

Exterior Painting Tips for the Do-It-Yourselfer

Spring is here and it's time to dust off the paint brush! Commonly viewed as a dreaded laborious task, using these tips will result in a professional-looking, longer-lasting paint job, after which you can hang up your ladder and not need it again for many years!

- Do an extensive assessment. Are there specific problem areas? What is causing the paint to peel within a year or two of painting—moisture problems, decayed wood, improper prep? Correct these issues before you correct the symptom (the peeling paint).
- Preparation is the key to a durable paint job. Do a thorough prep job, including scraping (to remove all loose or flaking paint to the next sound layer), sanding (to feather the edges where there is paint buildup and to dull gloss finishes), and washing (to remove dirt, dust and mildew). Closely follow all recommendations for handling lead paint. (*See note below.) Allow ample time for the surface to completely dry before painting. Follow the guidelines of the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation.
- Repair or replace any rotten or damaged wood. Back prime new wood. Re-nail loose clapboards with stainless steel ring-shank nails.
- Powerwashing and sandblasting are not recommended paint removal techniques. (They damage the wood's surface.)
- Apply a good quality oil-based primer to all bare wood within 48 hours of scraping. If applying a latex top coat over oil paint, apply a complete coat of oil primer to all surfaces.
- After priming, fill holes, caulk cracks, butt joints and recaulk around doors and windows where necessary. Do not caulk the undersides of the clapboards.
- Latex or oil? Basically, it depends on the material being painted and the environmental conditions. Latex is desirable if a breathable surface is required. Oil is used when adhesion is an issue, moisture is not, or when covering a previous oil coat.
- Buy the best quality paint you can afford. High quality paints are more chalk resistant and have better color retention and durability.
- Never paint when temperatures are below 45° F. Latex should not be used below 50° F. It is best to paint in the shade. Direct sun causes rapid drying time often resulting in lap marks and leveling problems.
- Do not paint on foggy, damp or high humidity days. Make sure the weather forecast is clear until the paint is completely dry. Only paint clean dry surfaces.
- The two top coats (preferably the same brand as the primer) should be applied immediately after the primer has dried.
- Keep your painted surfaces clean and mildew free to extend the life of your paint. A quality paint job can be expected to last 5 – 8 years or longer.
- Be environmentally conscientious when disposing of excess paint and empty paint cans. Oil paints should be disposed of on hazardous waste days at your town's sanitation facilities. Latex paint cans, once dried out, can be recycled.

- Enjoy your beautiful paint job!

* As a homeowner doing your own painting, you are exempt from the requirements of the new Renovation, Repair and Painting Law. But, you should be very familiar with the best handling practices for lead paint.

Helpful Websites:

National Park Service

<https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/10-paint-problems.htm> (Preservation Brief 10 - Exterior Paint Problems on Historic Woodwork)

www.alsnetbiz.com/homeimprovement/procedurext.html (Handy website for do-it-yourselfers)

Lead Paint Websites:

www.epa.gov/opptintr/lead

www.hud.gov/offices/lead/training/LBPguide.pdf

<http://www.finehomebuilding.com/PDF/Free/021150066.pdf>