

How to Apply Craft Flocking & Flitter

The application of Flocking is a simple process. Remember, you should wear a dust mask, do not skimp on the adhesive (any oil base or paint in the color you are flocking will work except spray paint), don't skimp on the fibers, and resist the temptation to touch the surface before the finish has dried. Flocked finish allows you to create professional looking suede like lining or finish with no previous experience.

First Step:

SEAL THE SURFACE TO BE COATED

The purpose of sealing is to prevent the absorption of the undercoat adhesive. If the adhesive is absorbed, the fibers will have nothing to adhere to and the finish will have thin spots. Even surfaces that appear solid can be porous (e.g. Masonite) and will absorb the adhesive. Sealing /may be done with lacquer, shellac, sanding sealer, polyurethane, etc.—anything that will prevent the surface from soaking up the adhesive. If the sealer leaves a very slick finish, rough it up slightly with sandpaper. (Metal, glass and most plastics do not require sealing, but may need a sanding to rough up the surface.)

Second Step:

APPLICATION PREPERATION

Line the inside of a cardboard box with a large plastic bag or use a plastic bowl or container to be used as a spraying area. Fill the applicator up to ½ with flocking fibers, this will allow space for the air to circulate the fibers within the applicator. Set aside for later use.

Third Step:

BRUSH ON THE UNDERCOAT ADHESIVE

It is not necessary to mask areas of your project that will not be coated if the surface is sealed and **IF YOU BRUSH CAREFULLY**. This means using the flat side of a brush, with a drawing motion toward the edge of the project. If you should get a small amount of adhesive on the edge, simply wipe it off. This should be done before the fibers are applied. (Some people prefer masking to guarantee clean lines.)

Apply a wet coat of adhesive—that is, enough for the fibers to dip into when applied. This coat of adhesive should be smooth and not dripping wet. The undercoat adhesive remains open to the fibers for 10 to 15 minutes—this is your working time. If you are working on a larger object, use a larger brush or apply the adhesive with a paint roller.

CAUTION: If you are working on one continuous piece, **DO NOT** work in sections as the lines between the sections may show. If you are working on a project that has many small sections (compartments), requiring a more detailed application, finish a few at a time. If you cover the uncoated section(s) with a piece of cardboard and then move the cardboard as needed, you will not have to wait for each compartment to dry before applying the fibers to the next section(s).

Fourth Step:

SPRAY ON THE FLOCKING FIBERS

To apply the fibers, place the adhesive coated project in the lined cardboard box. With the flocking applicator filled approx. ½ full, hold the applicator 8" to 10" from your project at an angle of 45° to 90° to apply the fibers. Apply more fibers than you think you need and then some more. You CANNOT overcoat—only so much will stick. Excess fibers may be reclaimed and reused.

HINT: When coating boxes it is best to spray the fibers on the bottom first, and then spray the sides.

HINT: To ensure the fibers continue to hit the project at the same angle, hold the flocking applicator at the same angle to the piece you are coating (as much as possible) and raise and lower the applicator. Do not tilt it when possible.

Fifth Step:

DRYING

Once you have applied sufficient fibers set aside your project to dry for approximately 10 to 15 hours before you remove excess fibers. If you need to reclaim some of the fibers before this drying process is completed, you may turn the project upside down to allow the excess to fall off. Do not tap or shake the project at this time as this may dislodge fibers that are sitting in wet adhesive. It is possible to speed up the initial drying time with a heat lamp. It will now take approx. 7 hours depending on your environment. TAKE CARE TO KEEP THE HEAT LAMP AT LEAST 18" AWAY FROM THE FIBERS. DO NOT USE A HEAT LAMP WITH A BLOWER.

IMPORTANT—while the adhesive is dried at this point (10 to 15 hours) it will take 72 hours to 1 week for it to cure completely. Some care should be taken in handling at this time.

Sixth Step:

CLEAN UP

To remove the excess fibers from your project after it has dried, shake the item over the lined cardboard box—remember, these fibers are still usable. Using a dry clean, soft brush, wipe out the excess fibers. Compressed air may be used, but take care during the initial 48 hours. Vacuuming may be used after the project has cured completely.

To remove the excess fibers from the flocking applicator, remove the top and empty the fibers into the original plastic bag. A gentle tap will remove the rest of the fibers. If there is a tiny amount of fiber left inside the applicator, it will blend into the next color used and not be noticed (with the exception of white.)
