

STAINING AND FINISHING PVC PIPE

I have built few hundred spiral stairs using all different kinds of balusters, metal, wood, plastic. Making a round wood handrail for an inexpensive stair is impossible, it cost too much. You have to mold and glue a 2½"x2½" layered laminated wood rail then pull it from you clamp irons that you have installed on the steps, then round it over and sand it to get the profile that you want. I have a ¾" round over bit for this purpose, to make a rounded over wooden railing. It takes a lot of time and precise carpentry work to make these.



For a lot of less expensive spiral stairs I use a piece of 2" pvc schedule 40 pipe. I bend the rail to the 6"x6" clamping irons that I use for making a bending rail on a spiral stair. I mark the baluster locations from the points on the tread and then mark exactly where I want to drill the hole for the baluster. I am going to get into showing you how to build a spiral stair in a few months. Now for the main reason of this article, I take 24 grit sandpaper and grain the pvc pipe, cutting scratches in it. Some of them are straight and some are at a

little bit of an angle, but grain it all the way around and then smooth the rough pieces off with some 50 grit. You can use a paste stain or regular wood stain. I take a brush and brush the stain on until I get the color and deepness of stain that I want. You want to let this dry and then apply 2 or 3 coats of polyurethane floor finish to the rail.



I have a very expensive camera that I take these pictures with, but it does not do justice to what this stained part on the right side of this pvc looks like. It will fool some carpenters when they see a scratched, stained pvc rail, until they get up close and see what you have done. But I will guarantee you from 3' away it looks like wood. I have done some 6" pvc columns filled with concrete and you have to get up close to see that they are not wood, and some people never realize that it is poly-vinyl chloride that they are looking at. You will have to get you some pvc, stain, brush and some poly and practice this. But this article should give you a lot of ideas about using pvc.

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