



## **INTERIOR PAINTING**

### **Types of paint:**

**Oil-based (alkyd) paint** forms a surface coating that doesn't allow water or moisture to pass through. Its advantage is that it is durable and can withstand repeated scrubbing. On the other hand, it is slower to apply, tends to make imperfections more visible, and is harder to clean up. It is also more expensive. Oil-based paint is gradually being phased out by manufacturers because of health concerns caused by volatile organic compounds. You will need to clean up this type of paint with paint thinner.

**Latex-based paint** attaches to the surface in a way that allows the surface to breathe, and moisture and water to pass through. It is easy to apply and clean up, and dries faster with less odor, but is not as durable as oil-based paint. Latex paint comes in several different degrees of shine – flat, eggshell, semi-gloss, and gloss. The duller the paint, the better it will hide surface imperfections, but the less it will stand up to regular cleaning. Latex can be purchased in an enamel-type mixture, which combines the ease of use of Latex paint with the durability of oil-based paint. All Latex paints can be cleaned up with warm soapy water.

### **Where each type of paint should be used:**

Oil-based paint is generally used only for woodwork or trim. Occasionally, it is used for walls and ceilings in baths, kitchens, or other high-moisture areas.

Latex paint is used for ceilings and walls anywhere. Semi-gloss latex enamel is frequently used to paint woodwork and trim.

Most painters will tell you that latex can be applied on top of oil, but never oil over latex.

### **Preparation:**

First, a word of caution. If there is any chipping or peeling paint, or if you are thinking about stripping the old paint off the surface before repainting, inform yourself about the **dangers of lead-based paint** before you proceed. If your house was built before 1978, there is a good chance that lead-based paint was used on the exterior *or interior* of your house. **Using the wrong preparation methods can pose a serious health hazard to your family.** (See separate handouts on “Controlling Lead-Based Paint during Your Paint Repair Project.”)

Taking these precautions into account, proper preparation of the surfaces you are going to paint will go much further to create a good finished job than anything else you can do.

Tools needed:	2” or 3” stiff putty knife	Vinyl spackling	Sandpaper
	Hammer	Masking tape	Sanding block
	Screwdriver	Tarps	

Start by removing all switch plates and outlet covers. Then, pull out any nails from the walls. Fill all cracks and nail holes with vinyl spackling and, when dry, sand them smooth. Unscrew and lower – or tape around the edge of – all light fixtures. (Garbage bags work well for covering hanging light fixtures.) Cover any stained woodwork or doors that you aren't

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going to paint, and then cover the floor with tarps. Give the walls one final check for any bumps or valleys; scrape or sand them off or fill them in, as needed. (*Note: Do not use an electric sander on uneven plaster, unless it is specially designed to sand drywall. Plaster dust can ruin the motors of other sanders.*) Washing the walls and woodwork with a household cleaner at this point will help the new paint adhere better.

If you are painting over new drywall, cover the wall with one coat of PVA primer, then a coat of high-hiding water-base primer (like Kilz™) before the finish coat is applied.

### Painting procedures:

Tools needed: 1-1/2" or 2" angled sash brush      ladder      9" roller frame and cover  
single-edge razor blades      roller pan      extension pole

There are three different surfaces to be painted: the ceiling, the walls, and the woodwork. Start with the ceiling. Paint around the edges first (this is called "cutting in"), using the sash brush. It doesn't pay to buy a cheap brush; it won't cover with one coat and will leave streaks. You'll pay more for a quality brush, but it will last a long time if properly cleaned.

Dip only the first third of the brush in the paint. Then, gently wipe the excess off on the side of the can. Cover the entire joint where the ceiling and the wall meet. It doesn't matter if you get some paint on the wall. After you have cut in, then you are ready to roll the rest of the ceiling. Note that latex paint dries in about an hour, so to prevent the "wet edge" of the paint you have already applied from drying before you roll, you'll need to work steadily – or you'll have a visible ridge when the paint dries.

Roller covers can be purchased with several different naps (material thickness) on the surface of the roller cover. The shortest nap is for very smooth walls; the longest naps are for brick or stucco surfaces. Choose the shortest one that will do the job. "Smooth" or "semi-smooth" are the naps most frequently used for walls and ceilings.

Roll the roller through the paint in the roller pan, and then roll the excess off at the top of the pan. Then, start applying the paint to the ceiling, using an even, gentle pressure and a random pattern (a "W" pattern that overlaps itself often works well.) Even pressure will prevent roller tracks, which will be visible after the paint dries. If you roll slowly, you will be less likely to splatter paint from the roller.

After finishing the ceiling, start on the walls. If you are using a different color on the walls than you used on the ceiling, you can wash out the roller sleeve and then re-use it for the walls. You can also wash out the roller pans, or you can use inexpensive roller pan liners, which you change with each new paint color.

Before you paint, apply masking tape to prevent slopping paint on the ceiling. Start by cutting in all the corners and where the walls meet the ceiling; then, cut in around the window and door trim and at the baseboards. Then, roll the wall paint on like you did the ceiling.

Once the walls are finished, you can use the sash brush to paint the door and window trim and the baseboards. You can also use the brush to paint any doors. Hold the brush like you hold a pen. The angle of the brush will aid you in getting into corners and other tight spots. Don't worry if you slop a little paint on the glass; it will actually look neater if you scrape the glass with a razor blade after the paint has dried.

If paint fumes bother you, you can buy relatively inexpensive masks to help with the smell while you are working. The smell will stay for a day or two after the paint dries.

Remove any tape you put on as soon as you finish painting – don't wait until the paint dries.

Interior painting is a project where you can expect pretty good results – even the first time. And, each time you paint after that, you'll get better and better.