

Hardwood furniture care:

For daily cleaning: Damp sponge is OK.

For daily use: Coasters or placemats is best, sweating glasses will leave rings until you build up a wax finish:

For weekly cleaning: Those furniture polishes are OK but some will build up additional wax over time, this is OK, just be aware if it comes time for refinishing. This can be removed with mineral spirits before the refinishing steps below if things get dull over time.

For refinishing or after a couple years: If the wood is looking thirsty here is what I would do: Start with a clean table, mineral spirits off any wax build up and lightly sand out any scratches or dings if you need to. Sand with the grain with 220 or 320 grit sand paper. If you need to be more aggressive with sand paper after much hard use you can use 150 grit, but then always finish with the finer grits. Alternatively, just oiling over the "patina" works too and can be pretty simple and done in an hour, after all, antiques and their charm have to start somewhere. For oil, I use a blend of three parts Danish oil to one part Tung oil. Both are readily available at hardware stores. The blend is not super critical, just what I like to use. All Danish works in a pinch but adding the tung makes it richer. I wouldn't recommend all tung, it gets sticky.

1. Cut off the sleeves of an old t-shirt then cut the remainder of the body in half.
2. To apply the blended oil, dip the cut off sleeve (the older the better because most of the lint is gone) in the oil and lightly wring it out before wiping it on the table.
3. Get it all wiped on, not dripping wet, but enough to see that it is wet. Make sure there are no drips and that the whole wood surface is oiled.
4. Now wait 20 minutes from where you started
5. Then take the two big halves of the t-shirt and wipe it all down to remove the excess oil. It will be smooth wiping and the goal is to remove the surface oil so flip the rags around as you use them, and I generally use one in each hand so it's twice as fast and my hands don't get sticky. Give it a good strong wipe and buff.

If you waited too long before removing the oil the tung oil will start to get tacky, it should be a clean easy wipe off if you only left it on 20 minutes or so. If you wait too long, or it's 115 degrees out and it's difficult to get off, you can apply more oil and then wipe off sooner.

Now you know the process, oil, wait, wipe off.

6. Repeat steps 2-5 again in 24 hours.
7. And if you are a perfectionist one more time 24 hours after that although 70% of the oil is going to soak in after the first coat, 20% on the second, so you are having diminishing returns after two and might even be happy after one.
8. Finish with a wax coat. Finishing paste wax will give your table top a thin layer of protection against spills. Spills should still be wiped up immediately but the wax will give you a chance to get a sponge. To apply the wax fold a square of cheese cloth in two and take a golf ball size lump out of the can. Make a wrapped ball and the wax will slowly press out of the cheese cloth. Wipe on the wax evenly over the entire surface, wait five minutes, then buff it out. Wax on, Wax off. Heat makes it buff and penetrate so don't be afraid if you break a sweat.

Furniture that has sat for years without oil will really look great after a fresh oil. Do it in a well ventilated area, safety glasses, gloves, hard hat, etc.

That's what I know, most of all just enjoy your furniture and treat it like furniture. I enjoyed making it for you, I hope you enjoy using it.

