

A little planning helps make painting easier

Painting.
On the surface, it sounds like a cinch. All you do is dress up like da Vinci, grab a brush or roller and slap on the color.

What you end up with might be satisfactory, albeit not "The Last Supper."

But then again, it might not because painting's just like anything else.

The more time you spend planning and finding out what the job's all about, the happier you're going to be with the results.

Some experts have honed the subtleties of painting into a science. Following are some tips they offer to help you when you've decided the interior or exterior of your home isn't making it anymore and needs a fresh coat of paint.

For walls and ceilings you'll probably want a good latex (water-based) paint.

Latex is easy to apply, dries quickly and splatters are easy to wipe up with a wet cloth or sponge. The surface is as durable as oil-based paint and can be cleaned easily with soap and water.

To determine how much paint you're going to need, measure the width of each wall you're going to paint, add the figures together and multiply by the ceiling height. This gives you the total area in square feet. Deduct areas not being painted such as doors and windows. The average spreading rate for a quality paint is 400 square feet per gallon.

For exteriors, multiply the width by the height of each surface to be painted, again subtracting areas not to be painted such as doors and windows. Exterior coverage per gallon varies significantly depending on the type of surface and application technique. Check with your dealer on how much paint you'll need for those measurements and the surface you're dealing with.

If you're repainting and not drastically changing colors, one coat of good quality paint is often enough. You'll need a primer, though, if the surface is unpainted wood, metal or masonry.

Previously painted surfaces often need a primer if the bare wood or metal is exposed after deteriorating paint or rust has been removed. Primers can be tinted very close to the color of your final coat.

If you're going to use a brush, get a quality one. It will hold paint better, spread better, won't drop its bristles into your work, will clean easier, last longer and save you money.

For latex paint, use a brush with synthetic bristles — nylon or polyester. Natural bristles are for oil paint.

When you dip the brush into the bucket of paint, cover the bristles one-third of the way

and don't drag the bristles against the edge of the can as you pull the brush out. This takes away half the paint the brush should be hold. Instead pat off any excess paint on the can's lip.

Rollers can cut painting time by two-thirds, but be sure to get a good roller. That means a roller sleeve with a core that won't bend with pressure. For latex paint, use a nylon or mohair roller. Lambswool is for oil-based paints only. Check with your dealer for the proper length of pile.

When using a roller, start by pouring a small amount of well-stirred paint from the can into the paint tray. Roll the roller in the tray so it is completely covered with paint. Then remove the excess paint from the roller by rolling it over the ribbed party of the tray.

If you try to paint with a too-full roller, drips, runs and splatters will leave you with a big cleanup job. Roll the paint on with even strokes while applying light pressure, rolling in one direction, then over-rolling in the other. Finish off with strokes in one direction for a neater look.

Most professional painters prefer to scrape windowpanes rather than spend the money and time to use masking tape. If you use masking tape, remember to take it off before the paint fully dries.

Professionals say that when you're painting exteriors, you should follow the sun and paint with the wind. This means you should allow the sun to dry the surface thoroughly and paint as the shade reaches the area. This will prevent too-fast drying on top. If you paint with the wind rather than into it, it won't make ripples on your work and it won't blow any drips back onto the work you've finished.

Don't paint the exterior in temperatures lower than 50 degrees Fahrenheit and don't paint if there's a chance of rain before the paint dries.

If you take a break while painting, put your brush or roller in a plastic bag and put a damp cloth over the top of the can or roller pan of latex paint. If the paint is oil-based, use a rag with solvent thinner on it.

Don't go all the way to the bottom of a gallon can before start another one. While there is still a quarter of a can left, stir up a new gallon. Pour the new paint into the old can and mix them back and forth a few times. This will minimize the chance of any visible color variations.

Apply cold cream or mineral oil to your face, hands and arms before you start painting, then any splatters will wipe right off when you finish.

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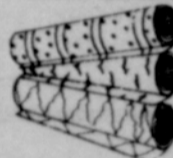


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