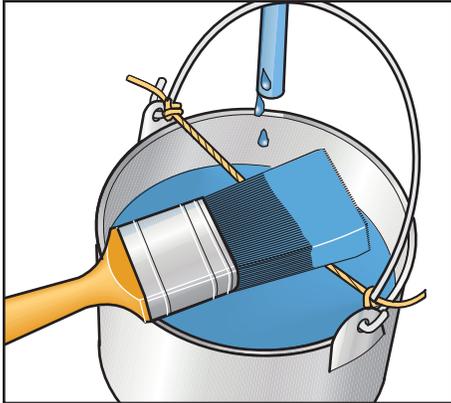


## Introduction



This 'How To' takes you through the steps for applying a four-coat paint system: primer, two coats of undercoat and a top gloss coat. It suggests a work order for tackling the job, and offers valuable advice on choosing paint and maintaining your woodwork.

Prepare your wooden surfaces well, then apply the paint as shown here. You'll end up with beautifully painted woodwork that not only enhances your property, but adds to its value too.

## What you'll need

### Materials

Kitchen roll  
Masking tape  
Paint – primer, undercoat, top coat  
Tack rags – for removing dust before painting  
Wet or dry abrasive paper – medium and fine  
White spirit – for use with oil-based paint only

### Tools & equipment

Bucket  
Cork block  
Dust sheets  
Dusting brush  
Paint brushes to suit the job  
Paint kettle – metal or plastic

Rubber gloves  
Sponge  
Step ladder with work platform, long ladder with 'stand off' or scaffold tower for outside work  
String

## About paint

A four-coat system – primer, 1st undercoat, 2nd undercoat and top gloss coat – extends the life of your paintwork by at least one third over a three-coat system.

For detailed information on the different types of paint available see [Buying Guide 'Paint'](#).

Buy the same brand of primer, undercoat and top coat.

### Hints

- Better to buy too much paint than too little. If you've more than one tin of a colour, mix the paint from the different tins together. This ensures a good colour match.
- Try a sample patch to test your colour. If you're matching emulsion paint with gloss paint, paint sample patches of both to check colour compatibility.
- Paint internal woodwork every five years, and external woodwork every two to three years depending on location and climate.
- Buy the best tools you can afford. Good tools, properly looked after, will give years of good service.
- Brushes are available in the following sizes: 12mm, 18mm, 25mm, 38mm, 50mm, 63mm, 75mm and 100mm. Cut brushes, for cutting in around windows, are available up to 25mm.
- Good-quality brushes are made from bristle, hog hair, ox hair or synthetic fibres set into resin or vulcanised rubber. The filling should be thick, flexible and smooth, and well bonded into a nicely balanced handle.
- Step ladders, long ladders and scaffold towers are available from hire shops.

## Before you begin

### Prepare the woodwork

See How To: Prepare woodwork for painting.

### Protect other surfaces

Cover internal floors or external paths with dust sheets.

### Ensure good light

Try to work in a good, natural light. If working by artificial light, use the strongest bulbs possible.

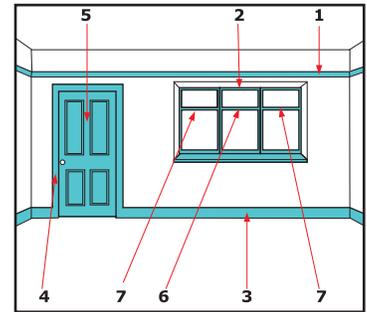


fig. 1

## Order of painting

### Whole room

Follow this order (fig. 1):

1. Picture rail
2. Window frames – remove catches, stops etc
3. Skirtings
4. Architraves
5. Doors – remove furniture
6. Fixed windows
7. Opening windows

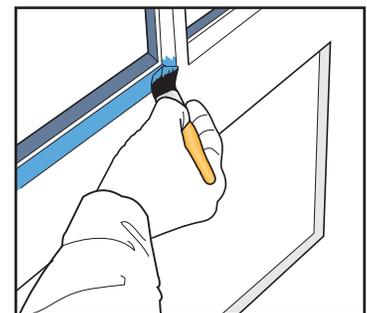


fig. 2

### Hints

- Remove fixed wires, such as telephone cables, bell wires and hi-fi wires, and replace after painting. Fixed wires can be over-painted.
- For security reasons paint windows and doors early in the day, so they can dry before you close them for the night.

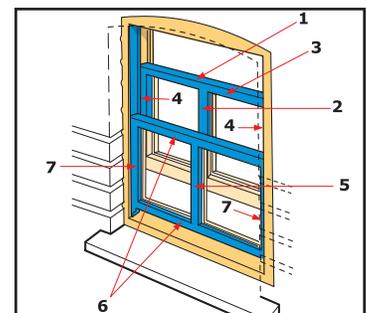


fig. 3

### Sash windows

Use a small brush (fig. 2) and follow the sequence shown here (figs. 3, 4).

Reverse the position of the windows and paint accessible timber. Then reverse the sashes again so you can reach all remaining surfaces.

Apply primer and undercoat up to and just onto the glass. The top coat should overlap the undercoat by 1–2mm, to seal the undercoat against moisture.

### Hint

Allow other internal paint to dry before leaving windows open. Otherwise dust and insects may enter and spoil the wet paint.

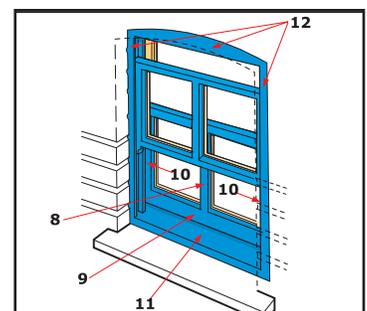


fig. 4

#### Casement windows & panel doors

Follow this painting sequence for casement windows and panel doors (Figs. 5, 6).

#### Using primer

Primer seals the surface and allows better adhesion between the wood and subsequent coats of paint.

Apply primer evenly, working it well into the grain, and allow to dry.

On open grain or end grain, apply a paste filler as soon as the primer is dry. Rub down and prime again.

You must over-paint primed surfaces within two months.

#### Hints

- Most new doors and windows come already primed. But since they might have been in store for a long time, give them a light rub down with dry glasspaper and prime again.
- Use a water-based primer or primer/undercoat for medium density fibreboard (MDF).
- Use an aluminium primer for resinous wood and most hardwoods.

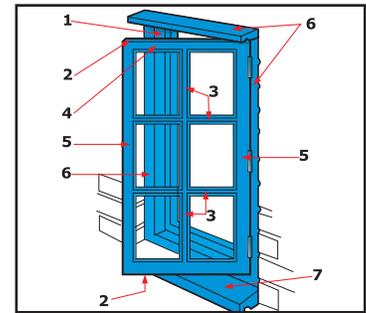


fig. 5

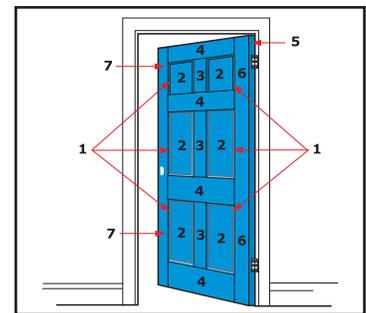


fig. 6

#### Using undercoat

The undercoat must suit the colour of the final top coat. Apply at least two coats to all surfaces, unless you're using one-coat gloss.

Rub down between coats with wet or dry paper and water. Remove the slurry, wipe until totally dry, and clean with a tack rag before over-painting.

#### Hint

Add a dash of washing-up liquid to the water when rubbing down with wet or dry paper. This helps lubricate the abrasive.

#### Applying top coat

##### 1. Prepare the paint

Before opening a tin of paint, wipe the top and rim to prevent dust falling into the can.

Always read the instructions on the tin.

Stir the paint thoroughly with a clean stick. Always check the instructions on the can first as some paints should never be stirred. The paint is the right consistency when it flows evenly from the tip of the stick. If lumps remain, stir some more.

Don't stir non-drip paints unless a layer of 'oil' has formed on top. Always read the instructions on the tin. Decant enough paint into a paint kettle to half cover the brush bristles. Wipe the rim of the paint tin and replace the lid.

### Hints

- Tie a piece of fine string between the handles of the paint kettle to make a 'rest' for the paint brush. Wipe the brush over the string as you work to remove excess paint (**Fig. 7**).
- Dust is the enemy of painters. Once you've started painting, don't do anything that produces dust. Wipe each area with a tack rag before painting and wear clean overalls.
- To prevent a skin forming on paint left in the tin, close the lid tightly then store the tin upside-down.

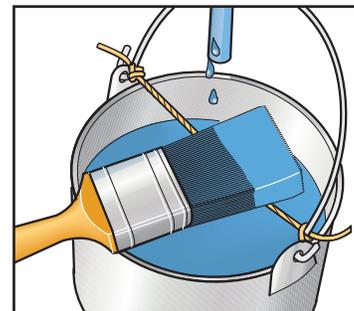


fig. 7

## 2. Brush with care

Control the movement of the brush by the wrist and hand, not by the arm.

Use a brush that suits the size of the surface you intend to paint. Too narrow a brush leaves an uneven covering of paint and increases the time spent on the job. Too wide a brush deposits paint in the wrong places.

Apply the top coat as evenly and thickly as possible. Finish off with long, light brush strokes (**Figs. 7a, 7b**). The appearance should be smooth, even and free from brush marks.

Don't brush out too thinly or add thinners. These are common causes of poor gloss and reduced durability.

Too much paint on the brush can cause 'runs' or 'curtains' of thicker paint to appear when the surface dries. Experience will tell you how much paint you can apply without causing runs.

### Hint

For tea breaks, wrap rollers and brushes in cling film to stop them drying out. Clean all traces of paint from rollers or brushes after you've finished using them.

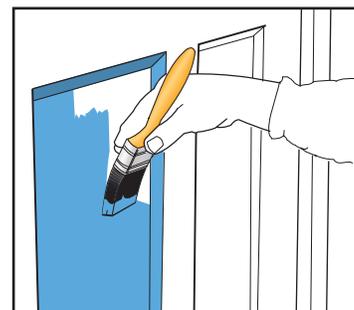


fig. 7a

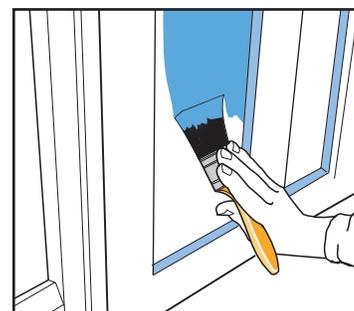


fig. 7b

## Dealing with runs

Allow time for runs and 'curtains' to harden. Then smooth them down with wet and dry abrasive paper and water. Lubricate the surface with a little soap.

Don't attempt to work on thick paint before it has hardened. You'll only 'roll' back the surface, leaving an even more difficult area to rescue. **HB**