

# Woodworking Tips



## Milk jugs make handy brush cleaners

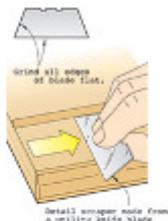
Recycling programs today cart away most of our empty plastic milk jugs, but you may want to hang on to a few to take advantage of this tip. Cut a large opening in the front of the jug and put solvent in the bottom to clean brushes. When your hands get slippery from paint or solvent, the jug with its handle proves easier to carry around and empty than a large metal coffee can.



## "Canned" applicator finishes small pieces

Like other woodturners, I use a lot of different finishing materials on my projects--sanding sealer, oils, and stains. My small turnings don't require much finish, so until recently, I was spending more time cleaning applicators than applying finish.

Now, to save time (and finish), I keep a tied-off ball of cotton cloth cut from an old T-shirt in each can of finishing material. I just grab the cloth from the bottom of the can with wooden tongs, daub on the finish, then drop it back in the can, where it stays until I need it for the next bowl or candlestick.



## Knife blade gets you through close scrapes

Sometimes you need an extra-small scraper to clean up an area where a typical cabinet scraper just won't fit. Here's a quick answer to that problem. Remove an old blade from a utility knife and grind all the edges flat. You'll end up with a burr on all four edges. The two short edges of the blade help you scrape into even the tightest spaces.

--Jan Svec, WOOD® magazine staff

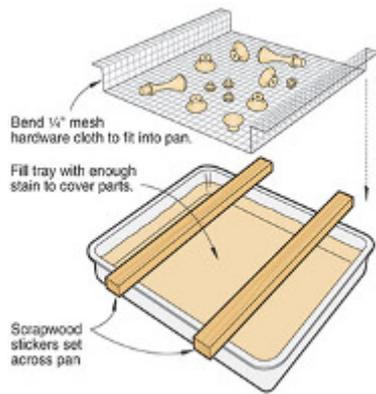


## For staining details, try pipe cleaners

It's hard to get stain or paint into narrow spaces. But I solved the problem with nothing more than a wooden handle and a pipe cleaner. As shown *left*, I drilled two small holes in one end of the handle of an old foam brush, bent the pipe cleaner in half, and stuck one end in each hole.

I dip the pipe cleaner into my finish and work it into just about any tight spot. When I'm done, I just pull out the pipe cleaner and throw it away. I then pop in a new one, and I'm ready for my next project.

--Bill Allmon, Fort Worth, Texas



### Avoid a mess with mesh

Here's a neat and easy way to stain small parts, such as drawer pulls, plugs, and Shaker pegs. Start with an old cake pan. Cut and bend 1/4" hardware cloth so that it fits inside the pan, reaches nearly to the bottom, and has enough left at each end to serve as handles. Pour stain into the pan, place the wooden parts on the mesh tray, and lower it into the pan. After the parts are coated with stain, lift the tray, put a couple of scrapwood stickers across the pan, and set the tray on them. Let the excess stain drip off, then wipe the parts.

--R.B. Himes, Vienna, Ohio

## Slash shelf-finishing time with just a few screws

I recently built a bookcase and wanted to spray lacquer on both sides of the shelves. I could have set the shelves on nailpoints, but I wanted to keep the fresh finish absolutely untouched. So, I came up with a touchless method.

Fasten a frame of 2x2s, spread 1" wider than the length of the shelves, to a pair of sawhorses, as shown at *left*. Into the center of one end of each shelf, drill a shallow hole and drive a 2" deck screw into the hole, leaving about 1" of the screw sticking out. The same way, put two screws into the other end of each shelf.

To finish the shelves, lay them across the frame, resting them on the screws. When one side is finished, grab the shelf by the two screws and flip it over, rotating it on the single screw on the other end. If your frame won't hold all of your shelves, lean the finished shelves against a wall--two screws down--to dry thoroughly.

--Kevin Bevins, Summerville, S.C.

