

Paint Shop Pro Tutorial

Weathered Wood

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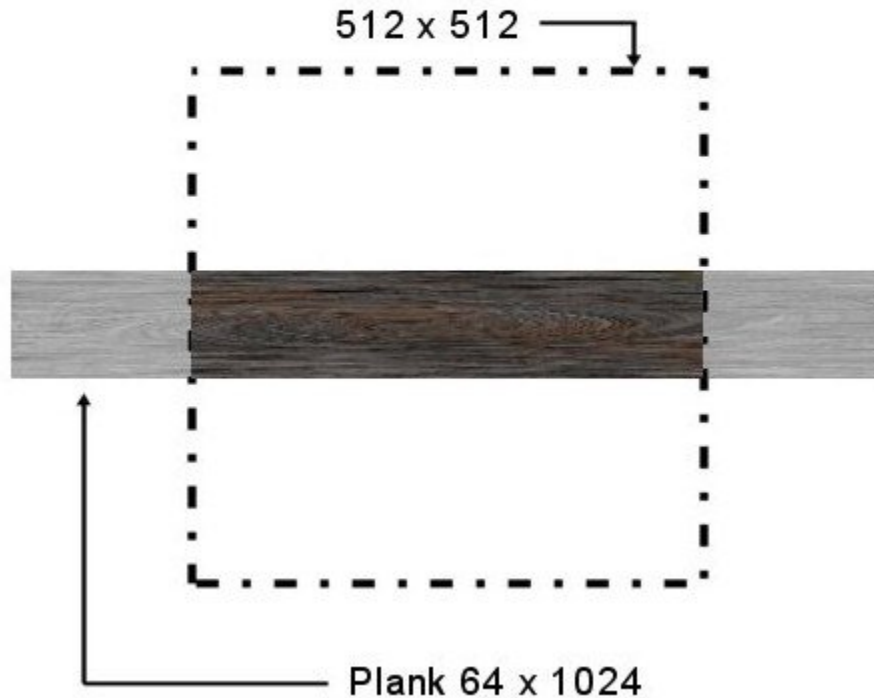
Weathered Wood

In this tutorial we'll explore a way to create a basic wood texture. Next we'll show you some ways to give the wood more realism and character. The concepts in this tutorial can be applied to other types of textures so even if what you wanted was a tutorial on how to make rusty steel, damaged bricks or cracked stone you should find this informative.



I created the above group of planks using the techniques I am going to outline here. You can use this basic concept to produce several planks to build doors, tables, crates and other wood textures. Save your creations as layers in a *Library* folder so that you can modify and reuse them.

You can see what I mean in the next image. Imagine the plank in your library is 1024 pixels wide but your finished texture will only be 512 pixels wide. You can paste the bigger texture as a layer, flip it or drag it to the right or left to vary the appearance.



The Color Layer

The next step is to add some color...the most basic way of doing this is simply to add a layer, flood fill it with a wood color and try different layer blend modes to combine the layers (Color, Multiply, Burn, Overlay). You can see a simple example of this in image 1 below.

Here are several things you can try to improve your results.

1. Go to one of the many free digital photo sites on the web and find a photo of some real wood; apply it as a layer and any grain or knots in the photo will be added to yours when you blend the layers. Or you could take the photo, blur out all the details and then apply this as a color layer. The benefit of this is that the color range will be based on a real image...the problem with this is that sometimes there is real world lighting and shadow in the image that may have to be corrected.
2. A better approach in my opinion is just to use the airbrush to paint your own color map; you can use a photo and the eye dropper tool to pick colors from a photo of real wood if you have an effect that you want to match. *Don't be afraid to experiment with the drawing tools!*

I generally add a new layer called 'Color 1' and then I select the airbrush, set the density low, opacity about 50% and the brush size large and lightly spray on a base wood color. I then pick other wood colors, make the brush smaller, vary the density and spray that color. You can do this on one layer, or multiple layers (*Color1, Color 2, ...Color 10 etc*) if you want to be able to have more control; you can also go back and change just one color by editing the corresponding layer this way.

If you want more details you can set the layer opacity to 50% so that you can see the grain in the layer beneath and then spray or brush different colors to follow a crack, knot or other feature (which is why I generally create use quite a few layers such as Color 1, Color 2, Cracks, Dirt, Nails, Mold etc so I can go back and forth and tweak things).

You can see in image 1 below a basic grain pattern I drew using the techniques in this tutorial. Image 2 shows a more complex texture I did by creating the base texture as outlined previously, then used a few more advanced techniques to add more depth and character -I touch on these briefly below.



Image 3 shows basic color layer using 3 or 4 variations of brown. Image 4 the same base texture with a more 'weathered wood' look created by using slightly different color combinations.

Improving the Texture

There are a few things you can do to add more realism to these textures. I may cover some of these in more depth in future tutorials but for now here are a few quick tips.

1. Use the techniques in my "Creating Cracks, Seams and Fissures" tutorial and add some grooves and other features to the wood. Wood that has been exposed to the elements is seldom smooth and even. Light, water, dirt, insects, age, Vikings, trolls and other circumstances will all leave marks. These dings and dents can add character and atmosphere to your art.
2. Experiment with using the freehand selection tool to pick out areas of the wood, while following the grain perhaps, and then try inner or outer bevels, shadows and other effects to create more surface variety - the axe marks and raised areas on the image on page 2 of this tutorial were made that way.
3. Add more layers for stuff like nails, and grunge, scratch marks, burns and so on.
4. Try using the warp tools, and other distortion filters, to increase the sense of depth by selecting areas with the freehand selection tools and making them less *perfect*. Select some of the cracks, then create or make some images of moss or mold and tuck those into these cracks. The trick is to have fun experimenting -after all this isn't *real wood*, so go ahead and beat it up!
5. Remember that many materials reflect the light and colors of surrounding objects so you may want to make a layer and use it to adjust the colors to give a sense of this; for example a brass plate on a wood plank reflects the wood a little and the wood around the plate is slightly affected by the color of the brass. These effects can be very slight but our eyes are use to these subtle clues; even if people aren't consciously aware of all these little bits you add it will increase the overall realism of your work.



6. Try adding knots and similar details by using the selection tools; select an elliptical area and use the Geometric Effects to twirl it and form a knot, or wave it ever so slightly so they are not all straight grains -the variations of the texture on page 1 of this tutorial were done this way.

By combining several of these layers and effects you can get a more realistic result. *Don't over do any one feature!* To often we spend a lot of time on a detail like nails or mold and we naturally want everyone to *ooohh* and *ahhhh*. What often happens is the image ends up being gaudy, too bright or colorful or just sticks out like a sore thumb. A better result can be obtained if you step back and look at the overall effect.