finish. If you find you do scrub the finish too hard somewhere, just do a quick touch up with Pure Tung Oil thinned 1 to 1 with thinner on a nylon pad or stockings. Then let it dry for a day.

### **Calculating Usage**

Here is a way to calculate how much Pure Tung Oil and Citrus Solvent you may need to finish the floor. This formula will assume you are cutting the oil one to one with solvent. Each gallon of oil will cover approximately 400 square feet undiluted. By diluting the oil one to one with solvent, it will cover 800 square feet. In our example we will assume you have 500 square feet to cover.

Day one 5 coats x 500 = 2500

Day two 3 coats x 500 = 1500

Day three 2 coats x 500 = 1000

Total 5000

5000 divide by 800 = 6.25

This means you would need 6.25 gallons of Pure Tung Oil and 6.25 Gallons of solvent.