

Varnishing ~ Poly Clay Play Style

Just my way...use tips at your own risk and let me know what works for you!

Supplies

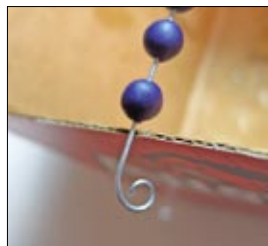
Varnish ~ I use Future® Floor Finish or
Varathane® Diamond Floor Finish - water based in a Can
Rubbermaid® Seal and Save Paint Container
Narrow Box (Austin Cracker Box from Sams!)



Stem Wires
Wood Skewers
Paper Towels
Patience...Just a Little

Dipping Beads

1. Curl the end of a stiff wire...such as 18 gauge stem wire found in the floral department at craft stores. The curled end will stop beads from sliding off as you dip them.
2. Push your beads on the wire.
3. Don't worry if the beads slide together. I have found there is time to slide them apart and hang the wire across the box.



Dipping Items Without Holes

Look at your item. Is there a hole to slip a wire through? Is it flat and not so important that you touch it's back while the varnish is drying?

If there is not a way to hang an item, I usually lean it against the side of the box trying to have as little surface touching as possible. For instance, if it is square, I will set a corner in the bottom of the box and lean it where the top corner is resting against the side. I have found that there is time to move pieces around as puddles form under them. Carefully pick the piece up by the very edges and move it so that it is not sitting in the puddle.

Hanging Items

1. If there is a hole in the item, run wire through it. Bend one end to keep it from slipping into the varnish and dip the item.
2. Lift it out of the varnish and straighten the end of the wire.



3. Tap the wire against the side of your varnish container to get rid of excess drips.
4. When it has quit dripping a lot, move it to your "Drip Box".



5. Lay the wire across the sides of the box and watch as new drips form.
6. Use a paper towel to gently dab at the drips as they form. Try not to touch the item too much. The closer it gets to drying, the less you want to touch it.
7. If there is a drip that doesn't want to let go, you can get your finger wet and lightly touch it. Getting your finger wet helps keep it from sticking to the item and ruining the finish.
8. I sometimes drape items across a skewer or even use a skewer through the hole if it is big enough on heavier items. You can also lay items across two wires or skewers.
9. Use a skewer to pop bubbles formed in cavities.

Touch Ups

Practice, practice, practice... this will get easier as you learn how the varnish flows and dries.

If you find there is a spot that is missed or needs touching up, dip the piece again.

When your piece has dried and you are happy with it, pop it in the oven for about 10 minutes at 225° to heat set the varnish.

Heat Setting Varnish

If you use Future, applying it to the surface and letting it dry thoroughly is perfectly acceptable without heating. However, if you have Future on a bead that will get a lot of wear, you may want to heat set it. Placing the completely cured item back into the oven at about 210* to 260*F for about 15 minutes will harden the Future enough to be fairly resistant to handling.

Without the heating, Future will wear off just like it does on a kitchen floor with heavy traffic.

With the Varathane, heating afterward has virtually no effect. You will have a lasting and strong sealant. It won't hurt to heat set it if you want.

NOTE: Let whatever finish you are using dry before putting in the oven to heat set it. I have had trouble with the finish bubbling and always staying cloudy.