

Painting know how

Emulsion paint

Type of paint: emulsion, water-based

Finishes: matt, silk, soft sheen, eggshell, vinyl (also kitchen & bathroom)

Uses: interior walls, ceilings

How to choose

When choosing emulsion paint it basically depends on the look that you prefer. That said, some emulsions may be more suitable than others depending on how easy you want it to be to clean your walls and how much moisture the room is exposed to, for example a lot of condensation tends to form in bathrooms.

When talking about paint the word for shine is 'sheen'. Generally the higher the sheen level, the easier it is to clean the surface/the more scrub resistant it is. Shinier surfaces can also give the illusion of an open, airy space by reflecting light into darker rooms.

Silk or softsheen is ideal for those who prefer a shinier look, whilst bathroom and kitchen emulsions offer a moisture resistant soft-sheen finish which is well suited to high condensation areas.

Matt finishes, on the other hand, are better at covering imperfect surfaces, as they reflect less light, making the surface appear flatter and can make rooms feel cosier. However, in general they do not tolerate cleaning and are slightly less durable than the higher sheen finishes.

It is worth noting that there are a growing number of water-based, gloss finish paints available - these offer a high sheen finish, although not as high as their solvent-based equivalent.

How to use

Full details can be found on the back of the paint can, but typically two coats of emulsion are required to get an even coverage. It can be painted directly on to walls that have already been painted or onto paintable wall coverings such as lining paper and textured wallpaper. One-coat emulsion, on the other hand can cover most surfaces using just one coat.

Prior to painting if the existing paint is peeling or has a high sheen finish, you will need to remove all defective coating or use sand or glass paper to remove any major flaws and roughen the surface.

Unless the paint is 'non-drip' you will need to stir it before use to ensure that you are working with an even colour throughout.

If you are painting a whole room, it is always best to start with the ceiling, this way if it does drip or splatter the walls you can cover it up when you paint the walls and finally the radiators, woodwork and finish with the doors.

How to clean up

Cleaning brushes and rollers after using emulsion (also known as water-based) paints is relatively simple.

To remove excess paint from rollers use a pallet knife or similar and wash with warm soapy water, shake to remove excess water and then dry using an old towel. To remove excess paint from brushes scrape off excess then wash with warm soapy water until water runs clear. Shake out excess water and leave to dry.

If you only need to store your roller between coats then you can simply wrap it tightly in a plastic bag, but it's always best to wash your brush.

How to store

Be sure to replace the lid firmly, so that the paint can is sealed and no air can get in. If you have some paint leftover when you've finished you can donate it to your local Community RePaint scheme: communityrepaint.org.uk

