

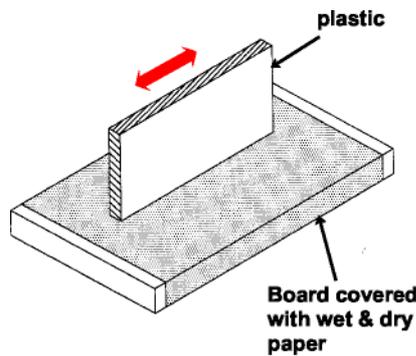
FINISHING PLASTICS

Plastics do not require a finish for the reasons that wood and metal do. Plastics do not rot or corrode. However ultraviolet light from the sun does affect some plastics, such as PVC. The PVC, after a number of years outside, becomes brittle and shatters easily. This can be avoided by either painting it, or using UPVC, a plastic that has had a special additive added when it was manufactured.

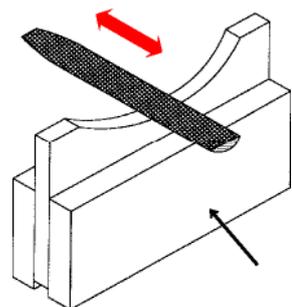
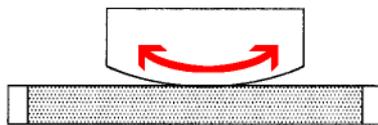
Edge finishing

When an edge has been sawn it is very rough and needs to be made smooth and shiny to match the sides.

When you want a perfectly straight edge it is best to remove the roughness by rubbing the edge over a board that has wet & dry paper attached. Start with a coarse paper and end with a fine paper. Wet the paper with water to get a finer finish



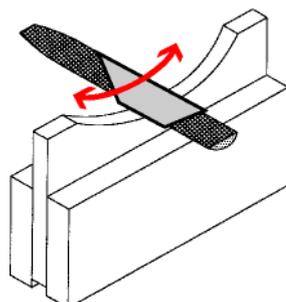
A convex curve can also be finished on a wet & dry board.



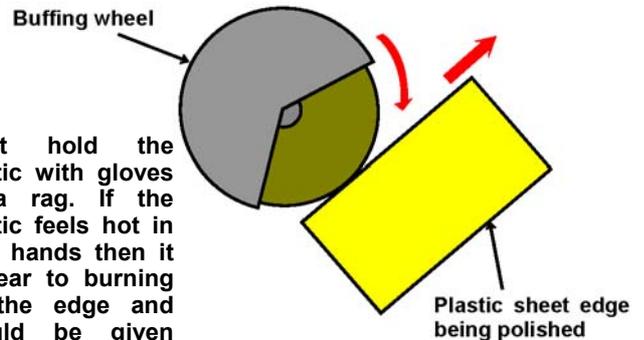
If the edge is a concave curve then a metalworking half round file can be used.

MDF support pieces used to protect the plastic surface from the vice jaws and to stop the plastic from cracking.

A finer surface finish is possible by drawfiling with wetted wet & dry paper wrapped around the file.



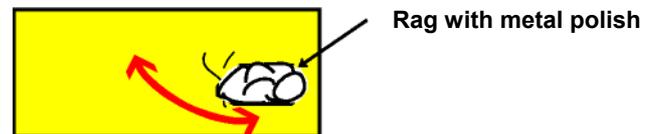
A very high polish can be obtained by using a buffing wheel coated with a light abrasive wax. To stop the plastic from overheating and burning, move the plastic towards you once and let it cool for a few seconds before making a second pass. Repeat the passes with a cooling break between each one until a high polish is gained.



Don't hold the plastic with gloves or a rag. If the plastic feels hot in your hands then it is near to burning on the edge and should be given time to cool down.

Removing surface scratches

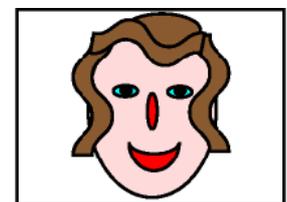
Scratches on the face of the plastic can be removed by rubbing the scratched area with metal polish and a rag. This is a slow process, but it is the only one available. So take extra care not to damage these surfaces. **Keep the protective paper on for as long as possible.**



Decoration

Coloured decoration can be applied to plastics by using permanent spirit marker pens. Any unwanted lines can be removed by using white spirit as a solvent.

A spirit marker decoration on a sheet of Acrylic.



1. How can plastics degrade in use outside and how can the problem be solved?
2. What is the best way of smoothing a straight or convex edge?
3. What treatment would you give a concave edge to make it smooth?
4. What precautions would you take when using a buffing wheel to stop the plastic from burning?
5. How can scratches be removed from the front and back of a sheet of plastic?