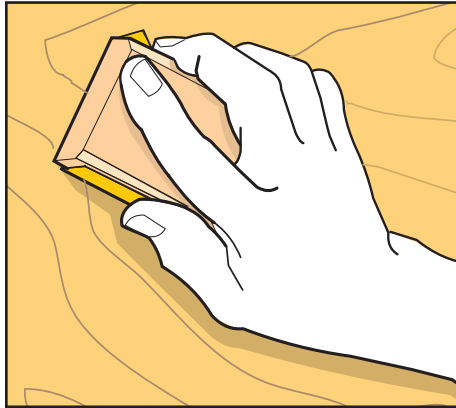


HOW TO: Prepare woodwork for painting

Introduction



This 'How To' gives guidance on preparing wooden surfaces for painting. You'll learn how to treat new wood, and what to do with wood that's been painted before: how to paint over it and how to remove it. You'll also find advice on dealing with rot.

The final appearance of your painted woodwork is totally dependent on the quality of your preparation. So be thorough and pay careful attention to detail.

If your house was built before 1960, it may have been decorated with lead-based paint. Lead, even in paint, is a toxic hazard. This 'How to' shows the safest way of removing lead-based paint.

What you'll need

Materials

Chemical paint stripper
 Decorator's detergent – sugar soap
 Exterior or interior decorator's filler
 Knotting solution
 Methylated spirit
 2-part resin wood filler
 Wet or dry abrasive paper – coarse, medium and fine
 White spirit
 Wire wool – '00'
 Wood hardener/preservative
 Wood preservative

Tools & equipment

2 Buckets – one metal and one plastic
 Cork block
 Dust sheets
 Dusting brush
 Filling knives
 Fine bottle spray – for keeping down dust
 Gas torch with fishtail burner or hot air gun with fishtail nozzle
 Hammer – claw or Warrington
 Long extension ladders – for outside work
 Nail punch
 Paint brushes – 13mm, 25mm & 50mm

Paint kettle – plastic
 Pin punch
 Plasterer's small tool – leaf and square
 Putty knife
 Safety glasses
 Shave hook – combination 225mm
 Sponge
 Stepladder with top tool tray
 2 Stripping knives – 50mm & 100mm
 Vinyl work gloves

⚠ Safety tips

- Wear safety glasses and vinyl work gloves.
- If you have a respiratory problem, wear a face mask.
- Work in a well ventilated area.
- Don't smoke anywhere near the chemicals.
- If you get stripper on your skin, wash it with lots of cold water.
- Keep children and pets away from the work area.

New wood

About woodgrain

Woodgrain is the pattern of lines in a piece of wood (**fig. 1**). The lines may be quite obvious, as in pine and ash, or very subtle, as in beech and ramin.

Achieving a good paint or varnish finish is a matter of smoothing and filling the grain. Here's a section through a piece of wood that's been planed and smoothed with glass-paper. The surface may appear smooth to touch but it's still quite bumpy.

Fill, paint and rub down between coats to fill the hollows and give the final coat a smooth finish.

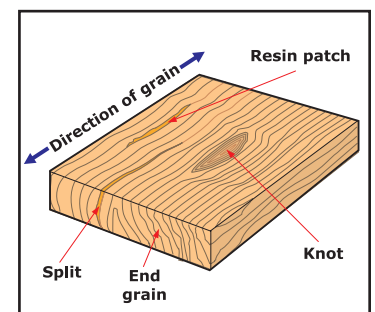


fig. 1

HOW TO: Prepare woodwork for painting

New wood (cont.)

1. Level the surface

Punch all nail heads below the surface of the timber (**fig. 2**) and fill any holes, cracks or blemishes with two-part resin wood filler. Leave the filler slightly proud and, when it's hard, sand smooth and level along the surrounding surface.

Thoroughly rub down the wood using a cork block and glasspaper. First use medium glasspaper, then fine. Always rub along the grain (**figs. 1, 3**).

If you're rubbing down a moulding, wrap the glasspaper round your fingers or a shaped piece of wood.

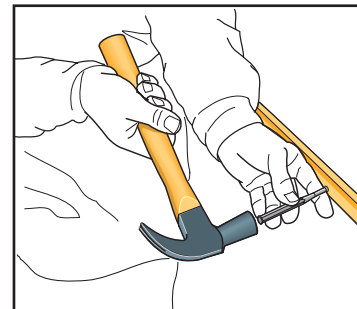


fig. 2

2. Apply preservative

Paint new timber with a clear preservative. Follow the manufacturer's instructions.

3. Deal with resin

Clean knots and resinous patches (**fig. 1**) with white spirit and, when dry, paint with knotting solution. This stops the resin 'bleeding' through subsequent layers of paint and showing as an unsightly brown stain.

Treat very resinous timbers with white spirit, then paint them all over with aluminium primer.

Don't use knotting solution or primer if you intend to varnish or stain the wood. Follow the manufacturer's instructions.

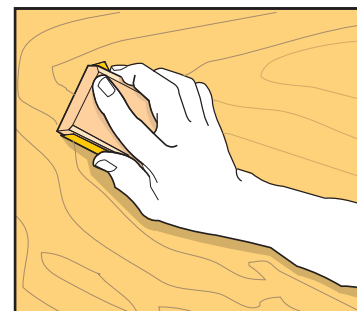


fig. 3

Hint

You'll recognise resinous timber by touch (usually slightly sticky), by sight (a dark 'golden syrup' sheen) and by smell (noticeably pine-scented).

4. Apply primer

Vacuum off all dust. Apply a primer, brushing it well into the grain, and allow it to dry. Primer seals the surface and allows a good bond between the timber and subsequent coats of paint.

Existing paintwork

1. Wash the paintwork

Wash surfaces from the bottom upwards using hot water and sugar soap or detergent. Rinse from top to bottom with clean water.

Rub down using wet and dry paper and water with a dash of washing-up liquid. This will flatten the surface and provide a key for new paint.

2. Level the surface

Scrape blistered or flaking paint back to a firm edge and 'feather' the edges so they're level with the surrounding surface (**fig. 4**).

Fill blemishes and cracks and rub down.

Removing old paint

⚠ Safety precautions for lead paint

Most paint used before 1960 contained lead. Lead paint is toxic and you must treat it very carefully.

- Rub down using waterproof abrasive with water.
- You may use a chemical stripper or hot air gun in a well ventilated room, but DON'T burn the paint.
- Dispose of waste in a sealed plastic bag.
- Clean up thoroughly with an industrial vacuum cleaner. You can hire this.
- Repaint with lead-free paint.
- Wash hands thoroughly before eating.
- Wear an appropriate mask when working with lead paint.

For full information contact the Paintmakers Association or see www.coatings.org.uk

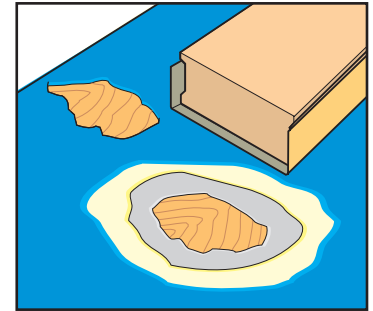


fig. 4

3. Apply primer

Apply Primer to bare wood and any areas you may have filled.

💡 Hint

If the existing paintwork is flaking, chipped or very thick and uneven, strip it back to the bare wood, fill and prime.

Burning off

Tackle mouldings first. Move the blow torch or hot air gun over an area of paint. When the paint starts to soften and bubble, use a shave hook to scrape it off the wood and into a metal bin or bucket. Try to keep the heat moving to soften the paint just ahead of the shave hook.

Start from the bottom and work upwards. If you're right-handed, work left to right – vice versa if you're left-handed.

When working close to glass, use a metal heat shield to protect the glass (**fig. 5**).

After you've stripped the mouldings, use a stripping knife to remove the paint from flat areas.

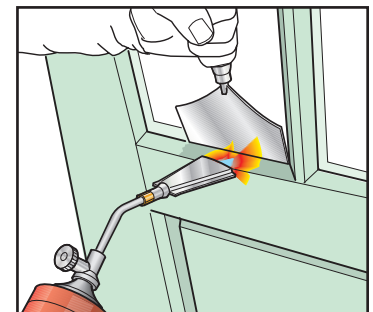


fig. 5

💡 Hints

- Use either a gas blow torch or an electric hot air gun. The latter is less vicious and easier to control. However, a hot air gun doesn't perform very well outside on a windy day.
- If you intend to varnish or stain the wood, remove all traces of primer from the timber grain. Dip 00 grade wire wool into chemical stripper. Rub the stripper into the grain until the paint softens, and remove residue with fresh wire wool. Before applying the varnish or stain, neutralise the stripper according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Use primer, undercoat and top coat from the same manufacturer. The paints are chemically matched and designed to give the best finish.

Removing old paint (cont.)

Safety tip

- Always wear safety glasses or goggles when removing old paint.
- Always follow the instructions on manufacturer's labels and pay particular attention to safety or hazard warnings.

Using chemical strippers

Chemical strippers are easy, if a little messy, to use. Choose a stripper suited to your task, which may be removing:

- paint from wood
- paint from metal
- varnish from wood
- catalysed lacquers from wood.

Gel strippers

Dab the gel liberally onto the paint, working it well into mouldings. When the paint starts to crackle and bubble, after 10–15 minutes, remove it with a stripping knife. Use a shave hook on mouldings.

Remove any stubborn patches with '00' wire wool dipped in stripper. If you're stripping paint from oak, use coarse hessian or sacking as steel wool will stain the oak blue or black.

Scrape the residue onto newspaper and, when dry, put in a dustbin.

Paste strippers

Apply the paste in a thick layer and then cover in a moisture sealing foil or cling film. After a few hours, lift the edge of the paste, now leathery, and remove the paste and paint in one big sheet.

Wrap the sheet in newspaper and dispose of it safely.

Repairing rot

Small areas of rot are common on wooden window frames. You can repair them quite easily, provided there is enough solid timber to support the frame.

Scrape away all rotten timber. Apply wood hardener with a 13mm brush until the timber is saturated. When it's hard – after about 6 hours – fill the damaged area with a 2-part resin wood filler. Sand the filler down when cured, after 20–30 minutes.

To prevent further rot occurring, drill holes in the frame around the rotten area. Insert preservative tablets into the holes. Fill the holes and rub down. **HB**