Herbie's Tips & Trends

Room Painting 101

Ready for a new look in your home, but don't have a budget for a big remodel? There's nothing faster or more economical to give your home a quick update than by painting your rooms a new color. A well-planned and executed paint job can make a room look larger or cozier, can accent features or hide flaws, or reflect your own personal flair.

Here are some tips to help make your painting project a success.

Choose the Right Color
Go to a paint or home improvement store and get swatches of colors to take home. Select a lot of options, chances are the florescent lights in the store will make the colors look completely different than they will in your home.

See how you like the colors on different walls and in different lighting conditions — early morning sun, midday and nighttime lamplight — to make sure you're happy with your final choice.

Another option is to paint a few colors on your walls. Many companies offer sample sizes in either a selection of popular colors, or in any color they offer. These samples cost much less than a full gallon and give you the opportunity to try them out on the wall before spending a lot of money.

Select an Appropriate Finish
Choose a paint finish depending on how the room or surface will be used:

- A flat or matte finish helps conceal flaws and absorbs light in well-lit rooms.
- Satin or eggshell finishes are a good choice for high-traffic areas such as foyers, family rooms, kitchens and bathrooms because they clean more easily than flat or matte paint.
- Baseboards, molding and railings look best in a semi-gloss finish, which is a shiny finish that is the easiest to clean and provides a contrast to the walls.

Many paint companies also now offer "all-in-one" paints that already contain primer. These enable you to paint over a darker paint color or area that's been repaired with patching compound without having to apply a coat of primer before the paint.

Stock Up on Supplies
Here are the basic supplies you'll need whether you're painting several rooms or just one:

- Brushes and rollers
- Paint trays
- Painter's tape
- Sheets or tarps to cover furniture

Prepare the Room
Give yourself adequate space to maneuver while you paint and protect your valuable furniture and belongings. Move as much of the room's contents as you can either out of the room or away from the walls.

Cover whatever is going to stay and the floor, especially where it meets the walls, with old sheets or plastic tarps.

Next, remove the switch plates and electrical outlet covers. It's easier than trying to cover them with painter's tape and definitely looks better — and is safer — than just painting over them. Don't forget to repair nail holes, dents or chipped spots with a patching compound.

If you have any doubt about your ability to paint a perfectly straight line, or you don't have a very steady hand, use painters tape to protect features you don't want paint to get on. This could include baseboards, window and door trim, and where the wall meets the ceiling or crown molding. Make sure the tape adheres properly by running a finger or mixing stick along the tape.

Clean the walls with a mild detergent solution or wipe them with a damp lint-free cloth to remove cobwebs and dust that will cause blemishes in your paint.

Vacuum or dust the room to make sure dust or animal hair doesn't get in your paint and on your walls.

Now you're ready to make a colorful change!