

# Know your paints before you take brush in hand

Before you embark on painting a particular room in your home, you will have to know which paint gives you the best results in terms of durability and appearance. Choosing the right kind of paint will save you time and money in the long run because removing the wrong paint can be tedious, timely and expensive.

Latex paint is the best interior paint to use on walls and ceilings in all rooms except the kitchen and bathroom. It dries so fast you can apply two coats in one day, and all clean-up work at the end of the day is done with water. The durability and washability of the final finish is good.

Latex paint is ideal for application to gypsum board, plaster, and masonry surfaces, but is not good on wood, plywood, or hardboard. Latex gives a superb flat finish. When painting new gypsum board, plaster or masonry, apply a latex primer and follow with one or two coats of latex paint. Primer is unnecessary for repainting jobs. There are two precautions to take: 1) don't paint when the temperature is under 45 degrees or over 85 degrees 2) don't spread the paint too thin.

Alkyd or oil-base enamel is the next most frequently used paint inside a home. You can't beat it for painting walls panelled in wood, plywood or hardboard or doors and windows, kitchens and bathrooms. It's attractive and tough and the newest enamels

dry in just a few hours.

Select the type of alkyd finish with care. Flat enamel is much less washable than gloss; and semi-gloss is less washable than gloss. Semi-gloss will do for most jobs, unless you like the high shine gloss gives.

Surfaces which need frequent washing like bathrooms and kitchens usually require a semi-gloss. You might use a flat enamel on wood, plywood or hardwood walls that need little washing.

To use an alkyd enamel on an unfinished surface, apply primer first and sand it lightly when dry. Then put on one or two coats of enamel.

If you are changing the colour of a painted surface, follow the same procedure, but if you're not changing the colour, omit the primer. For easy use and application, use a roller cover; keep it soaking in mineral spirits between coats, until your painting project is finished, and then toss it into the trash.

Varnish is the best clear finish if you want to protect wood or plywood from soiling and makes wood easy to clean. As long as it is not exposed to a great deal of sunlight, it is durable, washable, and produces a soft glow.

Varnish deepens the colour of the surface to which it's applied and also gives it a yellowish cast, but, when scarred, you can't touch it up invisibly. For most indoor jobs, interior varnish is preferred. But if you need an exceptionally tough finish, use urethane varnish.

Varnish must always be applied to a clean, well-sanded surface in a warm dust-free atmosphere. Don't stir the can before use. Load your brush well and flow the varnish on liberally with the grain; then smooth off across the grain, and finish with the grain. One coat is generally enough on wall paneling; two are better on woodwork that people touch.

Oil stain is a transparent, pigmented liquid used to change the colour of plywood without concealing the grain or texture. You can apply it with a brush or rag. Smooth it out evenly and let it stand for five minutes. Then, rub off the excess with clean dry rags. If you want a darker colour, apply a second coat immediately. When you've got the tone you want, let the stain dry for 48 hours before applying varnish or other final finish.

The colour you achieve with any given stain depends on the wood species. Therefore, pine treated with mahogany stain is not exactly like mahogany treated with the same stain. Before using a stain, try it out on a scrap of wood or plywood like that on the wall. Keep track of how many minutes it takes to sink in before you get the desired colour. Then give it approximately the same sinking time on the wall.

Textured paint is used mainly to conceal flaws, but recently it has become popular in bathrooms, for those wanting to make an artistic statement. It provides a definite texture on walls or ceilings. A thick latex or oil-based paint is brushed on a small area and immediately textured with a stiff brush, comb, sponge or roller made to produce a special pattern. One coat is usually enough. The principle drawback of textured paints is that, once you put them on, they are permanent, removal is extremely tedious.

Whatever you decide to use, if possible, test it on a small, concealed area first. If you are not sure you're using the best possible paint for the job, get some advice at your local paint or hardware store.

This article is provided by the Ontario Real Estate Association (OREA) for the benefit of consumers in the real estate market.

*Removing the wrong paint can be tedious, timely*

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