



Maintaining the Home

Selecting and Applying Paint

Maintaining the Home: Selecting and Applying Paint

Painting is easy

There are many reasons why interior painting is the nation's most popular home improvement project. Painting can quickly and dramatically transform the appearance of a room, an apartment or an entire home. It can be personally rewarding, inexpensive and fun. Moreover, interior painting is easy. Even novices can often get professional painting results by following just three simple rules:

Rule number one: Prepare the surface properly

- Good paint performance depends on good paint adhesion and paint adheres best to surfaces that are clean. Before picking up a brush or roller, it is important to make sure the surface is suitable for paint.
- Accumulated dirt, dust and grime should be removed from walls, ceilings and trim with a detergent-water solution. After washing, the surfaces should be thoroughly rinsed with water and allowed to dry completely.
- A putty knife should be used to fill cracks, holes and other surface imperfections with either spackling compound or a quality acrylic caulk. If spackling is used, after it is dry it should be sanded smooth and flush with the surface; caulk should be smoothed and feathered as it is applied.
- If walls or ceilings have water stains or other serious discoloration, then before painting, it may be necessary to coat them with a latex or

oil-based stain-blocking primer to prevent the stains from bleeding through the new paint.

Rule number two: Use only quality paint

- Compared with ordinary interior paints, quality finishes are much easier to work with and offer superior long-term performance.
- In terms of application benefits, quality paints do not spatter or tend to show brush marks. And since they hide better than ordinary paints, a single coat is often sufficient to give a great looking paint job and save on time, labor and cost.
- Quality interior paints also are more durable than ordinary interior paints. They resist fading, yellowing and staining and even if they do get spotted or stained, discoloration can often be washed off without damaging the finish.

Rule number three: Invest in quality tools

- To get the most from top quality interior paint, apply it with high quality brushes and rollers. Not only will they apply the paint more evenly, but they also will make the job more effortless
- The best brushes tend to be well balanced, hold a lot of paint and apply the paint evenly. Look for brushes with tightly packed bristles and test them for springiness. Also, be sure they do not fan too much.
- When applying the more popular latex or water-based interior paints, it is important to

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use brushes and rollers with synthetic bristles and covers. They will maintain the proper stiffness and keep their shape regardless of the amount of water they are exposed to. Most oil-based paints can be applied with brushes and rollers made either of synthetic or natural materials.

Interior painting can be as simple as one-two-three, but there are no shortcuts. For the best results, good surface preparation and quality paint and tools are essential.

How to paint

It is important to follow a specific sequence when you paint. Always paint a room from top to bottom – ceiling first, then walls, windows, doors and finally baseboards.

Ceilings

First make a 2-inch wide strip with a brush around the edges of the ceiling. This is called edging. Switch to a roller (usually 3/8 inch for flat paints) with a 4 to 5-foot extension pole. Starting at a corner, paint a section about 3 feet square. Use a zigzag pattern on the ceiling, which will disperse the paint on the roller evenly. Fill in this 3-foot section without reloading the roller until you have complete coverage. Continue to cover the ceiling, working across its shortest dimension in 3-foot square sections, overlapping while paint is wet to minimize lap marks.

Walls

Starting at the ceiling, make a 2-inch strip edge with a brush. Continue with the brush to make the 2-inch strips in corners, around windows, doors, cabinets and baseboards. **Note:** There are tools available at local paint stores that help make edging easier. Other tricks include sliding the roller cover off the holder slightly so the rollers edge gets closer to the ceiling, window or door.

Switch to a roller and paint in a vertical direction using a zigzag pattern. Push the roller upward

on the first stroke, then form an “M” pattern to evenly distribute the paint on the roller. Work in 3-foot sections. Fill in the “M” pattern without reloading the roller until you have complete coverage of the area. Continue with this approach until the wall is finished. Touching up spots you missed when the paint is wet will help minimize potential sheen differences.

Most manufacturers recommend that when you finish one wall, be sure you have enough paint to complete the next wall. Starting with another can of paint in the middle of a wall can result in slightly different colors, which will be noticeable side by side.

Doors

Open doors wide to reach all the parts to be covered. Protect hinges and other metal with masking tape. Always start at the top. If the door is paneled, paint the panels first, the horizontal sections next and finally the vertical sections. If the door opens into the room you are painting, use the same color on the latch edge that you have used for the rest of the door. If it opens into the next room, do not paint the hinged edge. It should be the same color as the other room.

Decks

Due to the growing popularity of decks, there are now a variety of deck finishes. These finishes range from conventional to new water-based latex products. In the alkyd category, there are clear, semitransparent and opaque finishes. In latex, semitransparent and opaque finishes are available.

Many homeowners are starting to use the semitransparent or opaque finishes to maximize the protection and duration of their deck coating.

Begin by cleaning to remove dirt, mildew and old coatings. If you are using clear, penetrating coatings, deck-brightening products help restore a new wood look to the wood. Both sides of the railings should also be cleaned.

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Brushes and rollers

Once the deck is clean and thoroughly dry, start with a brush on the outside of the deck, on tops of the railing and work your way down to the deck, then in toward the house. Then switch to a roller for the deck, starting at an outside edge and working toward the house. Use even pressure on the roller on each board to give uniform coverage and sheen.

Spraying is another way to coat decks. This technique is faster than a brush or roller, but you must be sure to protect shrubs or other items from over spray. Spray equipment can be rented at many paint stores, home centers or rental companies. Check with a paint professional for tip size and pressure settings, which will depend on the type of coating used. Spray railings first, unless the railings are to be a different color than the deck. Then the deck should be coated first. One tip for protecting plants or other objects from over spray is to tape craft paper to the outside of the railing, to catch the over spray. When spraying the deck itself, spray evenly over a 6-foot square area, then go over that area with a 1-inch nap roller to spread coating evenly into deck. Continue this procedure in sections until deck is covered. Be sure to use a large shield (such as 4-foot square piece of cardboard) when painting alongside the house to protect it from over spray.

Windows

Of all the woodwork in the home, windows suffer the most stress. Constant exposure to temperature changes and condensation means that windows often need to be painted more frequently than doors, moldings and trim.

Unfortunately, the process involved in painting windows can be confusing. To simplify things, the Rohm and Haas Paint Quality Institute offers some window-painting guidelines that can save you time, money and aggravation.

Start by gathering the right tools for window painting including:

- a 1 1/2-inch or 2-inch quality brush (use synthetic bristles if you are painting with one of the popular latex interior paints);
- a cutting-in brush for precision work;
- a paint shield or masking tape;
- a screwdriver;
- enough top quality paint to complete the job.

Remove locks, curtain hooks and other hardware from the windows. This will speed your work and produce a better paint job.

Double-hung windows

For double-hung windows, follow this six-step procedure:

1. Raise the bottom sash and lower the top sash most of the way, so that there is a 6-inch overlap. Paint the bottom horizontal section of the top sash, then the accessible vertical members. Use care to keep paint from getting in between sash and frame, which can glue the window in place.
2. Nearly close the upper and lower sashes, then finish painting the rest of the top sash.
3. Paint the entire bottom sash.
4. After allowing the sashes to dry, paint the window frame.
5. Close the windows and paint the exposed parts of the runners. If your windows have sash cords, avoid getting paint on them.
6. Paint the windowsill and apron.

Casement windows

If your home has any casement windows (windows that open out or in, rather than up or down), use a different technique:

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1. Open the windows and paint the top, side and bottom edges.
2. Paint the crossbars and frame casings.
3. Complete the job by painting the sill and apron.

Regardless of the type of windows you are painting, if you have a steady hand, you can keep paint on the frame and off the glass by using the cutting-in brush. But be sure to overlap the paint onto the glass slightly to help seal off moisture and drafts.

There are two other techniques for keeping paint off of the windowpanes: holding up a paint shield as you work or applying masking tape to the glass.

When using tape, press it firmly to the glass to keep excess paint from creeping beneath it. (If stray specks of paint get onto the glass, simply remove them with a razor blade.) Remove the tape before the paint dries to a hard film.

Some final tips from the experts at the Paint Quality Institute:

Before starting to paint, repair any damage to the window and properly prepare the surface. This can be done by scraping off old paint, then sanding, and priming any spots where bare wood shows. (Get more advice on surface preparation at a local paint retailer, hardware store or decorating center.)

- Paint windows early in the day so that they have enough time to dry before you close them in the evening.
- Finish painting each piece in the direction of the wood grain.

This material was adapted from publications produced by The Rohm and Haas Paint Quality Institute. More information can be found on the Web at <http://www.paintquality.com>.

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*This resource is one in a series on **Maintaining the Home** which include:*

Interior Maintenance

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Make a Basic Toolkit for Simple Home Repairs
Selection and Use of Home Cleaning Products
Discovering the Secrets of Successful Storage

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Fireplace and Chimney Care

Cooling

Evaporative Cooler
Air Conditioner
Ceiling Fans

Plumbing

Fixing Plugged Sink Drains
How to Unclog a Toilet
Repairing Dripping Faucets

Electrical

How to Set or Reset a Circuit Breaker
How to Replace a Fuse

Appliances

How to Buy an Energy Efficient Home Appliance
Choosing a Water Heater

Maintenance:

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Dryer Care and Dryer Cleaning
Freezer Care and Freezer Cleaning
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Range and Oven Care and Range Cleaning
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Small Electrical Appliance Care and Cleaning
Washer Care and Cleaning

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Selecting Fabric For Home Furnishings

Exterior Maintenance

Home Exterior

Foundations, Basements and Yards
Exterior Walls, Windows, and Doors

Roof

A Guide To Roofs
Roof Maintenance

Landscaping and Lawn Care

Principles of Xeriscape
Watering Your Lawn

Home Safety

Child-Proofing Your Home
Is Your Home Safe From Fire Hazards?
Smoke Alarms Save Lives
Carbon Monoxide Alarms
Are Your Children Safe From Poisons?
Protecting Yourself Against Burglary

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Conservation

Weatherize Your Home
Easy Tips to Save Money and the Planet
How to Stop Air Leaks Around Windows
Energy-Efficient Heating and Cooling
Indoor Water Conservation Tips
Outdoor Water Conservation Tips

Environment Issues

Green Building
Reduce-Reuse-Recycle: Alternatives for Waste Management
Create a home recycling center
Healthy Indoor Air for New Mexico Homes
Dealing with Mold
Household Hazardous Waste
Hazardous Household Substances: Alternatives That Are Relatively Free of Toxic Effects
Radon

Pest Control

Cockroaches and Their Control
Southwest Insects

Accessible Living

Update your home for a lifetime of living
Vision Loss & Hearing Loss
Hand Dexterity, Strength and Range of Motion
Cognitive Difficulties
Mobility Impairments, Balance and Coordination

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