

Article for Homelife

Don't paint yourself into a corner

A lick of paint is the easiest way to spruce up your home and make it seem more welcoming.

The trick, however, is to choose colours that don't put your guests off, if you're expecting summer guests, or even potential buyers if you are ready for a move.

Colour choice

A dreary magnolia might provide a blank canvas, but a lack of focus can mean the eye is drawn to all the wrong places. Likewise, a poor choice of a fuller colour can make even the most spacious room seem dark and small.

Summer is a popular time of year for decorating and also with it a whole new range of colours for inspiration. We may have moved from cooler, darker winter months into bright, lighter summer nights but the light in this part of the world tends to have a grey tone the whole year round so choose colours that are warm to make the most of British light.

You can draw attention towards – or away from – a feature in the room such as a window, fireplace or alcove by using a complimentary colour. If you have a fantastic old sofa, rug or picture that really takes centre stage in a room, choose colours to work with it – not compete against it.

Use the colour swatches available in stores to find which colour most closely matches your item and choose a colour from the same mood. Where possible use a local supplier that has colour scanning facilities to match colours to get the desired look.

Not everyone finds it easy choosing colours, so consult with experts and suppliers.

Preparation

One important rule – and it really will make a huge difference – is to have smooth walls in the first place. Good preparation is paramount. Any cracks, pinholes or damage will show up even more once freshly painted. For uneven walls with cracks, bumps, nicks, gouges or other damage there are various products on the market.

Quick tips

- If you are unsure about the colour you've picked do a colour test from a sample pot in the area you are decorating.
- When rolling use an extension poll even if you can reach. This will help you cover the surface quicker and more evenly.
- Using a matt emulsion on walls will hide a lot of imperfections as the light is absorbed. With silk emulsion the light is reflected showing up imperfection.
- When painting wood work remove fixtures and fittings, as you'll be able to work faster.
- Before painting, prime fillers in the same way you would to plaster or wood.
- Wash new rollers out before use to remove loose fluff.
- If you find "cutting in" difficult, it could be because you are using a cheap brush. When selecting a brush, it's better to choose a good quality one.
- Apply masking tape to carpets before painting skirting boards and door frames.
- If you notice runs on your paint work after it has dried but not hardened, remove with a filling knife (upwards). Allow to harden, rub down and then repaint the affected area.

Article written by Romerils.