

Do It Yourself

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Open Bookcase: Finishing Touches

From "[Wood Works](#)"

episode WWK-603 -- [More Projects](#) »

The final steps in the creation of the open-design bookcase include applying a tung-oil finish to the case and an ebonized finish to the base. The case and pedestal are separated and sanded, and some finishing touches are added -- including an ebonized finish using metal acid dye.

Materials:

- Belt sander
- Metal-acid dye
- Tung-oil wood finish
- Paint brushes
- Rags

Safety Alert: *Always* wear safety goggles or safety glasses, and follow proper safety precautions, when working with wood, power-tools, saws, drills, routers, etc.

Safety Alert: *Always* wear protective gloves, and ensure adequate ventilation, when working with wood stains, solvents and other toxic solutions. When working with some sprays and chemicals, a respirator mask may be required.



The open design of the completed bookcase allows items to be displayed so that they can be viewed from all angles.

Open Bookcase: Finishing Touches

- With the case assembled, and the glue fully dried, you can level the pins (left protruding earlier by about 1/32") so that they are flush with the case using a belt sander (**figure A**).
- Then, with the pedestal separated from the case, lightly sand the surfaces to ease the edges before adding the finishes.



Figure A

- We opted to **ebonize** the base of the bookcase to provide a distinctive contrast with the natural cherry. Ebonizing simply means that the wood is dyed so that it looks like ebony. One technique for doing this is with black aniline dye, but this treatment may fade in time, especially if exposed to sunlight.
- We opted for water-based **metal acid dye** which is much more light-fast. Brush on the dye with light, steady strokes (**figure B**) to avoid splotching.
- Once the first coat is applied, wipe off any excess with a lint-free cloth and let it dry for a few hours. Then sand lightly using 320-grit sandpaper, and apply a second coat.
- Finally, we finished the case with our familiar tung-oil finish to bring out the natural color and grain of the cherry (**figure C**). We applied five coats.
- Once the ebonized coat has dried, brush the same amount of tung oil onto the base.
- Re-fasten the case to the pedestal using the screws as in the previous segment.



Figure B



Figure C

Wood Works Tip: Metal acid dyes are known for their permanence, and they come in a variety of colors including black, browns, reds, yellows and blues. They can also be mixed to customize colors. Consider experimenting with these dyes for your woodworking projects.

RESOURCES:

Woodworking Techniques: Best Methods for Building Furniture from Fine Woodworking

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The base is "ebonized" -- meaning simply that it is dyed so that it looks like ebony.

David Marks, DIY's *Wood Works* host, is a master woodworker. For more information on cut sizes and project details, please contact him via his Website at www.djmarks.com

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- [Open Bookcase: Dovetail Joinery and Case Assembly](#)

- [Open Bookcase: Shelves and Final Assembly](#)

- [Open Bookcase: Finishing Touches](#)