

HOME

EXPRESSIONS

HOME

Face-lifts for furniture

(SOP) There may be a beautiful piece of furniture hiding beneath that ugly bookcase or table in your basement. If it's structurally sound,

all it may need is a face-lift, according to furniture experts. Here are some tips from them to make refinishing easier and more

successful:

- Identify the finish. Varnish, lacquer and shellac should be removed by a different process than is used for paint and polyurethane. All-purpose strippers often are harsh and can strip the beautiful natural color of wood.
- To identify a finish: Touch a spot of the finish with a cotton ball dampened with nail polish re-

mover. If the cotton sticks or softens the finish, it's varnish, lacquer or shellac. If there's no effect, it's polyurethane.

- Pick the right product. Avoid products that have a water base or require a water rinse. Water can damage wood.
- Read all instructions thoroughly before starting. Follow the recommendations.

• Protect decorative trim. Cover mirrors, glass, leather, insets, stencils and other embellishments with heavy-duty plastic, cut to fit and secured with masking tape.

• To remove varnish, lacquer or shellac, use a furniture refinisher.

• Work on one area at a time. Apply refinisher with fine steel wool or a finish-removal pad. Work in a small area, about the size of a dinner plate, and stay with it until the finish is completely dissolved.

• Work from the top down to prevent old finish from running on to clean areas as it dissolves.

• For paint or polyurethane, choose a paint remover; the heavier the can, the more effective the product.

• Paint removers work best when the temperature is 65 to 85 degrees F (18 to 30 C).

• Stroke in one direction. Don't use a painting motion to apply paint remover. Do not touch the surface until all the bubbling action stops.

• If heavy paint spots remain, don't scrape or try to dig them out. You'll damage the wood. Apply more remover.

• To get paint out of wood grain or carvings, use a genuine brass brush and work in one direction.

• After removing paint, immediately wash the wood with paint remover wash on steel wool.

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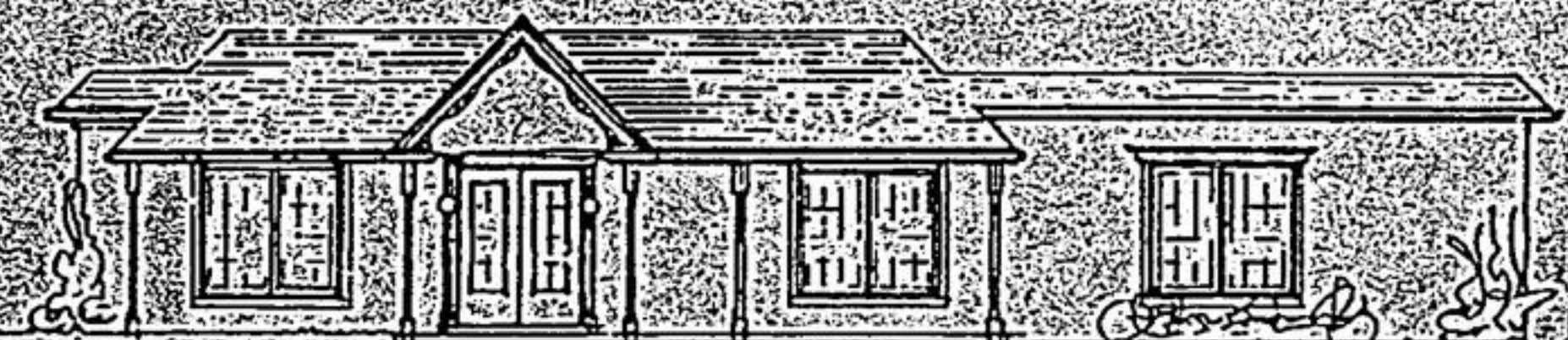
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