# **PAINT EFFECTS**

## SKILL LEVEL • • • •



There are varying levels of skill involved in paint effects, but some of the simplest techniques will produce very attractive results.

### SAFETY FIRST

Be sure all ladders are safe and correctly placed. Keep children and animals away from the work area. Work in a well-ventilated room and away from naked flames.

#### INTRODUCTION

Paint effects are great fun and can make your home attractive, adding texture and interest.

Most of the techniques covered here are best suited to large areas, such as walls. Some, such as stencilling and graining, are equally effective on smaller areas, on woodwork and furniture.

Paint effects mainly consist of applying a coloured glaze over a basecoat of a lighter or contrasting colour, which has already dried, then working the surface in a number of creative ways whilst the glaze is still wet. All the effects can be achieved with inexpensive tools and materials, and all are open to experimentation. You may even create a new style and unique effects!

#### 2 - Planning the work

Decide in advance the size and area that you need to cover in one go, and where your finishing point will be. Try to make this at a natural break in the surface area, such as the corner of the wall or a skirting board, as it is very difficult to blend in an edge of paint once it has dried.

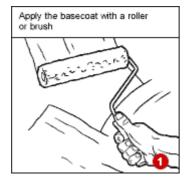
With large areas, you may need a helping hand to enable you to work quickly over the surface.

Have all materials and tools to hand before starting the work, with all ladders or steps set up in their best position to get the area covered quickly and efficiently.

Practice the paint technique and experiment with colour on a board before embarking on a whole wall.

### 3 - Preparation

The majority of paint effects today are created using waterbased paints and products that are easier and friendlier to use as opposed to the oil-based products which need some experience to master.



Apply the basecoat of silk emulsion (1) to a surface that has been well prepared with all the 'making good' work done well in advance. See our 'How To' on Interior Painting. Matt emulsion is not a suitable basecoat because it is too porous, making it hard to move the glaze over the surface and create the effect. Apply the basecoat evenly to

achieve the best finished result.

The basecoat must be perfectly dry before starting work with the glaze.

Some of these techniques can get a little messy so make sure any furniture left in the room, and surfaces not being worked on, are well protected.

## 4 - Preparing the glaze

Traditionally, paint effects were created using a glaze made from oil paints and an oil-based scumble glaze applied over an eggshell base. But these are really quite difficult to use. Luckily, there are now water-based equivalents available, which are much easier and more pleasant to use, and can be applied over a silk emulsion paint base.

You can buy ready mixed water-based glaze products or effects paint. But if you can't find the colour you want there are many ways of making up a water-based glaze.

It is possible to just add water to emulsion, but this dries almost immediately once applied, giving you very little time to work, and is quite tricky. If using emulsion paint, adding three parts water to one part emulsion is a good start. Test out the mixture on a board to see the effect and add more water or emulsion as required.

You can buy clear glaze products so that you can add paint to make up your own coloured paint effects glaze. These glazes are sold under a great variety of names, including 'scumble' and 'clear base', and can be used with various paints, but the way they work is basically the same. This 'product' prolongs the drying time of your glaze, and therefore making the whole process easier, as well as giving a translucent effect. Follow the instructions of the glaze product you have chosen to use.

Make sure you mix up enough mixture to complete the job, but keep a record of the proportions of materials in your glaze in case have to mix more.

Be prepared to experiment; try out a few mixes on pieces of hardboard painted in your chosen basecoat and look at them from a distance to gauge the overall effect.

## 5 - Colour washing



This is perhaps the most basic technique, which can produce a variety of effects from bold brush strokes to a soft-feathered look. First apply your basecoat and allow this to dry thoroughly. When dry, apply your glaze liberally to the surface with a colourwash brush, working in a random criss-cross manner through the glaze over the surface (2). The more you

brush, the softer the brush strokes become. You can further work the glaze with a dry softening brush, again used in a random criss-cross direction.

When dry, you can add another coat to deepen the effect if you wish or even add a toning colour of very thin glaze of a different shade. Building colour with a number of coats is the way to create a rich, deep-bodied effect.

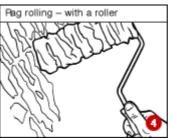
Clouding is similarly easy; instead of manipulating the glaze with a large brush, you can use a soft cloth or sheep skin painting mitten to 'wash' the glaze onto the surface in small or large circular motions.

#### 6 - Rag rolling

Apply your basecoat and allow it to dry thoroughly, then apply your diluted glaze randomly using a brush or roller, with the basecoat just showing through. Take a slightly dampened cotton rag, roll it into a sausage shape and then roll it randomly across the wet surface of the glaze (3). This will have the effect of removing areas of glaze to reveal an intricate pattern. Renew or wash out your rags as they become saturated. Shammy leather is another good material for this technique, as are rag rollers made especially for this effect (4).

Alternatively, ragging is a very similar effect, using a damp cloth that has been scrunched up into a ball. This can then be dabbed randomly over the wet glaze.





#### 7 - Bagging

This is essentially the same as rag rolling but is done with a crumpled plastic bag or with a bagging roller. It gives a much crisper effect with sharper contrasts between the basecoat and the glaze. Again, you can alter the technique by scrunching up a plastic bag into a ball.

### 8 - Combing

When your basecoat is dry, apply your glaze evenly over the surface with a brush. Take a rubber paint effects comb and drag it across the surface in either random or geometrical patterns to obtain the effect you want. Wash out the comb regularly to avoid clogging. Most combs come with various sized teeth for different textures and effects.

The combing technique can also be used to create a wood graining effect.

### 9 - Graining

Combing, dragging and graining can be combined to create quite stunning wood-grain effects.

This technique is ideal for smaller areas and furniture. Use a paintbrush to apply the basecoat, finishing in straight lines to simulate the direction of wood-grain. Allow it to dry.

Apply the glaze, again with a paintbrush along the 'grain', you can then either comb or drag over the glaze to achieve a basic wood pattern. Straight away, using a rubber rocker or a specially designed graining tool, you can now work over the glaze to create 'knots' and more elaborate grain effects. Starting from the top, with the graining tool tilted so that the semi-circular ridges are facing you, pull the grainer through the glaze. Rock it slightly as it glides through to give some knots, remembering to keep it moving. By experimenting with the tool, you can either create elongated knots by pulling the tool in long sweeping motions, or small knots by using short sharp movements. Always keep the tool moving along the surface as you rock it back and forth. Dragging the rocker straight through the glaze will also give a different finish.

A soft dry paintbrush can then be dragged across the

surface to soften the whole impact.

Experimentation is the best way to perfect this slightly more complicated technique.

### 10 - Sponging

For this you will need a natural sponge; imitation ones simply don't work as well. Sponging can be built up using two or more colours to add to the effect.



Apply the basecoat and allow to dry. Next, wet your sponge and allow it to swell to full size, then wring it out well until it's slightly damp. Dip it into the glaze and dab it over the surface with light pressure covering the whole surface with slightly overlapped dabs (5).

Allow this to dry, then add another coat, if required, either of the same colour or of a matching tone. You will need to clean your sponge fairly regularly to avoid it becoming clogged, making a splodge rather than a textured pattern.

#### 11 - Stippling

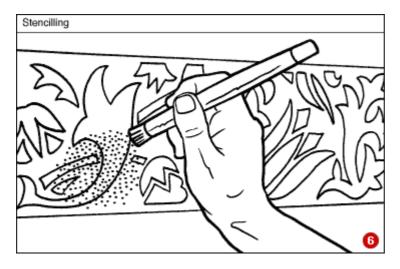
This is very similar to sponging and gives a finer, more mottled appearance.

Stippling can be used as an effect in its own right, or can be used to disguise brush or roller marks before applying another technique such as rag rolling. When the basecoat is dry, apply the glaze and stipple it with the bristles of a special stippling brush. This will create a fine, even effect with a textured finish.

## 12 - Stencilling

This is quite a different paint effect to the others mentioned, as it is usually used to create a specific design or pattern onto a previously painted surface. It uses its own paints and generally is used in smaller areas such a furniture or as a border. The advantage of this is that it can be done in stages, working on one small area at a time.

You can buy ready-made stencils or you can make your own. There are also a great variety of stencil paints available, but you can also use any emulsion paint, wood dyes and oil paints.



Once you have decided where you would like to apply the stencil, attach it with low tack masking tape. With a stencil brush or sponge, stipple the paint through the stencil (6). Use very little paint and build up the design and colours in stages. If you use too much paint, the pattern will smudge. Stencil patterns can be created using a single colour and motif or several colours and designs.

#### 13 - Spattering

Once again, this is a very simple process, well known to toddlers and schoolchildren - who are natural-born experts. It involves splashing wet paint, varnish, ink or stain onto a clean, dry surface.

The method is to use a short stick held in the hand and to knock a loaded paintbrush against it so that a spray of droplets spatter onto the basecoat. Don't have your brush too wet. You can control this by knocking off the excess paint into a tray or onto a rag before approaching the work area. You will soon find the optimum amount you need on the brush and learn how hard you should knock it to obtain your desired spatter.

This technique can be used on projects of all sizes, using very small paint brushes and thin glazes on small objects, or large ones on walls. Once again, you can stop in the middle of the process if you wish.

It's very effective in giving stone effects, such as granite, when three or four colours are overlaid. Allow each coat to dry before adding another. Finally, you may want to seal the whole surface with varnish for protection, especially if you have used inks and stains for any of the coats.

Paint effects are creative fun so, above all, enjoy doing them!

## 14 - Dragging

Dragging is another method of wood graining, and can be developed further to achieve fabric and linen effects.

Apply the glaze to the dry basecoat. Then, using a long bristled dragging or flogging brush, firmly drag the brush over the glaze holding it as flat as possible. Keep going until you have reached the edge of the area that you wish to paint. Repeat this all along the surface.

By dragging over the surface again at right angles to the first coat you can produce a fabric effect.