

# CLEANING UP THE EDGES ON A DOPED COVERING JOB

by Dick Fischer

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When you cover a model with silk or polyspan, there are inevitably spots where you have overlapped on solid balsa and leave a step or even a small bubble. Sometimes a corner is sticking up that resists laying down. An example of the overlap is where the bottom and top covering come together at the leading edge and trailing edge of a wing.

You can sand the overlap to make it go away. But you have to pile on a couple extra coats of dope in the overlap area so you have something to sand. If you didn't put on enough dope, you will develop a fuzz when you sand down into the covering. Then you need even more dope to stiffen up the fuzz so you can sand again.

The alternative? Dress everything down with your Monokote iron. It works just fine. Give the dope at least a few hours to dry. Go over the surface with your fingers to identify any rough spots, seams, or little bubbles. Set the iron on a fairly low heat and go over any imperfections. The right temperature seems to be around 130 to 140F. If you go over 140 the dope will want to melt and stick to the iron. You're not shrinking like Monokote, you are softening the dope and mashing it flat.

Just remember that dope, particularly nitrate, is flammable. Don't keep turning up the iron to get more effect. If a spot doesn't want to stay down, try working more slowly and use a bit more pressure. A few minutes spent dressing the surface with an iron will eliminate 95% of the sanding that's usually necessary.

*(Ed Note: I haven't yet tried this, but I would suspect it would work just as well for tissue covering. The note above about nitrate being flammable is worth paying close attention to. Keep the iron where he says and avoid the excitement of a smoking pile of balsa.*