



# Varnish Directory

Varnishes are final coatings which protect finished pictures from the build up of dirt and grease. There are a range of varnishes to suit your different needs. Details on when to use each varnish are on the chart below.

## OIL VARNISHES

There are three Winsor & Newton Oil Varnishes to choose from, Artists', Dammar and Wax. These are the highest performing removable varnishes and will remain so for up to 100 years.

### Artists' Gloss Varnish

A modern general purpose high gloss varnish that dries to a non yellowing gloss film. It is removable with white spirit.

### Artists' Matt Varnish

A superior quality Artists' Matt Varnish which represents the very latest in varnish chemistry. It remains readily removable with white spirit or turpentine. This also dries to a non yellowing film.

### Artists' Retouching Varnish

Dries to a non yellowing glossy film. Gives temporary protection to recently completed oil paintings, allowing the artist to make alterations.

### Dammar Varnish

A pale yellow varnish which dries to a high gloss finish for use on oil paintings. A traditional high gloss varnish which tends to darken with age.

## Wax Varnish

This varnish offers the most matt finish and remains easy to remove. It is a white paste which is rubbed onto a painting to achieve a soft sheen finish. When dry the surface should be polished with a soft brush or cloth.

## ACRYLIC VARNISH

Used to protect Acrylic painting this varnish is available in a gloss, satin or matt finish. In addition, varnishes may be intermixed for a variety of finishes and are removable.

## WATER MIXABLE OIL COLOUR VARNISH

The Water Mixable Oil Colour Varnish is a water based varnish which does not contain any hazardous solvents. Paintings should be allowed to dry completely before varnishing, at least 6-12 months for thin films, longer for impasto paintings. This varnish is available in gloss, satin or matt finish and can be removed with Artisan varnish remover.

## FAQ's on Varnish

Q: Do I really have to wait 6 months before varnishing an oil painting?

A: Yes. An oil film does feel touch-dry long before it's dry enough for varnishing. However, if you want the finished painting to be as stable as possible, you DO need to wait a minimum of 6 months or more.

Q: What happens if I don't wait 6 months?

A: The varnish will sink into the layer beneath and become part of the paint film. This results in a number of problems:

1. The varnish will not be able to be removed later without damaging the paint film.
2. The varnish may not fully dry, remaining tacky and picking up dust from the environment. If you have to varnish sooner, you may consider a retouch varnish (after 1 month of drying time). A good retouch varnish is made from a resin that's intended to be moderately homogenous with the paint layer.

Q: Can I use Liquin™ as a final coat?

A: No! Liquin is a great fast-drying medium, but it's not intended as a final coat or varnish.

Q: How can I tell when my painting is fully dried?

A: Dip a lint-free rag in solvent (white or 'mineral' spirits is fine), and rub gently on the painting surface. If colour shows more drying time is needed.

## Varnish your painting

**The ideal varnish offers three qualities: Superb clarity, removability (or 'reverse-ability'), and easy and even application. Varnishing is a very important part of any oil or acrylic painting.**

Varnish is desirable for two key reasons:

1. To bring the surface to a uniform gloss (or matt) level
2. For protection from dust and other atmospheric contaminants.

For an acrylic painting, the need is greater as the acrylic film approaches it's final dry state, the last few evaporating water molecules don't fully disappear, leaving micro-pores in the film. They remain open

indefinitely, meaning that the porous acrylic film can freely accumulate dust and grime from the atmosphere. The best way to protect the painted acrylic film is to varnish. Use an isolation coat of Gloss Medium before varnishing.

When varnishing an oil painting, it's essential to wait until the colour layer is thoroughly dry and oxidized. That can require from six months to a year or more, depending upon the thickness of the film. Acrylic paintings will be ready for varnishing once water has fully evaporated from the film. Depending upon film thickness, that will require anywhere between a few days to a number of weeks.