



Suggestions on how to remove and replace Laminate.

The Big Disclaimer: We have added this to our website by popular demand. We receive a number of requests on how to remove and replace the laminate on our tables. As an original equipment manufacturer, *we do not do this ourselves*. Tables are constructed by laminating whole sheets of furniture grade plywood, etc., and then cutting them to shape without regard to how to easily replace that laminate 10, 20 or 30 years down the road.

What we have here is the collected wisdom and advice from our engineering staff suggesting possible methods. THESE DIRECTIONS ARE NOT AT ALL SUFFICIENT TO EDUCATE SOMEONE WITH NO WOODWORKING EXPERIENCE WHATSOEVER TO CRAFT A LOOKS-GOOD-AS-FACTORY-NEW FINISH ON THEIR TABLE. Do additional research, find more resources, and practice on something that doesn't matter if you screw it up badly (which you probably will the first few times). Above all, proceed with care and caution, both for yourself and the table.

Valley-Dynamo is not liable for damage to your table (or you) while replacing your table's laminate. Proceed at your own risk.

Removal

Laminates are glued down with contact cement. It remains sticky most of its lifetime, but it breaks down easily with acetone (fingernail polish remover). This everyday chemical can be purchased at any paint or home improvement store in larger quantities. Insert the tip of a putty knife into any crack or joint. Inject some acetone into the crack, and wait a few minutes for the acetone to soften the glue. Begin pulling the laminate up with your hands. When it gets hard to pull, squirt some more acetone under it. Use the putty knife to cut loose strands of glue as you pull up on it. If it breaks off in pieces, that's fine. When you've removed all the laminate, scrape the gelled glue off with a putty knife. Use more acetone if needed to get the glue off stubborn spots.

Alternately, use of a heat gun will also frequently soften the glue to help allow you to remove the laminate.

HOWEVER if you use a Heat Gun AND Acetone there is a good chance you will also need a Fire Extinguisher, or someone nearby to dial 9, 1 and wait for you to scream. DO NOT EVER EVER EVER USE BOTH A HEAT GUN AND ACETONE FOR THIS OPERATION.

Preparation

When the area is dry and free of old glue, you're ready for new laminate. Begin by taking some measurements. We sell laminates for current colors of tables, sized to fit 8-foot models leaving more than enough to fit smaller tables. For other colors, many home improvement stores have laminates in stock that fit standard countertops. Purchase pieces as big as possible so you don't need to splice them together. Each piece of laminate should be at least one inch bigger around the perimeter of the area to be laminated to allow for routing. Plan where each piece will be placed. If needed, you can cut the laminate on a table saw to fit custom areas.

Cement and Dowels

They call it "Contact cement" because it bonds on contact. It has to be placed almost perfectly the first time because there is no do-over. You can't move it if you get it on crooked. Use a paintbrush or spray adhesive to cover the back of the piece that you're working on with contact cement. Do one piece at a time. Apply the adhesive to the area on the table where you plan on placing it.

Allow the cement to dry to the touch. If it's sticky, it's not ready. When the cement is dry, place 1/2-inch dowels on the area, parallel to each other six inches apart. Place the laminate on the dowels. The dowels hold the laminate up, away from the area surface. This allows you to adjust the laminate perfectly by moving it around on the dowels. Pull out the dowels one at a time. The laminate will settle into place exactly where you want it. Tap the surface of the laminate with a rubber mallet to bond it permanently.

Finishing

When the area is completely covered with laminate, you're ready to rout. Start by installing a 3/8-inch laminate bit into a router. This type of bit has a bearing at the bottom that protects the laminate. It has a cutting bit that trims the edges off flush and smooth. Place the router on the edge of the laminate anywhere it overhangs. Turn on the router, and ease the bit into the laminate. When the bearing makes contact with the edge, begin pulling the router toward your body. The bit trims the laminate off smooth. Trim all the way around the perimeter. Sand all of the edges by hand with a folded piece of 180-grit sandpaper. If the edges are rough, it's OK to smooth them first with a file and then sand them smoother with the sandpaper.

techhelp@valley-dynamo.com