

Project Ideas & Information

Exterior Painting



Before purchasing tools, paint and materials, read every step thoroughly then talk to one of our experts

There are few more rewarding projects than giving your home a new look with a fresh coat of paint. Painting is a relatively simple do-it-yourself project the whole family can help with and a good paint job will not only protect your house from the elements, saving you the higher cost of extensive repairs, but will also add value to your home, and can make a great first impression if you're planning to sell.

Take a few minutes to read through the steps that follow. They'll save you time, money and frustration as you paint outside.

Warnings:

Homes built before the 1970s may still have surfaces coated with lead based paint. Lead is very dangerous to your health and you should not sand or scrape the paint until you get specialist advice.

Old 'Fibro' or cement sheets may contain Asbestos. It must not be sanded or wire brushed as the abrasive action may release asbestos fibre into the air resulting in a potentially serious risk to health.

Contact the Environment Protection Authority in your state for more information.

Step 1

Prune, tie back and cover plants and shrubs next to the house. Place drop cloths over, or where paint may drip on decks, paths, driveways and lawns.

Remove window shutters, hardware, and light fixtures if necessary.

Step 2

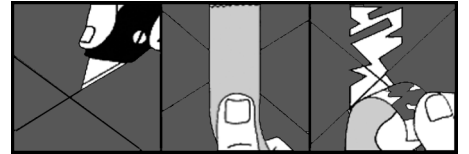
Wash the house. Rent or buy a pressure washer to thoroughly clean your home's exterior. Power washing blasts away dirt, grease, mildew and loose paint; it may even eliminate the need for hand scraping.

Spray under the eaves and down the wall getting rid of all dirt, spider webs and debris. If mildew is present (black or grey spots), it must be killed with bleach. Don't power wash if you have old or weathered weatherboard with cracks or gaps in it, the high pressure water may get into your walls.

Step 3

While you're waiting for the house to dry you should examine the entire surface of your house looking for problems such as peeling paint, open joints or seams, wet or rotted wood and other problems.

You can check to see if your old paint is in good condition by selecting a small area and making several cuts with a sharp knife or razor blade. Press a piece of strong adhesive tape across the area and peel it off. If the paint comes off with the tape, the surface should be stripped, sanded or scraped back to bare wood if possible.



To test for existing water or oil based paint, rub the paintwork hard with a rag dipped in methylated spirits. If the paint colour comes off on the rag, it's almost certainly water based.

Step 4

Remove all flaking, chalky or blistered paint thoroughly. Although there may be cases where chemical stripping, heat guns, or other approaches may be more appropriate, sanding and scraping are by far the most common ones.

Strip back to bare timber where the existing paint failed the adhesion test.

Step 5

Repair any damaged surfaces, whether wood, masonry or metal. On weatherboard, fill in any gouges or holes with an exterior-grade patching compound. Sand the cured filler to make it smooth and level with the surrounding wood. If damage is too extensive, replace the area with new material.

As you work around the house, fasten loose trim with galvanized nails or screws, and use a nail punch to sink old nail heads below the surface. Fill all nail or screw holes with an exterior filler.

Check for loose or missing putty on window sashes, and repair these spots with glazing compound.

Step 6

After scraping and making any repairs use coarse, followed by smooth, sandpaper to smooth uneven surfaces, paying particular attention to smoothing (feathering) the edges between painted and scraped areas.

If the surfaces you intend to paint are glossy, sand them lightly to remove the gloss. Paint needs a slightly roughened surface to stick to.

If needed, rinse off all dust created by the sanding and allow everything to dry thoroughly before proceeding.

Step 7

Use a flexible, paintable exterior caulk to fill gaps between materials, such as between brick and board siding, wood and masonry, wood and metal, and plastic and metal as well as the joints between two pieces of wood like window frames and door frames.

Step 8

Apply primer, that is compatible with the materials you're covering, over all raw surfaces. This is a very important step in proper painting. Existing paint that's sound and clean doesn't generally require a primer coat.

Cover stained areas with a stain-blocking primer that will prevent the stain from seeping through the finishing coats.

Step 9

If required, mask off areas that are not to be painted, but don't mask until the last minute, and remove masking tape shortly after you complete painting an area.

Step 10

Apply at least two topcoats with a good quality brush or roller. If you have a large house consider using a paint sprayer for walls, it is much quicker and the coverage is better.

Let each coat dry between applications according to the manufacturer's instructions.

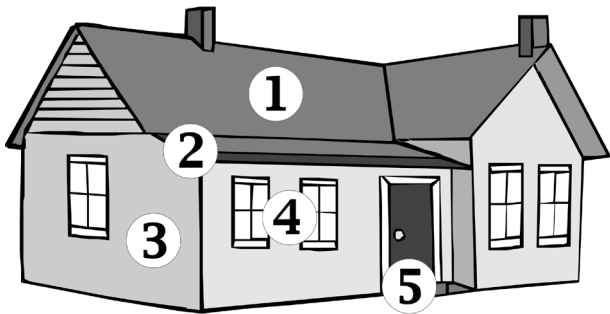
For convenience and to better assure colour matching, it's a good idea to purchase all the paint at one time.

These days water based paints out perform oil based in most situations and are the easiest to use because they clean up with soap and water.

For steel and iron, rust-inhibiting oil based paints are the better choice.

Painting Sequence

As a general rule, the parts of the house should be painted in this order:



Roof - Paint all the ridge, hip and valley flashings by brush and then fill the large areas with a roller.

Eaves and Verandah Ceilings - Paint all the barge and fascia boards and then the soffits. Removing the guttering can make painting the fascia much easier in some instances.

Walls - Start at the top and work down. If possible use trestles and scaffold planks and paint the full length of the wall at one time. If you are using an extension ladder, work down the wall, painting in wide vertical strips making sure you brush back into the wet edge of the previous strip. For weatherboards, start at the top of the wall. Paint one or two boards at a time. Paint the under edge first, then the face of the boards.

Windows - Either cut in around the glass with a cutting in brush, or mask the glass.

Doors - Paint the edges first then apply paint to the face of the door, starting at the top. If the door has a moulding, paint the moulding first then do the remainder of the panels.

Once the paint is dry, reinstall removed items such as light fixtures, hardware, and shutters.

Specific Exterior Surfaces

Typically when painting a house, you are dealing with wood, however, there are some cases that you may be dealing with metal, fibre cement or bricks/cement blocks.

The same basic procedures are required of nearly all paintable surfaces.

Metal - If undamaged, treat as any other surface to be refinished. Lightly sand gloss paint.

Scrape and wire brush any loose or flaking paint back to bare metal. Rust should be taken down to bare metal by scraping or wire-brushing or treat with a rust neutraliser.

Once cleaning is completed, apply rust-inhibiting primer and exterior enamel for best results.

Masonry and Concrete Surfaces - Remove all loose and scaling paint by scraping and sandblasting and repair all cracks, openings and surface fissures before painting.

Efflorescence and oil stains are two things to watch for on stripped concrete. Efflorescence stains are white and are caused by the mineral salts found in concrete. To remove them, use muriatic acid, making sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions.

For oil stains, use products specifically designed for this purpose.

Exterior walls can be painted using an exterior acrylic latex paint. For concrete floors and paths use a quality paving paint.

Fibre-cement - Hand scraping and hand sanding both work well to remove loose paint. Generally will not require a special primer if latex paint is used as a finish coat. Old asbestos fibre board should NEVER be scraped or sanded.

Painting Hints

- Be very careful around overhead electrical wires, especially when moving ladders around or painting near where service lines attach to the house.
- Follow directions and heed safety warnings on paints, chemicals, and cleaners.
- If possible, avoid painting in direct sun. Also, avoid painting in windy conditions that can blow dirt and insects onto the wet paint or cause the paint to dry too quickly.
- If you use a heat gun to help remove old paint, keep it away from all fresh paint, paint fumes, paint cans or paint thinner/cleaner to avoid a potential fire hazard.
- The painting of a whole house may take some weeks to complete. Because of this you could wash, prepare and paint one wall at a time.
- When using acrylic paint, brushes and rollers should be washed out regularly to maintain paint flow.

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