Recovering Furniture with Plastic

Vanis Deeter

Martha Jo Bentley
CARE OF PLASTIC UPHOLSTERY

Use mild soap and water to wash off surface soil. Most plastics are to be used indoors exclusively. Check with the manufacturer if outdoor use is desired.

LOOSE CUSHIONS

When turning square corners in sewing the cushion, make a single slash at the corner. This should be not quite into the stitching of the cording.

Either the entire back boxing or one-half the underneath side of the cushion should be of fabric to provide adequate air escape and intake.

Plastic upholsteries are now available in many beautiful colors and textures. There are two types, those with a fabric back and those smooth backed. A strong, fabric back permanently anchored to the plastic sheeting helps eliminate splitting, tearing and wrinkling. It reduces damage from snags and punctures. Smooth backed plastics tightly pulled on a chair may tear from stitching, tack holes or slashes.

Working with plastic is rather difficult for the amateur on the first chair. This is because plastic is stiff and has very little give.

Mimeo HE-235
May, 1954 (5M)

RECOVERING FURNITURE
WITH PLASTIC

Home Furnishings Specialists
Vanis Deeter and
Martha Jo Bentley

Fabric Supported

Smooth Back

Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, State of Indiana, Purdue University and the United States Department of Agriculture Cooperating.
E. L. Butz, Director, Lafayette, Indiana.
Issued in furtherance of the Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914.

Purdue University
Agricultural Extension Service
Lafayette, Indiana
stretch. However, with patience and perseverance, a nice job can be accomplished. The following suggestions are made to make the job easier and to help in obtaining a more professional-looking upholstery cover.

**TOOLS**

As in recovering a chair with any fabric, always use a **magnetic tack hammer**. This allows one hand to pull the plastic while the other hand uses the hammer with the tack on it. **Scissors** which are sharp, especially at the end are a necessity. Upholstery **tacks in No. 4 size work best.**

**TEMPERATURE**

Work in a warm room 70° to 85° to make plastic more pliable. Exposure to the sun for a few minutes before working with it helps too.

**TACKING**

Space tacks ¾ to 1 inch apart, except on corners where they should be about ½ inch. Place them in as nearly a straight line as possible rather than staggering them. Drive tacks only part way in until the entire piece is tacked. This is called tack basting. By this method, any part can be released and tightened or shifted then re-tacked without damaging the plastic. Any experimental tacking should be below the finished line. A hole results when a tack is moved.

Do not drive the tack head into the plastic during the final tacking.

**CUTTING**

Take length and width measurements (at the widest place) of each part of the chair between original seams. Allow 2 inches on each measurement for seam and fitting allowance. Make two charts (see examples below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chart I</th>
<th>Name of the piece</th>
<th>length + 2&quot;</th>
<th>width + 2&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>example</td>
<td>cushion</td>
<td>33 + 2 = 35&quot;</td>
<td>14 + 2 = 16&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cushion boxing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>inside arm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>outside arm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>front scroll</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>front below cushion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cording</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTCHING**

Notches at corners and around arm posts always present a problem. Before notches are cut, be sure the plastic will not need to be shifted. Make notches with a rounded look rather than slashes. This prevents further tearing from the cut.

**FITTING**

Smooth the plastic into place while working from the center out, moving the air from underneath.

**SEWING**

Use 5 to 7 stitches per inch, sewing at least ½ inch from the edge. Release of pressure on the pressure foot may be necessary to help the plastic through the machine.