

Pen Finish Dipping Method

By Les R. Elm © 2012

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 end of the blank.

Materials:

- MINWAX Polyurethane Types:



Oil Modified Water Based Clear Gloss



Fast Drying Clear Gloss Polyurethane



Wipe-On Clear Gloss Polyurethane

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

Preparing the Pen Barrel:

1. With the lathe running at 500-700 RPM sand the wooden pen barrel to 400x
2. With the lathe off sand the blank lengthwise with 400 grit and wipe the blank clean with tack cloth.
3. With the lathe running at 2000-2500 RPM buff the blank with extra fine steel wool and clean the blank with the tack cloth.
4. With the lathe running at 2000-2500 RPM pick up some of the turned blank wood shavings with a piece of extra fine steel wool and burnish the blank and clean the blank with the tack cloth.

Finishing the Pen Barrel:

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 MINWAX wicking onto the blue shop towel, hang vertically to dry for 4-6 hours.
10. After the blank has dried, rub down the blank lengthwise with extra fine steel wool and clean with tack cloth.
11. Remove the dowel and the Play-Doh, reverse the blank, install the dowel and plug the opposite end with Play-Doh
12. Repeat steps 5 thru 11 to apply as many coats of MINWAX desired.
13. Clean up the blank ends.

Finished Results:



Stabilized Box Elder Burl/ Chrome Longwood Click Ballpoint



Stabilized Manitoba Maple/Gold Longwood Click Ballpoint