



Decorating your home...

Introduction

In this leaflet, you will find some handy hints and advice about decorating the inside of your home. Although home decorating can take some time, it can also be extremely rewarding and help you to create the kind of atmosphere that you want to live in.

From painting to wallpapering, here's a few tips to get you started and ensure you have the right tools to work in a safe environment.

If you have any questions or to find out more, contact the Hackney Homes Painting and Redecorations Team on 020 8356 3132.

*Residents should note that any internal structural changes to your home must be agreed first by Hackney Homes.



Painting – getting it right the first time

Good preparation is essential for a good quality finish.

- To get first-class results when painting, choose good materials and equipment and use them correctly.
- Keep brushes and other items clean and in good condition.
- Try to ensure that you have enough materials to complete the job. This is essential when buying wall-paper.
- Don't rush the job. Give paints time to dry between coats.
- Remove dirt/grease from surfaces and keep the area where you are decorating as dust free as possible. Only start painting when surfaces are smooth, clean and dry.
- Don't wear woollen garments, if possible wear cotton overalls or jeans and cotton shirt.

Be safe

Even when working just a couple of feet off the floor, always use a strong stepladder - never stand on a chair or other 'hop-up'. Always read the safety instructions on the products you use. If in doubt, call the manufacturers helpline.

Tools for painting

- Dust sheets
- Protective gloves
- Safety goggles
- Paint kettle
- Paintbrush and roller
- Paint tray
- Paintbrush cleaning tub (optional)
- Filling knife
- Paint Pads
- Sandpaper

Materials

- Filler, if necessary
- Sugar soap
- Paint
- Cleaning fluid, if using oil-based paint

How to prepare a room

Clear as much furniture from the room as possible. Whatever has to remain should be gathered in the middle of the floor. Use dust sheets to cover furniture and floor coverings that have to remain in the room. Remove all fixtures and fittings from walls and doors. In the long run, it is far quicker to do this rather than to try and paint around them, which leads to running and smudging on the fitting itself.

How to prepare walls and ceilings

Use sugar soap and plenty of clean water to wash down all surfaces, starting with the ceiling. Allow to dry before painting. Make sure that electrical fittings are protected from water.

Plaster surfaces tarnished by nicotine stains also need to be coated with primer/sealer before painting. In older houses, you can still find walls and ceilings coated with distemper. You can tell if this is the case because the powdery coating will come off when you wash down the surface. If the distemper is loose and flaky, then wash and scrape off as much of it as possible. Distemper must always be covered with stabilising solution before repainting or the new paint will not adhere.



Cracks and holes

Use cellulose filler to fill any small cracks and holes in plaster. Use a flexible filling knife to force the filler into the hole. If you can't get a smooth finish with the knife, leave the filler slightly above of the surface, allow it to dry, then rub it smooth with dry sandpaper wrapped around a wood block. Alternatively, use a sanding block.

Preparing Woodwork

If existing paintwork is in a good condition and is not damaged, there is no need to strip it off – it will make a good base for the new paint. The only exception is where a thick coat of paint is causing windows or doors to jam. If the paint is to remain, then it should be washed down with sugar soap and water to remove all traces of dust, grease and stains.

Rub down the surface with a medium-grade sandpaper, or an orbital sander fitted with a medium-grade sanding sheet. This takes the shine off the gloss, leaving a good key for the new paint to adhere to. It is advisable to wear a face mask when sanding.

Finally, wipe over the surface with a lint-free rag moistened with white spirit. Use a pointed stick to get the rag into corners where dust can be trapped - it may be picked up on the brush and spread across the surface to leave a pimply effect on the dried paintwork.

Don't forget to clean out keyholes and the top edges of doors where dirt and dust can be picked up on the brush. Paintwork that has the odd chip or crack need not be stripped off. Fill the hole with cellulose filler (if painting) or woodfiller (if varnishing) and sand it flush with the surface when the filler has dried.

Painting Ceilings and Walls

Always plan to decorate a ceiling or a complete wall in one work session. If you take a break and the paint dries, a hard paint line will show where you stopped and restarted.

Start decorating at the main window and work backwards into the room. This way you will be able to see which areas have been covered and which have not. Be sure to work in a well ventilated room and keep windows open to accelerate drying.

If using a roller, first go around the room with a paint brush and paint a narrow band along all edges and into corners where the roller won't reach. Tip some paint into the well of the roller tray and load the roller by immersing it in the paint and running it backwards and forwards on the slope of the tray, completely covering the roller sleeve.

Now simply use the roller in random directions. Work systematically across the room painting the ceiling in 600mm (2ft) bands. With a wall, work downwards from the top to the skirting. Brushes and paint pads are also used in random directions, working quickly to join up wet edges.

Painting Woodwork

Always use a coat of primer on bare wood. Where a door has already been painted, choose the undercoat colour recommended by the manufacturers of the chosen gloss/satin wood. In some cases it might require a second undercoat to completely obliterate the old paint. It is important that you do this or the colour will show through the new coat of paint. When each coat has dried, sand down lightly with medium-grade sandpaper and wipe with a lint-free cloth

moistened with white spirit. Then apply the next coat.

When painting woodwork, apply the paint with the grain and then, without reloading the brush, work it across the grain, and finish with the grain. Then reload and move on to the next section, joining up wet edges quickly.

Colour schemes

Colour is the first thing you notice when you enter a room. It creates mood and atmosphere, and allows you to transform your home quickly and cheaply with stunning results.

Creating a colour scheme may seem difficult, but many manufacturers of paints and wall coverings carefully co-ordinate their colour cards and design collections so that most of the hard work is already done for you.

Wallpapering

Wallpapering is one of the most popular ways of changing the appearance of a room. Modern materials make decorating much easier for beginners. The extensive range of wallcoverings available means that you can change the colour, pattern and texture of your walls with ease.

Wallpapering – the basics

- Ceiling/walls should be in good condition and clean. You can paper directly over painted surfaces, as long as you have washed them thoroughly with sugar soap.
- If you have stripped off old wallpaper ensure the walls are sanded down carefully as any little bit on the surface will show through the new paper.
- Dust all surfaces that the wallpaper is likely to come in contact with.

Tools for Wallpapering

- Pasting table
- Wallpaper paste
- Wallpaper paste brush
- Clean bucket
- Soft sponge
- Paper-hangers brush
- One metre ruler
- Measuring tape
- Wallpaper scissors
- Plumb line or large level
- Craft knife or scalpel

Cutting and pasting wallpaper

Step 1: Mix wallpaper paste in a bucket. Instructions on the packaging will give you a guide to the strength and amount of paste you need for the type of paper you are hanging.

Step 2: Measure the height of the wall to ascertain the length of the first strip, adding about 100mm (4in) for trimming top and bottom. Cut similar lengths from the roll. If your paper is patterned, you may have to allow extra for matching the pattern on adjacent strips - check before cutting.

When cutting wallpaper strips from a roll, first mark or nick the edge of the paper at the required length. Then fold the paper over at this point, lining up the side edges carefully, and slit along the crease with a metal ruler or wallpaper scissors.

Step 3: Lay the cut strips face down on your pasting table. To prevent the strips curling while you apply the paste, tuck the free ends of the paper behind a piece of string tied between the legs of the table.

Step 4: Line up the top strip with the front edge of the table and, using a wide pasting brush, apply the paste evenly, first down the centre of the strip, then brush it out towards the front edge. Slide the strip across to line up with the back edge of the table and brush on more paste towards that edge. Make sure both edges are well covered. Try not to get paste on the front side because it can leave marks. Fold the pasted section over, pasted side to pasted side, and slide the paper along the table to paste and fold the other end in a similar way. Use this method to paste subsequent strips of paper and keep your pasting table clean.

Keep your pasting brush clean by resting the bristles on string tied across the top of the paste bucket. You may have to leave some heavyweight papers to soak for a short while before hanging them. Check the manufacturer's instructions.

Hanging wallpaper - basics

Step 1: If possible, start by papering a wall that contains neither door nor window. Begin at one corner, working away from the window. When hanging paper with a large regular pattern, start at a central feature such as a chimneybreast.

Walls and corners are rarely true or square, so they cannot be relied upon as a guide. The trick is to mark a vertical guideline on the wall, using a plumb line. Mark the line on the wall, slightly less than one roll width away from the corner.

Step 2: Unfold the top half of the paper and lightly press it to the wall using a paperhanger's brush.

Step 3: Slide the strip to line up its edge with the plumbed line on the wall. Allow the paper to overlap the ceiling by about 50mm (2in). Brush out from the centre to exclude air trapped under the paper. Unfold the bottom half and brush it into place in a similar way.

Step 4: Using the back of your wallpaper scissors or sharp knife, score a line along the corner between the wall and ceiling. Peel back the paper and cut along the crease to remove the waste, then smooth the paper back into place. Use the same method to trim the strip to length at skirting level.

To avoid tearing wet wallpaper, put a new blade in your craft knife or scalpel.

Step 5: Hang the next strip beside the first, making a neat butt between them. At the same time, slide the strip up or down to match any pattern motif. Keep checking that the match is accurate as you brush the strip into place.

As you proceed, wipe excess paste from the ceiling and skirting, using a damp sponge. Similarly, wipe smears of paste off the surface of the paper. Run a seam roller along the butt joints to make sure they are stuck down, and that your wallpaper is flat.

Disguise a less-than-perfect line at the ceiling by pasting a narrow, patterned border along the top of the wall.

Papering a ceiling

Papering a ceiling requires special access so we advise getting a professional painter to do this area.

Find out more...

If you have any questions or to find out more, contact the Hackney Homes Painting and Redecorations team on 020 8356 3132.

For further information on decorating tips and safe working methods, please refer to the websites below or contact the Health and Safety team on 020 8356 2280/2095.

www.paintquality.co.uk/health/safety

www.defra.gov.uk/environment/chemicals/lead/pdf/leadpaintleaflet

www.diyfixit.co.uk/diy/safety/dti_6/dti_6

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Bengali

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