

TIPS

A Home Exterior Makeover

Latex paint is almost everyone's first choice for exterior paint because it is easy to apply, cleans up with water, and dries quickly. On top of that, it's long lasting. But if you don't know what you're painting over, choose alkyd paint. Alkyd will adhere to most surfaces, including chalking ones; latex is more finicky about what old paints it will bond with.

MORE ABOUT LATEX PAINT

Is it always damp around your house? Choose a latex paint or stain. Porous latex breathes and lets moisture escape. Moreover, it doesn't contain vegetable oils that encourage mildew by feeding it. Latex is also great for most masonry and can usually be applied without a primer.

PAINTING CINDER BLOCK

For cinder blocks, get a solvent-thinned rubber-base paint. The water in latex can penetrate into the blocks, causing embedded iron particles to rust and stain your fresh paint job.

For Best Results, Paint When It's 50 To 90 Degrees Fahrenheit.

PAINTING OTHER SURFACES

You can revive faded aluminum siding with any standard topcoat. But first, you must sand the problem areas, wash the surface well, and coat any bare metal with a zinc-based primer. For doors, windows, and other places where durability is a concern, pick a glossy paint. It contains more of the resins that give a paint body and hardness.

POWER WASHING THE SIDING

If your house's exterior is badly soiled, rent power washing equipment. The high-pressure jet of water it emits will blast away flaking paint as well as dirt.

USE SANDPAPER

Scraping off loose flaking paint is also an important part of preparation. But don't overdo it. There's no need to scrape off any paint that's firmly stuck to the surface. Areas where you've scraped off flakes and blisters will be less noticeable if you smooth the sharp edges of the old paint with sandpaper.

IT'S PAINTING SEASON

For best results, paint when the temperature is from 50 to 90 degrees Fahrenheit. Spring and Fall are the best seasons for painting. Besides moderate weather, nearby leaf-bearing shrubs are usually bare. Be sure to wait until the dew evaporates in the morning before painting, and in the evening, stop before the dampness sets in.