

FINISHES TO WOODS AND METALS

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FINISHES TO WOODS AND METALS

1. WHY IS A FINISH APPLIED TO WOOD?

2. INITIAL PREPARATION OF WOOD BEFORE APPLYING A FINISH

3. FINISHES TO WOOD

4. WHY IS A FINISH APPLIED TO METALS?

5. FINISHES TO METALS

WHY IS A FINISH APPLIED TO WOOD?

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1. A good quality finish such as varnish, offers a level protection to the surface of the wood.
2. A finish will enhance the natural grain, lifting the perceived value of the product.
3. Preservation of wood is another reason for applying a finish, lengthening the lifespan of the piece of furniture / product.
4. A dye applied as a finish, will change the 'colour' of the wood, giving the illusion that 'cheap' pine is actually more expensive mahogany.
5. A finish will provide a gloss, matt or silk finish, depending on preference of the customer.

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INITIAL PREPARATION

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Filling cracks - PVA or cascamate mixed with wood dust producing a paste, which is then applied to cracks and gaps.

Premixed wood fillers are also available, as powders to be mixed with water or applied straight from a tube.

Shellac - Supplied in stick form, in various shades. It is melted into holes / cracks in the wood with a soldering iron and then levelled, usually with a chisel.

Wax sticks - useful when repairing scratches, nail holes or cracks. The stick is warmed up and when soft, pressed into the hole / crack. The surface is then levelled with glass paper.

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GENERAL WOOD FILLERS



SHELLAC STICKS



WAX STICKS



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SANDING / GLASS PAPERING NATURAL WOOD

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Different grades of glass paper are used, to produce a blemish free and smooth finish.

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Glass paper is often referred to as sand paper. There are other abrasive sheets including aluminium oxide, silicon carbide and garnet. Use a coarse abrasive, followed by medium and then fine, when preparing a surface

GRADE	GRIT SIZE	DENSITY
EXTRA COARSE	60 TO 40	S.2, 2, 3
MEDIUM COARSE	80 TO 100	
MEDIUM	120 TO 180	1, F.2, m.2
FINE	220 TO 280	2/0, 0, 1
VERY FINE	320 UPWARDS	FLOUR

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NATURAL WOOD - WAX FINISHES

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Wax - for interior use. Popular, in Victorian times and has recently seen a resurgence.

Supplied as a liquid or paste. It is good practice to apply a coat of wax periodically, which helps to refresh the finish.

A first coat of wax is quickly rubbed into the surface, in a circular fashion. Use a clean cloth to remove surplus wax. Leave to dry over night and then apply another coat, following the grain. When dry, polish the surface with another soft cloth.

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NATURAL WOOD - OIL FINISHES

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Oil - applied using a brush or a cloth. Teak oil (a blend of solvents and linseed oil) is for external garden furniture and Danish oil for interior furniture and woodwork.

Danish oil is a mixture of thinned oil and varnish. The oil penetrates the wood fibres, whilst the varnish leaves a layer on the surface. It gives a natural glaze to wood and is a good choice for kitchen worktops or surfaces, being used for food preparation.

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SHELLAC AND POLISHES

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Shellac is a non-toxic, natural finish, produced from processed resin, that is secreted from the forest inhabiting insect, Laccifer Lacca, found from India to the Far East. The processed resin, which, in the form of light brown flakes, are mixed with alcohol, producing a liquid. Shellac is the basic ingredient of a range of polishes, including white polish and button polish.

Shellac based polishes, produce a high quality finish, typical of vintage furniture, but they do not withstand water or heat very well.

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VARNISH

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Varnish is supplied as water based or oil based. Water based varnish is an environmentally friendly version of the oil based varnish.

Polyurethane Varnish and Yacht Varnish, give a quality, protective finish.

Varnish is UV resistant, protects the surface of the wood and helps prevent cracking and shrinking. It can be purchased as a matt, silk or gloss finish.

Varnish is applied by brush or spray gun

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WOOD DYE AND STAIN

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Varnish puts a layer on the surface of the wood. Dyes / stains, penetrate the surface fibres. Dyes/stains are water or solvent based.

They need a further finish such as varnish (matt, silk, gloss) or wax, to protect the surface.

Dyes and stains are supplied in a range of vibrant colours or wood based tones. Most can be thinned and mixed, to achieve the required colour/shade.

They are applied with a paint brush, a soft cloth or even a paint pad.

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PAINT AS A FINISH

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Paint is basically the same as varnish, although it contains coloured pigments. Paints are applied with a brush or spray gun and add a protective layer to the surface. Paints are available as matt, silk and gloss finishes and they are either water based or oil (solvent) based. Unlike many other finishes that enhance the natural grain of the wood, paints hide the grain.

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PRIMERS, UNDERCOATS AND TOP COATS

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Paint primer is required to seal the wood, so that there is a stable base for the application of the next paint, which is undercoat.

Undercoat is supplied in a restricted range of colours and is selected according to the colour of the final top coat. The undercoat blocks all blemishes, grain and marks, providing a blank canvas for the top coat.

The top coat provides the final finish, in terms of the colour and whether it is matt, silk or gloss.

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WATER BASED (ACRYLIC EMULSIONS) OR SOLVENT (OIL) BASED?

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Water based paints (acrylic paints) are environmentally friendly. They dry more rapidly and do not produce the odour associated with solvent based paints. After use, brushes and equipment can be cleaned in soapy water.

Solvent based paints are more damaging to the environment and the health of humans. Brushes and equipment have to be cleaned with thinners or white spirit. When drying, the solvents evaporate, releasing volatile organic compounds (VOCs) into the atmosphere.

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WHY IS A FINISH APPLIED TO METALS?

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1. To protect them against the elements and resulting corrosion.
2. To increase the aesthetic / visual appeal.
3. To increase or reduce electrical conductivity.
4. To prevent or limit tarnishing of the surface, therefore, no need for repetitive polishing.
5. To provide decoration, such as the technique called etching.
6. To increase surface wear and resistance.

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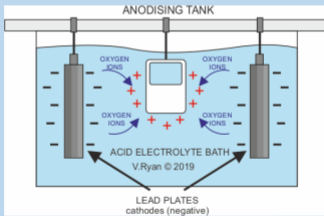


WHAT IS ANODISING?

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An electrochemical process that converts the aluminium surface into a decorative, durable, corrosion-resistant, anodic oxide finish. It increases the wear resistance of the metal and produces a better surface for the application of primers and paints. Anodising is often followed by dyeing, to produce an attractive, colourful finish.

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WHAT IS ANODISING?

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An anodised finish can be found on products all around us. It is used as a finish on some of the worlds most famous high buildings, including the Sears Tower in Chicago. It is often found as a finish on interiors, such as aluminium stair cases and escalators. A recent medical innovation is in the production of anodised titanium dental implants and other medical implants. MP3 players, mobile phones and many other electronic gadgets, have an anodised finish, that is also colourfully dyed. A range of scientific instruments are also anodised.

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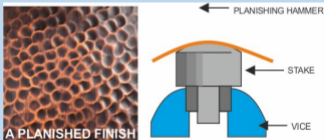
PLANISHED / HAMMERED FINISH

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A planishing hammer is used to 'hammer' a patterned finish into the surface of a metal.

Copper is often given a planished / hammered finish. It is first softened by a heat treatment process called annealing. It is cleaned before being planished. As the copper is 'planished', it is rotated on the stake. Planishing hardens the metal, ensuring the final shape (such as a bowl) has the strength to resist drops and knocks.

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METAL - LACQUERED FINISH - 1

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Many metals suffer from surface tarnishing and even corrosion, if left open to the atmosphere / air. Surfaces can be protected through the application of different finishes such as paint or powder coating. However, sometimes the surface of metals can be attractive without a coloured coating. This is when lacquer is most useful. Lacquer is usually applied as a clear coating, leaving the surface texture on view. Lacquer forms a protective clear layer on metals and is particularly useful on brass, aluminum, silver and copper which are often in the form of decorative items. When lacquered, polishing and cleaning will no longer be required.

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METAL - LACQUERED FINISH

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Lacquer is used on brass ornaments and on the surface of finely machined steel. This ensures that the surface remains as clean and polished / machined, as the day the initial finish was applied.

Materials to be lacquered must have a clean surface, with all dirt / grease removed. Lacquer should be applied in a dust free environment, with the workers wearing appropriate protective clothing and a breathing mask. The spray 'can' version of lacquer is the easiest to apply.

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LACQUERED METAL PRODUCTS

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POWDER COATING OF METAL

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The coating offers surface protection combined with a decorative appeal, due to the vast range of colours that are available. A dry powder coating can improve the functionality of the product. A mixture of resin and a pigment is electrostatically charged by a special spray gun. When sprayed, the particles are attracted to the material being coated.

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A SAMPLE OF POWDER COATED PRODUCTS



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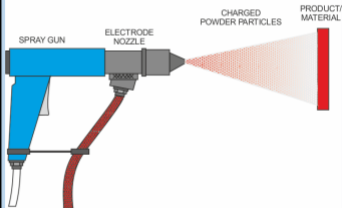
POWDER COATING OF METAL

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Powder coating is a specialist process and is carried out by trained operators. It is applied in a well ventilated area, by skilled technicians wearing appropriate protective clothing, with goggles and breathing masks.

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Electrostatic, Spray Deposition (ESD)



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SAMPLE POWDER COATING COLOURS

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SPRAY PAINT FINISHES FOR METAL

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Spray paints (in the form of spray cans) can be bought straight 'off the shelf' of most hardware stores.

Metal may need a primer and undercoat, although it depends on the instructions on the paint can. Hammerite paint can be applied to a surface without the need for a primer or undercoat. Some cheaper paint sprays need a carefully cleaned surface, prepared with primer and an undercoat.

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BRUSH PAINT FINISHES FOR METAL

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Paint can also be applied with a brush. Again the surface should be clean of rust and grease. Depending on the instructions written on the tin, a primer coat and undercoat may be required. Some brush-able paints only need one coat, without a primer or undercoat.

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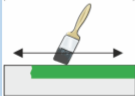
1. REMOVE RUST AND GRIME



2. PAINT WITH PRIMER
(ONE OR TWO COATS)



3. UNDERCOAT MAY NOT BE NEEDED.
PAINT WITH SELECTED COLOUR
(TWO COATS MAY BE NEEDED)



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THE LATHE - TYPICAL MACHINE FINISH

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Lathe tools produce a machined finish. They can be shaped to produce a range of different machined finishes - two are shown below. A machined finish can be attractive and also have a practical function, such as a grip.

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THE MILLING MACHINE TYPICAL FINISHES

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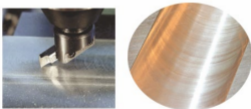
Milling machines can be used in conjunction with a variety of cutting tools. Often the tools produce a very accurate, distinctive and fine circular pattern.

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END MILL SURFACE FINISH



FLY CUTTER FINISH



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THE SURFACE GRINDER - FINISHES

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A surface grinding machine is used to accurately produce a flat surface, after some machining has already taken place (for example, through the use of a vertical miller).

A surface grinder is used where absolute precision is required.

As the grinding wheel revolves at high speed, it produces a smooth, flat surface, giving a distinct finish (samples shown below). If real precision is required, a surface grinder is used.

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SURFACE GRINDER FINISHES



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ELECTROPLATING

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In industry, electroplating is the process whereby a cheap base metal, is coated with a much more expensive metal, in order to make it visually attractive and aesthetically pleasing (gold and silver plating are examples).

Electroplating is usually a decorative process and is often used to increase the visual appeal of cheaper jewellery. It also serves to provide the surface with a level of protection against corrosion. Some everyday products such as bathroom taps have been electroplated with chrome for decoration, as well as corrosion resistance. Electroplating is also used to apply a conductive surface to metals, that are of low conductivity or non-conductive.

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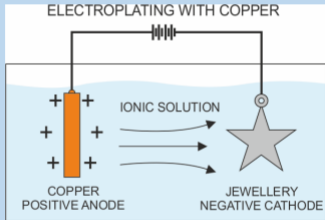


ELECTROPLATING

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The copper anode is ionised once the electrical current is allowed to flow. The ionic solution allows the positively charged copper atoms to flow to the negatively charged base metal, where they are deposited on the surface. This produces an effective coating of copper.

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ELECTROPLATING

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SILVER PLATED
GOBLET



CHROME
ELECTROPLATED
TAP



GOLD PLATED
WATCH



COPPER PLATED
MUG



SILVER PLATED
TEAPOT



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WHY ARE SOME STEEL PRODUCTS GALVANISED?

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Steel is a very strong and versatile metal used to manufacture a large range of products. Steel surrounds us in our every day lives, as it is used to construct buildings and structures.

It is a versatile material, although it has one weakness, corrosion.

If an exposed steel surface comes in contact with water or moisture, rust can take hold.

Rust can damage the surface of the steel as seen on corroded car bodywork. It is possible that on a large structure, such as a bridge, rust can cause structural failure leading to collapse.

Galvanised steel is steel that has been coated with zinc in order to prevent rusting / corrosion.

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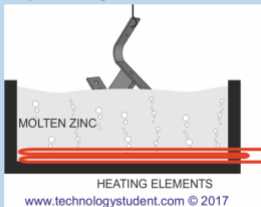


HOT DIPPING - GALVANISING

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The hot dipping process applies quite a thick layer of zinc to the steel, by passing the steel through a molten bath of zinc. The temperature of the zinc is usually in the region of 460 degrees centigrade. The zinc forms a bond with the steel by forming an iron-zinc alloy. The zinc also forms a zinc oxide when it comes in contact with the air which also helps prevent corrosion.

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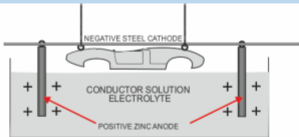
ELECTROPLATING ELECTRO-GALVANISED

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The steel car body is electrically charged as negative and is suspended in a conducting solution, known as the electrolyte. Rods of pure zinc are positively charged and it is the zinc from these rods that is eventually deposited on the surface of the steel. The rods are suspended in the electrolyte.

'Top of the range' cars often have galvanised steel bodies.

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The diagram above shows a car body about to be lowered into the electrolyte solution

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THE POLISHING MACHINE - 1

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The Polishing Machine (also called the Buffing Machine) is used to polish soft metals, including copper and brass, as well as plastics, including acrylic. The 'mop spins at high speed when the 'on' switch is pressed. 'Polish' is applied to the mop, before gently pushing the metal against the rotating mop.

If the material is gently pressed against the mop and moved backwards and forwards, it will be polished.

Before polishing, the material must be filed to removed scratches and then wet and dry paper or emery cloth, is used to further smooth the surfaces. Only then can it be polished on the buffing machine.

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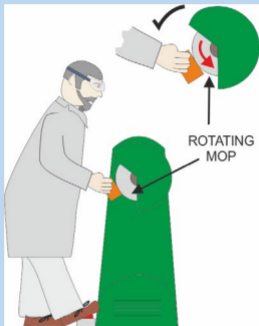


THE POLISHING MACHINE - 2

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Polishing gives the metal a smooth and reflective surface.

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ETCHING PROCESS TRADITIONAL METHOD

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Traditionally, 'etching' is a process, whereby acid is used to slowly remove the unprotected surface of a metal such as copper.

A pattern is produced by applying a 'resist' substance to the surface of the copper. The resist can be beeswax or shellac. A sharp tool such as a scribe, is used to 'scratch' a pattern into the resist, removing it where acid is to 'eat into' the surface.

When the drawing / 'scratching' is complete, the copper is placed in a suitable acid, in a glass container. The acid slowly dissolves the surface of the exposed copper, producing the pattern. This can take hours.

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SAMPLE ETCHED PRODUCTS

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ETCHING COPPER USING A PCB TANK AND A VINYL CUTTER

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A shape can be cut out of 'sticky back' vinyl, with a vinyl cutter and then 'stuck' to a piece of copper.

The copper is then immersed in a PCB etching tank, in a mixture of clear etchant. The area covered with the vinyl is protected from the etchant, whilst at the same time the unprotected surface is etched.

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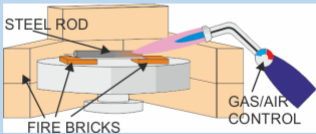
CASE HARDENING

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Case hardening is a method of hardening the surface of steel. This techniques is used for steels with a low carbon content. Carbon is added to the outer surface of the steel, to a depth of approximately 0.03mm. The inner core is left untouched and so still processes properties, such as flexibility and is still relatively soft.

In school workshops, steel is heated on the brazing hearth to red heat and then dipped into a case hardening powder, which has a high in carbon content. It is heated again and plunged into clean, cold water.

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HARDENING AND TEMPERING

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This process results in a blend of hardness, strength and toughness, through the entire section of steel. It is process that is more 'intense' and variable than case hardening. A mild steel or silver steel screw driver blade, is hardened by heating to 'red' heat, to prevent it wearing down when in use. Next, it undergoes another heat treatment called 'tempering'. This second heat process reduces the hardness a little, but toughens the steel. It also reduces the brittleness of the steel, so that it does not break easily.

Tap the image for more information

HARDENING

HEAT TO 'RED' HEAT

PLUNGE INTO CLEAN, COLD WATER

TEMPERING

CLEAN AND HEAT UNTIL BLUE IN COLOUR

ALLOW TO COOL SLOWLY

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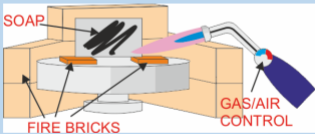
ANNEALING METALS

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Annealing is a heat process whereby a metal is heated to a specific temperature /colour and then allowed to cool slowly. This softens the metal, which means it can be cut and shaped more easily.

Annealing sheet aluminium: Rub soap on to the surface of the aluminium and heat it on a brazing hearth. In a short time the soap will turn black. Turn off the brazing torch and allow the aluminium to cool slowly. It is now 'annealed' and should be very soft and malleable - easy to cut and shape.

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TRADITIONAL OIL BLACKING OF STEEL

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With steel, corrosion to the surface will always be a problem, especially if the product / component is in contact with moisture, as carried in the atmosphere. One of the most cost effective ways of preventing tarnishing / corrosion to the surface of steel, is to 'Oil Black'. This can be achieved on a small scale in schools, although strict safety precautions must be taken.

1. Clean and degrease the steel.
2. Heat to 'red' heat on a brazing hearth.
3. Use tongs to drop the steel into a container of old engine oil.
4. Allow to cool and remove the steel (now with a blacked finish).

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OIL BLACKED AND CHEMICALLY BLACKED COMPONENTS

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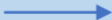
BLACKING OF STEEL WITH A CHEMICAL BLACKING SOLUTION

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This is a process called 'Cold Chemical Blacking' and does not require the steel to be heated on a brazing hearth.

1. Clean and degrease the surface of the steel being 'blacked'.
2. Use tongs to drop the steel into a solution of 'Chemical Blacking'. Leave for no more than five minutes.
3. Remove from the blacking solution, wash with water, dry and drop in a 'Dewatering' solution. Leave for ten minutes.
4. Remove and wash in clean water, revealing a 'blacked' finish.

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