

Spruce up Your Space with New Paint:

The Easiest Way to Improve Your Home, on a Budget

The paint and supplies needed to redecorate a room typically cost less than \$100. Can you think of another project that delivers such a remarkable transformation to your home's look and feel for so little money?

Choose the Right Color

It seems like homeowners have struggled with choosing the right shades for their rooms since before Sir Isaac Newton invented the color wheel in 1706.

1. Paint makers offer new color options each year based on the most current design sensibilities, and their cues are commonly highlighted on company websites and in home and garden media. Trends aside, the color you choose should reflect your family's tastes and personalities.
2. It also helps to keep the room's purpose in mind. For example, a relaxing green or blue hue suits a bedroom or bath, and a deep red adds sophistication to a room that's intended for entertaining. Furthermore, light shades can make a small space seem larger, while dark ones may be used to create a warmer feeling in a large room.
3. Ultimately, it's usually best to select a shade that will balance out the room. If most of your furnishings are bold, go with a subdued look on the walls so they won't compete. When the big pieces in the room are neutrals, consider adding a punch of color that is pulled from the decorative accessories or artwork.

All About Finishes

Flat: Matte finishes are good at concealing flaws but more difficult to maintain; flat paints work best for old walls and low-traffic areas.

Satin or Eggshell: Versatile and attractive satin finishes are great for the walls in high traffic areas and family spaces because they are easier to wipe clean.

Semi-gloss: With its visible shine, this durable finish is suitable for trim, woodwork and high-moisture areas in the bath or kitchen.

Gloss: These are the shiniest finishes and are sometimes used to draw attention to doors, mantels and other special architectural features.

Breathe Easier: If you're concerned about the adverse health effects of volatile organic compounds (VOCs), look for the new low or zero VOC paints that release fewer toxic chemicals and odors into the air.

Are You Planning to Sell Soon?

Don't feel the need to neutralize a nicely staged interior if you already have custom paint colors that coordinate well with your furnishings. However, if your home's decor is dated or the walls are in rough condition, it's best to create a blank canvas for potential buyers by applying a popular neutral color such as white, cream or beige.



Get the Paint Job You'll Love

Did you know one gallon of paint typically covers about 400 square feet of living space with two full coats? If you're not entirely sure which color you want, ask for small samples and try them out on the wall before you commit.



If your home was built before 1978, consider having a qualified lead specialist check for the presence of the harmful metal and recommend precautions. It's safest to wear a respirator mask and eye protection whenever you sand or scrape areas with old paint. You can also check out the Environmental Protection Agency's lead paint guidelines at www.epa.gov/lead.

If You Plan to Do it Yourself:

Painting can be fun, but before you grab a roller **spend some time planning**; make a list of the appropriate products and supplies for your project.

Force yourself to **focus on the prep work** that will ultimately make the overall job and the clean-up much easier. Wiping, repairing or sanding surfaces; protecting floors, furnishings and fixtures; taping off trim and edges—all of these tasks can matter as much as the paint itself when the results are in.

Use a primer if needed. Some special undercoatings help to cover dark paint, smooth out rough surfaces or resist moisture.

Fortunately, novices can easily **find detailed instructions and "how-to" videos** on the websites of major paint companies, on YouTube, or by accessing online home improvement resources like hgtv.com, diynetwork.com or thenest.com.

Accidents are common, so be careful! Each year, more than 90,000 people receive treatment in the emergency room for ladder-related injuries.* Make certain to wear shoes that won't slip, and don't climb to the highest rung or lean to the side.

*Source: Consumer Product Safety Commission

If You Plan to Hire a Pro:

Make sure the contract includes an accurate description of the job and the products to be used, including:

- The type and amount of surface preparation
- Any necessary undercoating, including the specific type and brand of primer
- The brand, color of paint and number of coats
- Any extra charges for high walls and ceilings or decorative woodwork
- Whether furniture will be moved by the homeowner or the workers *(and at what cost)*