

Preparing Linocut Blocks for Printing

The wooden base of the block is unaffected by common solvents used for cleaning oil-based inks. Before printing with water-based inks, apply a waterproof sealer such as spar varnish to the wood so it will not soak up any water used while cleaning the block.

While it is not essential, the manufacturer recommends re-sanding the finished carved block before proofing and printing. Use a standard rubber sanding block and very fine grit black emery waterproof sand paper. Go over the block slowly and carefully with a circular motion, keeping the rubber block flat to the surface and not using too much pressure. Think of it as polishing the linoleum rather than sanding it. You can add a small amount of

water to speed things up a bit and also to increase the life of the sandpaper, but be careful not to get any water on the substrate unless it has been sealed. Very rarely you may find areas with very light scratches on the surface of the linoleum, from the final machine sanding of the material. Those light scratches will disappear with very little effort as you polish the block. This step also eliminates any pressure ridges or slightly raised edges around your cuts, formed as the block was cut, which can otherwise show up in printing.

After printing, clean the blocks and store them in a dry place, stacked either vertically or horizontally to prevent warping.



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