



# Tabletop Care & Finishing Tips

## ► Important! Read all instructions before removing tabletop from poly-bag.

### Tips, handling and care of your new tabletop

#### ► Solid wood tabletops will warp if not handled properly.

**Warping happens when one side of your top adjusts to humidity change more rapidly than the other. The most critical time is when your top first arrives. Your location will have a very different humidity level than those in our woodshop.**

- **Keep your new tabletop sealed in its poly storage bag until you are ready to finish the top.**

The sooner you get finish on your top and mount it to the base the better it will resist the forces of warping. The longer it sits around the more likely you are to have warping, damage, or discoloration issues.

- **Do not cut the bag.** When you are ready to proceed, open the poly bag by removing the sealing tape.

It is important to keep air in the room circulating evenly around both sides of your top. If your top is going to be out on a work table for an extended period cover it with the bag it was shipped in to prevent warping. Leaning the top against a wall so the air circulates evenly around it also works well.

**Final prep before finishing** – Applying finish to the tabletop will slow the rate at which wood adjusts to changes in humidity.

Your new top has been fine sanded with 180-grit sandpaper. Before finishing we suggest you sand with the grain all surfaces with 220-grit. This will remove any minor marks that it might have picked up during shipping. Switch to 600-grit as you build up finish coats. Sand with the grain of the wood, not across it or not in a circular pattern. Clean the dust from the top using a clean rag, clean brush or vacuum. Let the dust settle. Just before applying finish, wipe the top with a tack rag to remove the finest dust. Proceed with final finishing.

**Mounting your top** – This is actually a fairly simple process, but one that can go badly awry in a hurry. Nothing will ruin your day more completely than flipping your table right side up after mounting the top only to find a screw sticking through your beautifully finished topside. I know because I have seen it done numerous times.

- **Tips to avoid this disaster** – Start by double-checking for human error. Make sure all the mounting screws are the same length. Put a screw into a mounting hole and check how much it protrudes. Factor in that the screw will protrude more when you snug down the screw (because this action compresses the wood under the screw head slightly).

Our table base aprons are set up with pocket holes and come with screws that will allow you to mount a top as thin as  $\frac{3}{4}$ ". With a  $\frac{3}{4}$ " top the margin for error is small, just  $\frac{1}{4}$ " to  $\frac{3}{16}$ ". Tops thicker than  $\frac{3}{4}$ " give you a little more room for error, but

not much. Pilot holes in the top are not required unless you are putting the screws in by hand. If your tolerances are close be very careful not to over drive the screws.

- To mount the top to the base, flip the finished top upside down on a clean carpeted floor or a blanket on your work bench or table. Flip the table base upside down and locate it onto the top.
- Using a tape measure, adjust the base in small movements to obtain even, parallel overhang measurements around all four sides of the table. Carefully use a pencil to scribe faint but legible witness marks that register the correct base alignment onto the underside of the tabletop. Witness marks will help you put the parts back into alignment should you accidentally bump the top.
- Drive in the first mounting screw – start carefully and drive slowly. Put a few screws in different locations to ensure proper alignment of top and base. Check to make sure you haven't poked through the top. Snug down the screws gently. Don't overuse force. Put in all the screws, flip the table over and enjoy your creation.

Have fun and email us a picture of your new table to:  
[legs@TableLegs.com](mailto:legs@TableLegs.com)

We would love to see how your projects turn out!  
May your life be filled with creativity.

*Matthew Burak*