

# How To Decorate With Paint

By Cathy Knopp

If you're looking for an inexpensive way to jazz up a room, decorative painting offers a quick solution. It's a fun way to express your creativity and gives a room a truly individual style.

Instead of painting the wall with ordinary flat paint and brushes or rollers, you can create a wonderful textured look by using sponges, rags, combs or even plastic bags. One of the advantages of decorative painting is that it can hide imperfections and uneven wall surfaces.

Before you begin, consider whether decorative painting would look best on only one wall or all four. Sometimes just giving one wall a distinctive look can make a room more exciting. Once you've decided on a color scheme and pattern, clean the walls to remove dust, grease and cobwebs and patch any holes or cracks.

## Rag rolling

Rag rolling is a popular technique that imparts a marble-like look. For a nice faux painting effect, choose two or three colors of paint and one glazing liquid. The base coat should be low luster latex enamel such as white or beige. Next choose the colors you will apply on top of the base coat. The colors you choose will lighten slightly when mixed with the glaze so choose a color slightly darker than the effect you want to achieve. Apply the solid base coat with a roller and allow it to dry completely. Mix the glazing liquid with the contrasting paint colors. The more glaze you use, the more transparent the effect. Dip the rag into the first paint color and begin rolling the rag on the wall to create a random design. Work on small areas at a time and adjust your technique as necessary. Try to keep the same amount of paint/glaze mixture on the rag each time. (For the rag you can use an old dishtowel, knit scarf, cheesecloth or T-shirt. Experiment with different fabrics until you find the one you like.) You can achieve a nice effect using only one color. If you want to apply another color, allow the first coat to dry before applying the second color. Use the same technique when applying the second color, rotating the rag to achieve a slightly different texture.

## Sponge Painting

Sponge painting is a technique you may like if you are trying to achieve a softer texture. You can use a synthetic sponge made for decorative painting (available at paint and crafts stores) or a natural sea sponge. Prepare the paints and glaze the same as in the directions for rag rolling, but

apply them with a sponge. Wet the sponge with water before dipping it into the paint and press the sponge into a newspaper to remove excess paint before applying it to the wall. It's a good idea to practice sponge painting another surface before beginning on the wall. This will give you a chance to develop a feel for the pattern you want to achieve. For example, rotating your hand slightly as you press down and pull back on the sponge will create a circular pattern. Experiment with other motions on your sample surface. Remember to take your time as you execute your design. Rushing will result in a splotchy, unattractive wall.

### **Faux marble painting**

To achieve a marbled look, you may want to use a technique called veining. Black is used as the base coat and two different shades of green are sponged or ragged on top. A feather is used to apply the final coat of an acrylic extender paint. A very light color applied with the feather creates a vein-like irregular pattern.

### **Glazing**

Glazing is often used to enhance the beauty of paint colors. After the wall has been base coated, a glaze can be applied starting at the top and working down. One person can apply glaze while another follows using a ragging or combing technique, if desired.

### **Color Washing**

Color washing can be used with water and oil-based paints. The technique results in a soft finish through the use of a thin glaze. Select colors that are close in tone. The idea is to build transparent layers. The glaze can be applied with a roller followed by wide brush strokes.

### **Combing**

Many professional decorators use a combing technique for an unusual effect on walls. By dragging a comb through the wall glaze you can create a straight line to resemble wood grains or make a wavy pattern. Combing requires practice and a steady hand to achieve a professional looking result. It's a good idea to practice first on another surface until you achieve the right degree of pressure and the effect you seek.