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Painting ‘rules of thumb’



Painting – and for that matter, paint – has changed dramatically over the years. Technology and just plain good ideas have created a number of applications to choose from. But there are a few hard and fast rules that if followed, make the chore of painting into a positive, lasting improvement. There are also a few ‘tricks’ that make painting more effective as well.

- When buying paint, look for paint with a high percentage of titanium dioxide in the formula. This can be found on the can’s ingredients label. Titanium dioxide is the “hiding” or “coverage” factor in paint. Also, if possible, opt for pre-mixed paint colors. Base tints for custom colors have less coverage than standard tints and often require multiple coats.
- Find out what type of paint was used - oil-based or latex-acrylic – if painting over an older coat of paint. Do not paint latex directly over oil-based paint as it will start to peel within months. If latex over oil-base is unavoidable, one needs to apply a primer coat first followed by the latex paint coat.
- Preparation of the surface is important, make sure the surface is free of dirt, grease, oil and if surface is raw wood, it also must be primed before painting. Light sanding of glossy surfaces is also necessary.
- Paint comes in flat, satin, semi-gloss and gloss. Flat is suggested for living rooms, dining rooms and bedrooms. Semi gloss and gloss paint is suggested for trim-work, bathrooms and kitchens due to resisting grease and moisture, in addition to being scrub-able. Children’s playrooms and bedrooms are painted in semi-gloss for this reason as well.
- Paint brushes are important as well. Natural bristle brushes should only be used for oil-based paints. Polyester and nylon brushes are used for latex and acrylic paints, although polyester can be used on both oil- and latex-based paints. A really great innovation was the invention of the polyester foam brush. These brushes are very good for both oil and latex paints on smooth surfaces, are low cost and disposable.

Observing these ‘rules of thumb’ will result in a successful painting job every time. Just use plenty of drop cloths and try to be careful when applying the paint. Good luck!

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