

Atreus Keyboard Assembly: Lacquered Case

The wooden Atreus Keyboard case can be made with an oil/wax finish, but if you have the patience to apply several coats of lacquer finish you can get a very pleasing shiny look with a smoother texture. You'll need a few items in addition to what's in the kit:

- Sandpaper of various grits: at least 100, 220, 600, and 1200
- Sanding block
- Small can of lacquer
- Oil/wax mixture (from kit)

Start by sanding everything with the 100-grit paper, then take a second pass over the exposed surfaces with 220. Pay special attention to remove the scorch marks from the laser cutting.

Once the case is sanded down all over with 220-grit, apply your first coat of lacquer. This coat can be laid down pretty thickly. Check the can to see how long your particular product needs to dry; this can vary by composition. In some cases it can take a day between layers. Once your first coat is dry, apply a second all over.

After the second coat, you can ignore all surfaces except for the top of the top plate and the bottom of the bottom plate since only these are exposed to the outside. At this point you can take the switch plate and continue the rest of the keyboard construction while you wait for lacquer coats to dry.

Apply a third coat that's a bit thinner than the first two. Look for bubbles in the lacquer and try to pop them and smooth them out as it dries. Once it's nearly dry, take your 600-grit sandpaper and soak it in water with a drop or two of dish soap for an hour or so. Sand down the lacquer lightly, taking care to clean out the gritty residue in between every few strokes.

Once you've done that, apply another coat of lacquer and repeat the last step with your next grade up of sandpaper. You'll want a total of at least five coats, and you can go up to 2000-grit for the smoothest possible finish. The sanding on the last coat should be very light so as not to go through to the coat below.

After each lacquering, the board will feel slightly sticky. As a final step, take the wax/oil mixture from the kit and spread it over the outer two surfaces with your fingers, rubbing it into the finish as a polish. This should take care of any lingering stickiness.

Congratulations; you should have a beautifully-finished case. Enjoy!