

Fresh Paint: The Easiest Way to Improve Your Home On the Cheap

The paint and supplies needed to redecorate a room typically cost less than \$100.

Can you think of another project that can deliver such a remarkable transformation in your home's look and feel for so little money?

How to Conquer Colour Confusion

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

1. Paint makers offer new colour options each year based on the most current design sensibilities and their cues are commonly highlighted on company websites and in the home and garden media. Trends aside, the colour you choose should reflect your family's tastes and personalities.
2. It also helps to keep the room's purpose in mind. A relaxing green or blue hue suits a bedroom or bath, for example, and deep red adds sophistication to a room that's intended for entertaining. Furthermore, light shades can make a small space seem larger, while darker ones may be used to create a warmer feeling in a larger 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 colour that is pulled from decorative accessories or artwork.

Selling Soon?

Don't feel the need to neutralize a nicely-staged interior if you already have custom paint colours 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 such as white, cream or beige.

Choose the Right Finish

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: The shiniest finishes 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 (VOC's), look for the new low- or zero- VOC paints that release fewer toxic chemicals and odours into the air and are safer for the environment.*



Top Tips to Get the Job Done Right

Did you know one quart of paint typically covers about 100 square feet of living space with two full coats? If you're not entirely sure which colour you want, ask for small samples and try them out on the wall before you commit to one.

If your home was built before 1960, 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 Health Canada's lead paint guidelines at www.hc-sc.gc.ca.

Source: Health Canada

If you decide to step up...

Painting can be fun, but before you grab a roller **spend some time planning** and select 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 advance tasks can matter as much as the paint itself when the job is finished.

Use a primer if needed. Some special under-coatings 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, YouTube, or online home-improvement resources like hgtv.ca or diy.ca.

Accidents are common, so be careful! Over two-thirds of ladder-related injuries occur around the home.* Make certain to wear shoes that won't slip, and don't climb to the highest rung or lean to the side.

*Source: Canadian Institute for Health Information

If hiring a professional is in your budget...

Make sure the proposal and final 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 and colour of paint, and how many 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)

