

Painting Like a Pro...

The do's and don'ts of interior painting

Re-painting the inside of your home can completely change the appearance of a room. From giving the space a freshen up, to changing the entire colour scheme of the area, the power of a good re-paint should never be underestimated. There some really important things to consider before you pull out the paintbrush though... because while you might think a paint job is quick and easy, this is often far from the truth if you aren't well prepared! Let's keep this simple... there are things that you should do, and things that you shouldn't. So let's start with the stuff that you should be doing when you go to re-paint a room:

Painting Do's

- *Clean the walls* – Washing the walls and preparing the space properly is super important. Paint sticks better to clean walls and it also leaves a much more professional finish.
- *Prepare the room* – Painting can get messy so use drop sheets! Remove the furniture and don't take risks... paint flecks can end up in all sorts of places!
- *Use good quality tools* – A painting project is not the time to go for the cheapest and nastiest tools. Good quality paint brushes and rollers (as well as good quality paint and primers) are the best way to ensure an efficient, effective and professional job.
- *Look after your tools* – If your painting project runs over a few days, make sure you clean up at the end of every day properly. Capping the paint cans and thoroughly washing your brushes will make the job run more smoothly, as well as save you time and effort in the long run.
- *Use good quality paint* – Higher grade paint has superior binders and pigments so skimping on paint is not a good idea. Consider where you are painting as well... is it a high traffic area? If so, then it is worth investing in a good quality, easy maintenance finish.
- *Know the difference between finishes* – Flat/low-sheen paint is great for hiding flaws on walls, whereas semi-gloss or high-gloss is ideal on woodwork (like door frames, window frames and skirting).

- *Stir the paint properly* – This sounds like common sense, but it’s amazing how many people forget this important step! Give the paint a really good stir with a stick (never the brush) and make sure the colour is properly mixed.
- *Work your way down* – When painting an entire wall, you should always start from the ceiling and work your way down the wall. Start by cutting in around the edges with a brush, and then move onto rolling the actual walls.
- *Be patient* – Allowing each coat (from primer through to the final coat of paint) to dry, is so important, especially when dramatically changing the colour of the wall.
- *Don’t forget safety* – You might wonder how dangerous a painting job can possibly be, but safety should always be a priority. If sanding a wall, be sure to wear a dust mask. Make sure that the room is also well ventilated and well lit. When using ladders, check that it is sturdy and try to reduce trips up and down the ladder as much as possible. If your house is much older, allow for the possibility of toxic lead paint. Contact the Environmental Protection Agency on 1800 803 772 for more information.

Painting Don'ts

- *Jump the gun* – Make the most of paint swatches and test tins! Don’t just dream up a colour scheme or follow the latest trend and hope for the best. When using paint swatches, remember that colours will always look darker on the actual wall. Also, the glossier the finish, the lighter the colour will appear. It’s a great idea to paint boards with your short list of colours and prop them up against the wall in question. Look at the samples in different lights, from different angles and consider how it suits furniture, carpet and other walls.
- *Ignore the effects of warm and cool* – Remember that warm colours are expansive and ideal for social areas like dining and living rooms. Cool colours, on the other hand, are calming so are best suited to offices and bedrooms.
- *Forget the ceiling* – The ceiling is the “fifth wall” of a room, so be sure to consider the colour of the ceiling as well.
- *Buy insufficient paint* – Buy all of your paint and tools at the same time because once you start, you don’t want to have to stop. Measure the room and always add a little extra so that you can be sure you won’t run out of paint.
- *Use thick coats of paint* – Thick coats of paint don’t hold as well as thinner coats. Three thin coats of paint are ideal because it will dry correctly, cover any old paint and give a fresh, professional finish.
- *Forget the colours you used* – It is really important to keep a record of the paint you choose, because one day you just might need to get some more!
- *Not consider hiring a pro* – If you don’t enjoy painting, if it is a bigger job (or more complex with lots of cutting in etc...), or if you are making dramatic colour changes, hiring a professional painter may well be worth your time and money.

Re-painting Dark Walls

Just a note on converting a dark wall to the light side... Be sure to use a good quality primer. In order to fully cover a dark wall with a lighter colour, two coats of primer and sealer help to seal the porous surface and produce an even finish. You can also consider tinting the primer with a colour similar to the final paint colour, as this can help to reduce the number of topcoats needed. Allowing each coat of primer, paint and topcoat to dry completely is extremely important when dramatically changing paint colours.

While painting can be great fun (and even therapeutic at times!), making sure you have a clear game plan, a well prepared surface, and all the best tools at your disposal will help to make the project run smoothly. Happy prepping and painting folks!

Sources:

- *SF Gate Home Guides, "Tips on Painting Dark Walls with Lighter Colour Paint"*.
- *Domain, "The essential DIY Painting Guide"*.
- *MSN Real Estate, "22 Biggest Painting Blunders"*.

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