

Papa John's Toolbox Buffing & Polishing Instructions

Before polishing your work piece it's important to clean it thoroughly. When a material appears dull there are scratches or dirt preventing the light from directly reflecting off the surface. Dull material may just be dirty. Clean thoroughly, and if it's still dull then proceed to polishing.

Polishing is similar to sanding. In order to make the material more reflective (smoother) you're simply removing the surface of the material to the depth of the deepest scratch.

Papa John's Toolbox carries exclusively Enkay Polishing's [polishing compounds](#), [specialty buffs](#), and [buffing wheels](#). These instructions take you through the basics and explain how to use Enkay Polishing's different tools and compounds. The following steps can be followed for most reflective surfaces including metals, plastics, rubber and even wood. When polishing always work from coarse to fine (the same as if you were sanding a piece of wood).

Every material is different. Before polishing a new surface we at Papa John's Toolbox recommend practicing on a piece of scrap to familiarize yourself with the material and how it responds to polishing.

Always wear protective gear when polishing, including safety goggles or face shield, dust mask, shop apron and gloves. You may also want to protect surfaces and tools with tape or padding to prevent accidental gouging.

Not all manufactures polishing compounds are the same. Papa John's Toolbox carries exclusively quality US made Enkay polishing compounds. These instructions are for use with Enkay brand polishing compounds only.

Step 1: Determine if the material you wish to polish needs to be sanded first. A good rule of thumb is if your fingernail can catch the edge of a scratch it will need to be sanded before it can be polished. Work your way up in grit from the coarsest applicable paper to the finest. Sand in a consistent motion without cross hatching – follow the grain of the material, if visible, until there are no scratches visible and a satin finish is achieved (1000 grit wet dry is usually a good place to end up before polishing).

Step 2: Start polishing by using any [felt bobs](#), [felt cones](#), [specialty buffs](#), or [spiral sewn buffing wheels](#) (note: loose single stitched buff, the buffing wheel with 1 row of stitching around its center, is primarily for finishing and working with fine compounds). Papa John's Toolbox carries a variety of uniquely shaped [buffing wheels](#) and [felt bobs](#) for getting into different hard-to-reach areas of the object being polished.

Insert the buff you wish to start with into any standard electric drill or bench grinder and choose the coarsest applicable [polishing compound](#) by consulting the [compound chart](#). (Find the material you wish to polish in the left hand column, then find the first marked column to the right for the correct compound.)

Step 3: Coat the buff or felt bob by lightly spinning the buff and applying the chosen polishing compound. Use the compounds sparingly – you only need a small amount for them to work properly.

Next spin the coated buff or felt bob onto the surface to be polished. Best results are obtained at 3,000 RPM or less. Working at a higher rate will overheat the work surface and prevent the compound from working properly.

Slight pressure works best – let the coated buff do the work for you. You'll notice a residue coming off the material as you polish (metal should produce black soot). Continue polishing as needed, reapplying more compound if necessary.

For best results use a different buff for each polishing compound. If using a different buff for each compound is not possible then remove the previous compound by “raking” the buff thoroughly. To “rake” the buff spin it against a sharp metal edge to remove the residue.

Step 4: Repeat the process with the next finer polishing compound as shown on the chart. Continue polishing until visible scratches are removed and the desired luster is achieved.

Step 5: To finish your project and achieve a mirror like finish use the finest applicable compound with the [loose single stitched buff](#). Again use very light pressure and let the buff do the work for you.

(It's not always necessary to go all the way to the finest applicable compound. Our white diamond polishing compound is sufficient in most cases.)

Step 6: Once work is completed you can, depending on the material, wash the material with warm soapy water to remove any excess buffing compound or residue. Dry your work piece with a soft cloth or chamois. Depending on the material you may want to protect your restored finish with a clear coat.