



SIMPLE FURNITURE REPAIR

Major repairs such as cracks or splits in the wood, broken panels or replacement of missing pieces should be left to the professionals unless you are confident in your woodworking skills. If you wish to attempt any of these major repairs, refer to a copy of a good furniture repair book or see your county extension agent for more information.

Many minor repairs take little or no woodworking skills but make a big difference in the finished item. A few of the more common minor repairs are discussed below.

Loose glue joints

If the joint can be taken apart without disturbing other sound joints, then knock it apart with a rubber mallet (be careful not to mar the wood).

1. Remove all the old glue on both pieces by scraping and sanding lightly. Be careful - too much sanding will result in an ill-fitting joint. Wipe surfaces clean with a damp rag.
2. Place pieces back together just to insure a good fit. (Then take apart and apply a thin coat of a good wood glue (white glue is OK) to both pieces.
3. Reassemble pieces and apply pressure (see clamping) to hold together tightly until glue cures. Use a damp cloth to fully wipe away all of the excess glue that has been squeezed out of the joint.
4. Keep clamped for at least 8 hours.

If the joint cannot be taken apart easily:

1. Force glue into the joint with a syringe-type glue applicator.
2. If large gaps are present, dip wood slivers or shims (wooden toothpicks work well) into glue and force into the gaps. Break them off below the surface; fill remainder of gap with glue.
3. Apply pressure to hold together tightly until glue cures.
4. Wipe off excess glue.
5. Keep clamped for at least 8 hours.

Clamping hints

A variety of sizes and shapes of clamps are available that can be used in wood gluing. For small jobs, the wooden C-clamps especially designed for woodworking are best. However, any metal clamp can be used if a piece of scrap wood is placed between the metal and wood surfaces. This will prevent

compression of the good wood surface by the metal surface. Clamps can also be fabricated from straps, fabric or rope. This method works particularly well on chair rungs. To do this, wrap the strap around the pieces to be clamped. Tie the two ends of the strap together snugly. Place a pipe or wooden dowel through the knot and twist the dowel until the joints are securely clamped. Then tie one end of the dowel to the strap to keep it from unwinding.

Place a piece of corrugated material (cardboard) between the rope and the wood surfaces to prevent the wood from marring.

Deep scratches that go into the wood.

Minor scratches can often be removed by restoring the finish; but there is no easy way to remove deep scratches. Here are four possible solutions:

1. Leave the scratch there. Any effort to remove the scratch will effect the patina of the wood, so accept it as a character mark. Remember, over-restoration can ruin a fine old piece of furniture.
2. Sand the scratch out. Any sanding you do will have to be done to the entire piece to keep the surface uniformly flat and smooth. This should not be attempted unless you plan to refinish the entire piece.
3. You can fill the scratch with a synthetic wood filler, but this will never look the same as the original wood.
4. Apply a shellac or lacquer stick repair. This procedure is difficult and should be left to a professional restorer.

Removing Dents

Small dents can often be eliminated in unfinished wood by steaming the damage area. To do this, cut a piece of wool cloth the same size and shape as the dent. Soak the cloth in water and place it in the dent. Take a small putty knife and heat it over a flame such as a candle. Hold the hot putty knife on the wet cloth for 10 seconds. Repeat this procedure until the dent has disappeared. Allow the area to dry completely, then sand it smooth with No. 240 sandpaper. This procedure may not work on deep dents.

Removing oil and grease spots from bare wood

Make a paste with whiting, talc or white chalk powder and mineral spirits (paint thinner). Cover the grease spot and allow it to dry overnight. Brush the surface clean. Repeat as necessary. Remove the remaining white residue with grade 000 steel wool.

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Linda Adler, M.A.

Extension Specialist for Home Furnishings
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