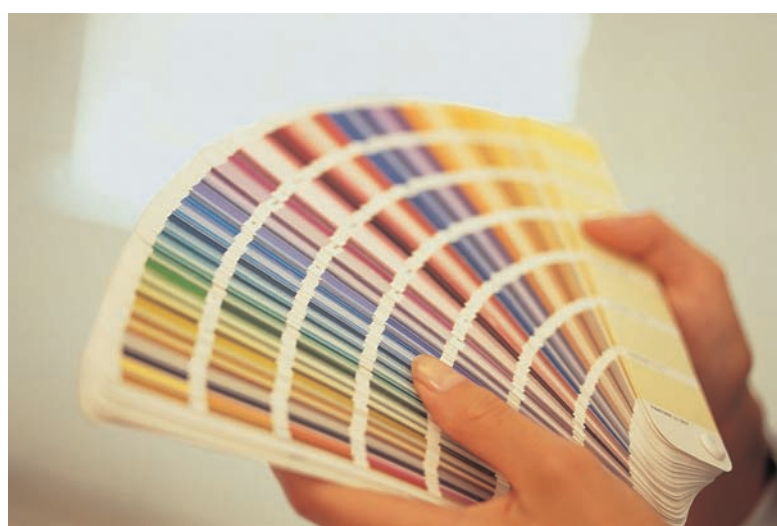




As with all things in life, if a job is worth doing it is worth doing well. Decorating is no exception and so we have put together a useful step-by-step guide to help get you started.

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A Step-by-Step Guide to Successful Decorating

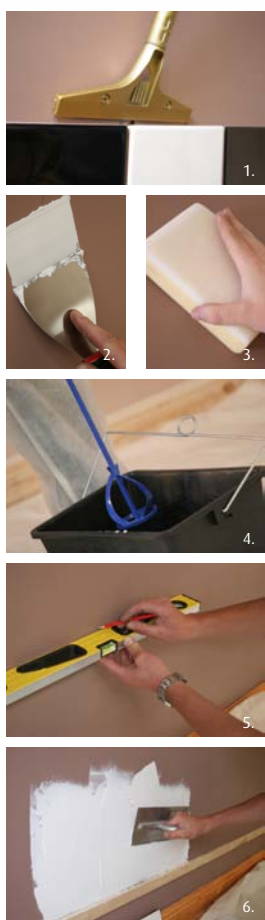


TILING

Checklist

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------|
| Bucket | Tile spacers |
| Drill | Goggles |
| Multi-mixer | Dust mask |
| Trowel | Stripping knife |
| Float | Filler |
| Plumb bob | Tile Adhesive |
| Spirit level | Rubber mallet |
| Sponge | Pencil |

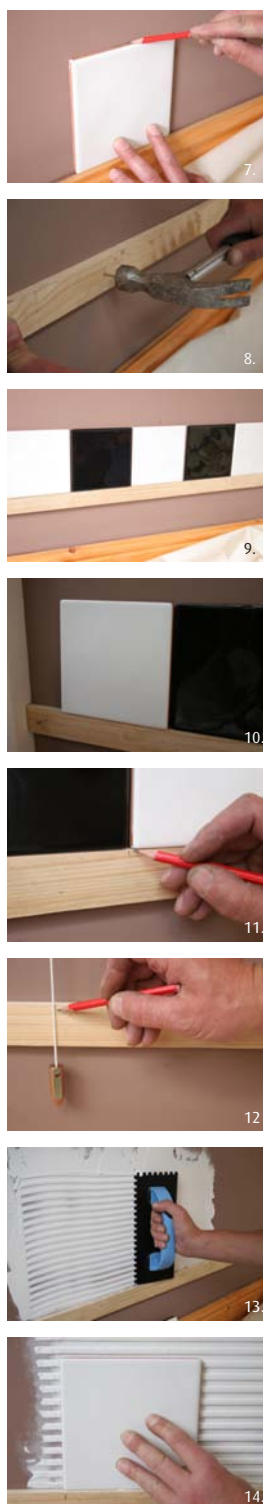
- Remove any old tiles and adhesive with a strong stripping knife.
- Fill and repair any cracks or holes.
- Rub down and clean surfaces to be tiled. Ensure that surfaces to be tiled are as smooth and even as possible.
- Mix adhesive in a large container or bucket using a drill and a multi-mixer (alternatively use a ready mixed adhesive). Be sure to keep the multi-mixer in the adhesive to avoid spray and the possibility of air entering the mix. It is advisable to keep the drill speed under 300 rpm during this stage. Follow adhesive instructions carefully and allow to set.
- Hold a spirit level against the wall to identify any defects in the wall. Using a pencil be sure to mark low and high areas that would have an impact on how the tiles would adhere to the wall surface.
- If necessary apply a light skim coat of adhesive to the surface area to level out defects in the wall. Once dry place a spirit level over the area to ensure the surface is in the best condition to work with.



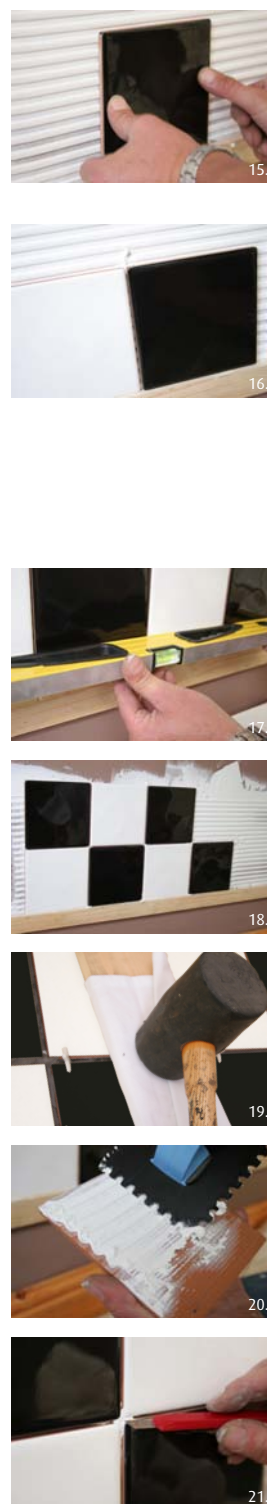
PRO TIP

New plaster surfaces should be left to dry out thoroughly for about one month before tiling.

- Identify the lowest point on the perimeter of the floor by running a spirit level across this area. Once this point has been found measure the wall with one full tile height plus the width of two spacers.
- A temporary batten should be nailed to the wall with the top of the batten aligned to the measurement you have just made. A spirit level should be used to ensure this is level as the floor may not be.
- Locate the centre of the wall on the batten and carefully place a line of tiles without adhesive at this stage. Start with the centre of the tile in the centre of the batten and work outwards from that point. Remember to add enough of a gap to accommodate the tile spacers and joints along the way.
- Slightly adjust the positioning of tiles to ensure that an even gap remains at each end. This makes the task easier as only two equal cuts will need to be made.
- Once the arrangement is complete mark the location of the tiles on the batten with a pencil. Now stack the tiles in a convenient location ready to be laid.
- Use a plumb bob to create a vertical line using the end marker on the batten. Then using this line mark the height for each row along the line remembering to include space for the joints. This provides a perfectly square corner from which to begin tiling.
- Spread adhesive evenly over the working area using the straight edge of a trowel at around a 30-40 degree angle to the surface. The adhesive then needs to have a comb effect applied using the notched edge of a trowel at a 45-65 degree angle from the surface.
- The first full tiles should be placed at the corner of the layout plan and along the batten. All tiles under the batten will be a complete tile or slightly less which avoids the need to make hairline cuts to fill in spaces that could be left by the tiles. These tiles should be cut and left in a pile ready to be applied once the full tiles are in place.



- For the best technique place the tile with a careful twist as this ensures a good adhesion. When placing the tile make attempts not to reduce the thickness of the adhesive underneath, or pressing too hard which may result in adhesive building between tiles.
- Spacers should be positioned between the two parallel edges of the tile and the tile should be adjusted to meet the exact distance determined by the spacers you have chosen to use. Spacers should be placed horizontally within the joint at either end and when a corner is formed these should be lowered to fit the cross point between the tiles. After the adhesive is set, any spacers which are hard to remove may be left in and grouted over.
- At regular intervals take time to ensure your pattern is forming straight and level lines. To do this take a long spirit level and place it across the tile edge. Ensure the tiles form a straight line and adjust any tiles which are out of place.
- Continue to lay tiles with the twist motion that has been described whilst taking time to make sure all tiles are straight and even.
- Once an area has been completed it is important to check that the tiles are all level. A flat piece of wood can be placed over the surface area to highlight any inconsistencies. Areas which are too high can be levelled by beating a rubber mallet against a piece of wood.
- Should a tile be lower than others you will need to lift the tile and apply additional adhesive to the side which was lower. Place the tile and using the mallet and piece of wood ensure the tile sits level within the pattern.
- Run a grout removing tool or a knife blade between the tiles to remove any surplus adhesive. Run a damp sponge along the joints to lift any residue from the tile edges or joints. Leave the adhesive to set according to the manufacturers instructions.



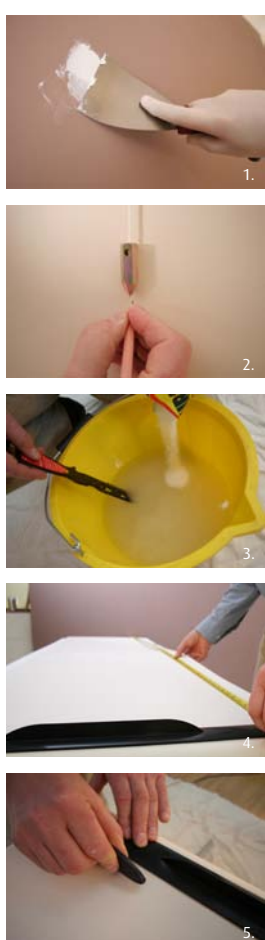
WALLPAPERING

Checklist

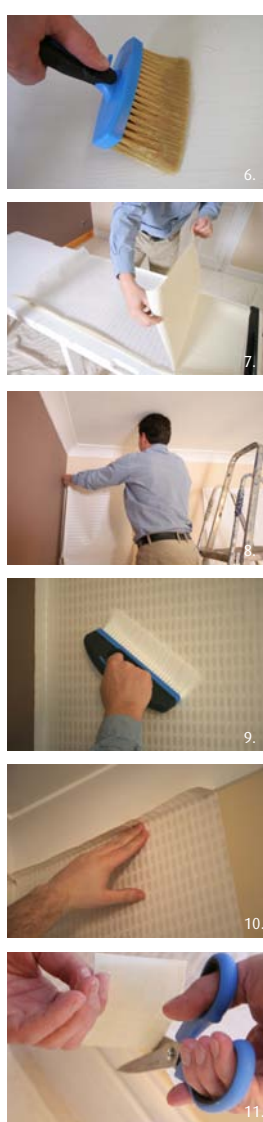
- | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| Paste bucket | Paperhanging brush |
| Paste stirrer | Sponge |
| Paste brush | Paperhanging scissors |
| Paste table | Trimming knife/ |
| Plumb bob | Trimming wheel |
| Pencil | Seam roller |

Before you start

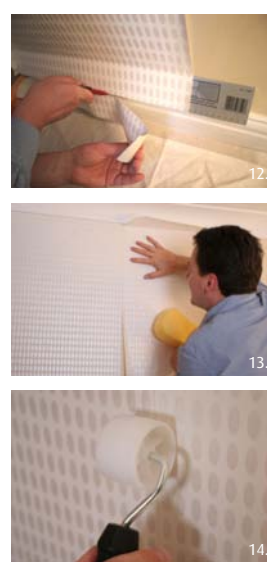
- All holes and cracks should be filled and smoothed flat. On particularly bad walls lining paper should be hung horizontally to provide a base.
- As many walls are never truly square, a plumb bob should be used to mark a vertical line. Hold the string on the wall and once steady, mark the wall with a pencil using the line as a guide.
- Mix paste according to manufacturers instructions in an appropriate container.
- Place a length of paper, measured to overlap at both ends, design face down on a suitable pasting table. Allow a small overhang over the nearest edge and one end.
- Cut the paper to size allowing a 50mm overlap at both ends.



- Apply the adhesive with a large paste brush spreading evenly over the area except for 300mm away from the far edge of the table. Re-position the paper to overhang the other edge of the table and paste the remaining area.
- Now fold the paper onto itself leaving the remaining area to be pasted. Then fold the bottom length onto itself so that the two edges are almost touching. You can then pleat the large section of paper so that you can move and transfer it without fear of damaging it.
- Slide the paper onto the wall against the line and uncurl the folds you made when pasting.
- Smooth out the paper using a paperhanging brush or sponge by brushing outwards from the centre. It is preferable to work from the top down.
- Push the paper into the edge of the skirting board and at the ceiling making a crease along the paper.
- Then peel back and cut along the crease with paperhanging scissors or a trimming knife.



- To ensure a perfect fit use a Harris wallpaper cutting guide.
- When hanging a patterned paper measure the second piece on the wall against the first. Match up the pattern against the first ensuring the edges are butted against each other.
- Subsequent pieces should be butted against the previous but not overlapped and the edges sealed by lightly rolling them with a seam roller.



PRO TIP

When hanging patterned papers, hang the first length on the centre of the chimney breast and work outwards from both sides.

PRO TIP

If you notice a missed bubble later but before it's dry, pierce the bubble with the edge of a sharp knife then carefully press the bubble to the wall

PRO TIP

On dry or absorbent walls paste the wall lightly as well as the paper itself



WALL PREPARATION

Checklist

Stripping knife
Filling knife
Filler
Abrasive paper
Sugar soap
Sponge
Steam stripper

Time spent cleaning and repairing surfaces prior to receiving their finish is time well spent. Careful preparation to ensure smooth surfaces yields a better quality finish.

Newly plastered walls

Bare plaster should be sealed either with a dilute mixture of PVA (according to manufacturers instructions) or with a mix of 50% water and 50% emulsion. This seals the surface and prevents rapid absorption of subsequent emulsion coats.

Previously painted surfaces

As long as the surface is sound, painting over previously emulsioned walls or ceilings requires no sealing process, though several coats of emulsion may be required if you are making a significant colour change.

Filling Holes/Cracks

1. Take out any loose material from cracks and holes with a filling knife and re-fill using an interior filler. The type of filler used can vary depending on the size and position of the crack so read the manufacturers instructions before purchase.
2. Press the filler into the crack with a filling knife and smooth off with the flat of the blade. Build layers where cracks are deep and use a little water to ensure the filler remains pliable. Leave the filler a little proud of the wall to compensate for any shrinkage as it dries.



3. Smooth down excess filler with abrasive paper until the repair is flush with the surface.

Papered walls and ceilings

1. Remove old wallpaper with a stripping knife and warm soapy water. Thicker wallpapers will require scoring to break the surface and allow water to penetrate. For best results soak the wallpaper, leave for 15 minutes and soak again. Work from the top down as the water will run down the wall soaking in as it goes. Use a stripping knife to remove the soaked wallpaper. Once the majority of paper is removed, allow the walls to dry before going over again with a stripping knife to remove any remaining backing paper.
2. If using a steam stripper, work from the bottom up as this allows the steam to rise, loosening the paper at the top. Use a stripping knife to remove the paper when loose.



Before you start painting/wall papering

Surfaces should be washed after stripping and repairing before any new paint or wallpaper is applied. Wash thoroughly with sugar soap or a weak solution of warm water and washing up liquid.



It is common practice for slightly inconsistent or rough walls to be papered with a thick grade lining paper. This improves the surface quality and the finish that can then be achieved by painting.

PRO TIP

When soaking old wallpaper, slightly thicken the water by mixing a little (approx 2 TEASPOONS) of paste. This will adhere to the wall and help the water to soak in.

PRO TIP

Take extra care when stripping around electrical sockets. Switch the power off for extra safety.

PAINTING WALLS & CEILINGS

Checklist

Roller frame
Extension pole
Brush for cutting in
Emulsion paint

The easiest way to paint a room is to work from the top down. Start with the ceilings then paint the walls and then finally the woodwork. Your project will look more professional if you complete each section in one go, a half finished wall or ceiling will leave a drying mark which will remain visible even when painted over.

1. When painting a ceiling it is important to consider how you are going to safely reach the surface to be painted. Where you need to paint into the corners or 'cut in' with a brush, you will need a sturdy pair of step ladders which allow you to paint without the need for any over reaching. Paint around edges and into corners with a suitable size paint brush.
2. Once the brush work is complete, the safest and quickest method for painting a ceiling is to make use of a roller with an extension pole incorporated into it or a roller frame which will accept a separate extension pole.
3. Paint the ceiling in strips making a particular effort to ensure even application near windows, as the light can accentuate any faults in the finish.
4. Painting a wall is much the same as the technique used for a ceiling. Cut into corners and edges with a paint brush first to ensure neat and straight lines.



PRO TIP

Use a matt emulsion on ceilings to avoid any inconsistent light reflections. Use matt on walls too if they are not perfectly smooth. A matt emulsion will not accentuate surface inconsistencies whereas a silk emulsion will.

5. Using a roller with an extension pole attached makes the task much easier and allows extra reach if you are painting tall walls. Paint the wall using multi directional strokes to achieve even coverage.
6. You can also paint walls or ceilings with a brush. This will avoid an effect you sometimes get with rollers called 'orange peel' and will not cause spray. However it is slower and more tiring.



PRO TIP

If you dislike the 'orange peel' texture that some rollers create and have walls which are not rough or textured, a short pile, microfibre roller sleeve creates a smooth finish. Or use a brush instead.

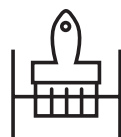
CARING FOR YOUR BRUSHES

If well maintained, you will find that a good brush improves with use, wearing into a shape that reflects the way that you use it and becoming silky smooth at the tip. This makes it much easier to use when painting edges or 'cutting in'.

If using the brush the next day

Water Based Paints

Use a brush tub or jar of water filled up to the line of the paint to stop the brush from drying out overnight.



Oil Based Paints

If you have been using oil based paints the brush head may be left tightly wrapped in cling film.



PRO TIP

Do not leave natural bristle brushes in water for long periods of time as this will invariably ruin them. Never wash any type of synthetic filament brush in hot water or expose to direct sunlight for long periods, as this may cause the bristle filament to curl.

PROTECTING SURFACES

1. Where possible remove furniture from the room. If this is not possible ensure that all surfaces are adequately covered by a dust sheet.
2. Use masking tape to bridge any gaps between dust covers and surface edges.
3. Masking tape is ideal for protecting fixed surfaces from unwanted paint bleed. Tape should be removed whilst paint is still wet to provide a perfect edge.



It is of course important to use not only the best decorating equipment but also the right tools for the job.

A useful starter tool box which would also make a welcome gift would include the following which would enable you to completely re-decorate a house of any size.



CHOOSING THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT

Dress For Success

Two important considerations to keep in mind when selecting work clothing for any decorating task are safety and comfort. A bib and brace overall is extremely practical for holding the tools that are needed when decorating.

There are many accessories which can make the task more comfortable and convenient such as knee pads or disposable gloves. A pair of decorators or disposable overalls to protect clothing is always a good idea.



There are also some dangers associated with decorating which must be protected against. For example old paintwork may have a lead content which can create a toxic dust when sanded back. Also some fillers can create an irritating dust when sanded. Make sure you read manufacturers on-pack instructions before commencing any DIY work.

An appropriate dust mask is strongly recommended when using abrasives.

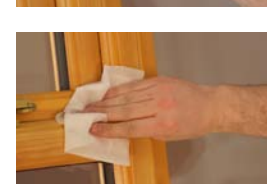
WOODWORK

Checklist

Shavehook
Fine grade wire wool
Wood filler
Abrasive paper
Abrasive sanding block
Cloth

Heat gun
Chemical paint stripper
Masking tape

1. Use a shavehook in conjunction with a heat gun or chemical stripper to remove old layers of paint. Use wire wool with a chemical stripper for detailed areas to avoid any damage.
2. Once the old paint is removed, fill any cracks with an appropriate wood filler and sand down the wood to provide a key for painting.
3. Clean off any dust with a damp cloth.
4. If required mask off areas where paint is not wanted.
5. Use a brush or mini roller to apply gloss paint onto woodwork and this will provide a smooth and even finish.



PRO TIP

Once stripped back check woodwork for rot and treat with an appropriate wood preservative if required.

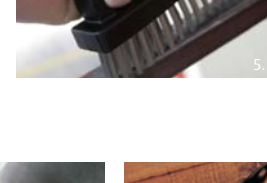
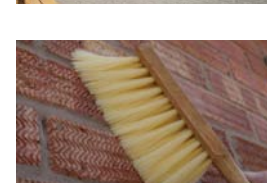
EXTERIOR PAINTING

Checklist

Shavehook
Fine grade wire wool
Wood filler
Abrasive paper
Abrasive sanding block

Cloth
Wire brush
Chemical paint stripper

1. Choose a warm, dry day with little wind which has followed a good spell of dry weather.
2. Work in small manageable areas, beginning at the top of the house cleaning and repairing as you go. Use a suitable masonry cleaner with a stiff brush to remove any dirt, loose masonry or old flaky paint. Repair with a suitable exterior filler.
3. Make repairs to exterior wood work, rub down with a fine abrasive where paintwork is in good condition to create a surface which new paint can adhere to. Strip back fully to bare wood where paint or woodwork is damaged or old.
4. If existing paint is sound then wash and dry off before re-painting. If however several layers of old paint exist, stripping back fully will achieve a better finish. Use a chemical stripper and wire wool to remove the old paint.
5. Clean down the stripped metal with a wire brush and white spirit prior to painting. Use a specialist exterior/masonry paint and use a masonry roller or wall brush to achieve a good finish.



PRO TIP

Wear heavy duty rubber gloves when using chemical strippers.

BRUSHES

As a general rule, use pure bristle brushes for oil based paint and synthetic brushes for water based paint.

Brushes	Oil based Paint	Water based Paint	Masonry Paint	Varnish Paint	Wood Preserve.	Doors	Frames	Skirting Boards	Walls & Ceilings	Radiators	Furniture	Outside Walls	Sheds & Fences
0.25"/6mm	●	●		●			●						
0.5"/12mm	●	●		●			●						
0.75"/18mm	●	●		●			●						
Angled Window	●	●		●			●						
1"/25mm	●	●		●			●	●					
1.5"/38mm	●	●		●			●	●					
2"/50mm	●	●		●			●	●					
2.5"/62mm	●	●		●			●	●					
3"/75mm	●	●		●			●	●					
4"/100mm	●	●		●			●	●					
5"/125mm	●	●		●			●	●					
6"/150mm	●	●		●			●	●					
Masonry			●									●	
Shed & Fence													●

ROLLERS

Short Pile		●			●				●				
Medium Pile		●			●				●				
Long Pile		●		●	●				●			●	●
Foam	●	●			●		●				●		

PAINTERS TOOLS

Tool	Stripping Paint	Stripping Wallpaper	Applying Filler. etc.	Pointing Brickwork	Sealing Wallpaper Edges
Stripping Knife	●	●			
Chisel Knife	●	●	●		
Putty Knife			●		
Combination Shavehook	●				
Triangle Shavehook	●				
Filling Knife			●		
Seam Roller					●
Small Fill Trowel			●	●	