

How to Repair Cracks in Wood Furniture

Wood is a natural material that will shrink and expand depending on the temperature and humidity of its environment. Cracks are a common problem on wooden furniture due to this phenomena.

Cracks should be filled so that they're level with the surface of the wood. For very small cracks/holes wood-tone putty sticks can be used. If you can't match the wood, several colors can be mixed together. To use a putty stick, wipe it across the crack/hole and smooth the surface with your finger. If you plan to finish or refinish the wood, let the putty dry for at least a week before proceeding further.

For larger cracks/holes, wood filler and water putty are the easiest fillers. These fillers can be used on bare or finished wood. Wood filler is available in several colors, and water putty can be tinted with oil or water stain. However, wood filler and water putty patches are usually noticeable, and may look darker than the wood. For the best results, test the patch on an inconspicuous surface to make sure the color is right.

To use wood filler, carefully clean the crack or gouge with the tip of a craft knife, and then press the plastic firmly in with the tip of a craft knife or the edge of a putty knife. Wood filler shrinks slightly as it dries, so press it in tightly and leave it mounded slightly above the surface of the wood.

Wood filler dries fairly quickly, but let it set for at least two days. Then smooth the patch lightly with fine-grit sandpaper and buff the area with No. 0000 steel wool. If surrounding finish is involved, feather the edges so that the new patch blends in with it. Then, if necessary, stain the patch and buff it lightly with No. 0000 steel wool. Apply finish to match the rest of the surface, using an artists' brush and feathering the edges. Let the finish dry and then lightly buff it with No. 0000 steel wool; clean the area of any residue, and wax and polish the surface.