Banister Makeover Step Sheet

Your complete sequence and supply list for a durable espresso finish.

Track every layer from the initial scuff-sand to the final topcoat. Keep this guide handy to ensure perfect dry times and a flawless finish.



Curing & Coating Times

65-75°F
Room temp for the entire week

45 minutes
Shellac-prime spindles dry time

4 hours
Spindles: trim enamel recoat time

3 thin coats, satin
Gel stain over old oak

24 hours
Wait time between stain layers

72 hours
Gentle treatment while surface cures

30 days
Wait before using wet cleaners

Gloved-Hand Rub-In

Wear a nitrile glove under a clean cotton sock to massage the thick pigment into the wood, ensuring seamless wiping on curved profiles without sticky pooling.

Makeover Sequence

1. **Protect & Prep** Tape bases, seal with putty knife, clean with degreaser, then scuff-sand the surfaces.
2. **Prime & Paint Spindles** Apply shellac to block tannins, smooth, then apply self-leveling urethane trim enamel.
3. **Degloss Handrail** Strip factory finish, then wipe with mineral spirits to remove residual chemical sludge.
4. **Apply Gel Stain** Build deep espresso color gradually, massaging pigment onto the sealed wood and wiping excess away.
5. **Smooth & Topcoat** Lightly abrade raised fibers, dust with a microfiber cloth, then apply wipe-on polyurethane.

Choose Your Prep Method

Find your row: **Handrail surface profile**

Handrail surface profile	Your pick	Why
Intricate curves	Liquid deglosser	Low mess, chemically etches
Flat broad areas	Power sanding	High mess, physically levels
Between topcoats	Hand scuffing	Medium mess, lightly abrades

Project Supply List

- [ ] Heavy canvas drop cloths & heavy-duty painter's tape
- [ ] Plastic putty knife & lint-free cloths
- [ ] 120-grit & 220-grit sandpaper
- [ ] Shellac primer & urethane trim enamel
- [ ] Liquid deglosser & mineral spirits
- [ ] Gel stain & wipe-on polyurethane
- [ ] Nitrile gloves & clean cotton socks
- [ ] 400-grit sanding sponge & microfiber cloth
- [ ] Degreaser for pre-sanding cleanup

Workspace Checks

- ◯ Confirm cross-ventilation by opening windows at top and bottom of staircase.
- ◯ Verify room temperature will remain steady for the entire curing process.
- ◯ Test the new dark stain on an inconspicuous spot for proper adhesion.
- ◯ Ensure adjacent stair treads and flooring are completely covered and sealed.

Project Notes

Enjoy your beautifully transformed banister and the fresh, updated look of your entryway!