

A stylized illustration of a paint can and a paintbrush. The paint can is on the left, with a line representing the paintbrush handle extending from it towards the right. The words "how to" are written in a simple, lowercase font above the paint can.

how to

Re-Do Walls

and Woodwork

Re-doing walls and woodwork isn't too difficult if you know what you're doing and use the right materials. Amateurs can do a satisfactory job by carefully following directions. Here are some tips to guide you.

by June Brown

YOU'RE ALL SET to do something new to the walls and woodwork in your home. What shall it be? And how will you go about it to get the result you want?

The information in the latter part of this article is provided to give you a guide for the three major steps in re-doing walls and woodwork. This information will answer most questions—though each home has its own particular situation to meet.

What To Buy . . .

We need to consider use, ease of application and care at the time we buy. But it's at this point most people are stumped as to where to begin. The main problem really comes down to *use*.

Today's finishes for walls and woodwork have been pretty much perfected so that an amateur, with care in following directions, can get results that satisfy.

The color range in most popular finishes is so vast that personal preference in color shouldn't be a problem.

Maintenance isn't too difficult as you will notice from the "Care"

section. It rests on the right use of the product though. And that brings us back to the foremost problem—intended use.

Narrow the problem down to the particular room. Does your family give this room hard use (kitchen, laundry, bathroom, dining area), moderately hard use (living room, dining room), or less wear (bedrooms)? The only exception to the latter is if you have a ranch-type home and the children use the bedroom as a playroom. In this case, the bedroom might get as much hard wear as the kitchen.

Hard Wear . . .

Kitchens, bathrooms, laundries and dining areas in connection with the kitchen get regular hard use. The wall finish must be able to withstand moisture and be smooth in texture so it won't quickly collect dust and dirt. Such wall surfaces need to be as washable as possible so the surface can be restored to its original fresh appearance easily.

Paints that have these qualities are usually high gloss or semi-gloss. Wallpapers or wall fabrics need a protective surface for durability and ease of care. Most tiles—ceramic, plastic, metal—also meet these qualifications.

What you decide on for any room given hard use, then, depends primarily upon *getting the most of these qualities for the money you can afford to spend*. This is said with the realization that most of us first think in terms of color or final effect.

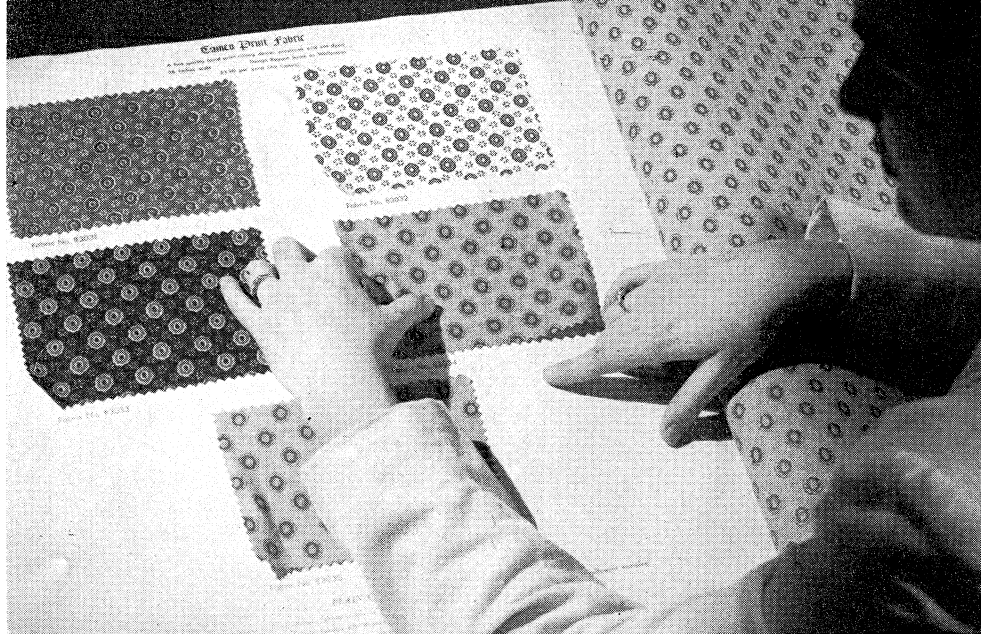
Your line of reasoning might follow one of two paths: (a) "I personally like this color scheme or this finish"—then go on to make service comparisons between products. Or (b) "I can afford to spend just this much;" then compare products, then make a color selection. (See also suggestions below.)

Less Wear . . .

For rooms given less wear, your main considerations should be: (a) appearance in combination with furnishings you already have; (b) total lighting of the room both in daylight and evening; (c) exposure to sunlight; (d) particular structural problems. For example, a room can be made to appear larger or smaller depending on choice of wall finish.

Remember, walls are the largest color area of the room. Color tends to appear even more strong in large areas. What may seem as a rather mild color on a color card or in a wallpaper booklet may be-

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Wallpapers of all-over pattern or textured design can camouflage imperfect wall surfaces. Some modern papers now available are planned in the same design and color as are drapery fabrics.



Be sure to choose the right plan to use. The roller and paint job will show no marks.

come much more pronounced on the wall.

In paints, a dull finish gives softer tones which convey the feeling of quiet background for other furnishings.

In wallpapers, the small all-over designs or plain papers are more restful than papers heavily patterned with fruit, tassels or ornate designs. Papers with large designs tend to make a room look smaller or tend to draw attention away from the furnishings.

However, wallpaper with striped design can serve to make a room appear higher. Paper of all-over pattern or textured design can camouflage imperfect wall surfaces.

If you use a combination of paint and paper, remember that you're creating a certain amount of contrast which, inevitably, draws the eye to the walls.

I would not apply a finish to a wall until I had tried out a small amount on an inconspicuous area and studied the effect over a period of a few days.

Color Facts . . .

Here are a few color facts to consider:

Any wall finish which contains predominantly reds, oranges, yellows

low-greens or yellows will make the room seem smaller, warmer in appearance and more stimulating.

Any wall finish that has a color in the blue, neutral green, violet, blue-green or blue-gray range will make the room appear somewhat larger, more cool and more subdued.

Light colors reflect more light; make objects seem larger and farther away (room looks bigger).

Dark colors absorb light, make objects look smaller and closer. They can make a room seem depressing rather than quiet.

If you want color gaiety on your walls, keep the area small. The only exception is if all your other furnishings are very uninteresting and you can't change them.

Preparing Surface

New Plaster:

Be sure plaster is thoroughly dry. Paint applied to damp plaster may peel or discolor in spots.

Put on a prime coat or size. Let it dry before you apply final coat of paint or wallpaper.

If you plan to paint the walls, try adding color to the prime coat. Color effect can help you determine color for curtains or draperies. Final coat takes less paint.

Old Plaster:

Remove peeled paint. Sandpaper sur-

face until it's smooth. Use steel wool on rough surfaces.

To take off old wallpaper, apply warm water to walls with a cloth, sponge or wide waterpaint brush. Repeat until paper scrapes off. Work from ceiling down, so water will trickle down paper and soften it.

Wash a calcimined wall with large sponge and hot water. Rinse sponge often. Let wall dry 48 hours before applying another finish.

When old covering is off, fill any cracks with commercial patching plaster. Always moisten edge of plaster with water before applying patching material. To fix wide cracks, cut them into a "V" shape with point of "V" at wall edge. This keeps the patching plaster from breaking away from the wall.

If walls are greasy, wash them with warm water and sal soda or detergent; rinse thoroughly, let dry.

Cover bare and patched spots with a priming coat of paint before putting on final coat of paint or wallpaper.

Dry Wall Construction (such as wall board):

If wallboard is porous, use a special sealer to fill all holes, seams and cracks. Then follow method for painting old walls.

Use a size or prime coat on a new wallboard; allow to dry thoroughly before painting or papering.

Woodwork (doors, windows, trim, wood-paneled walls):



the particular paint you in large areas. A good ush marks when finished.



Today's paints and enamels vary in composition and are planned for a specific purpose. If selecting paint for living or sleeping areas, remember that a dull finish gives a softer effect.

If new, sand surface. (See "New Finishes for Old Furniture," HE 28 Revised, Iowa State College.)

If old and to be finished in natural state, remove old finish with paint or varnish remover. Then clean surface with turpentine or tack rag; let dry.

If to be painted, sand or use liquid sandpaper so finish will cling. If there are worn spots or deep indentations, fill with plastic wood. Sand smooth and proceed according to directions in the leaflet mentioned above.

If painting over old wood stain, use stain sealer first. For raw knots in pine or gum, shellac to seal in resin.

Applying Finish

Paint:

Choose the right paint for your purpose. Get the right tool. (See suggestions under specific types of paints).

Begin painting opposite strongest light. Paint from ceiling to floor in strips not more than 2 feet wide. Coat areas roughly; then go over quickly to smooth out. Use fan brush strokes to join strips so no lapping is visible. A good paint job shows no joining or brush marks.

A roller speeds work in large areas. Covers for rollers are of mohair, fleece, frieze and synthetic fiber. Be sure cover is suited to type of paint you use.

Use a brush to apply paint first to areas which a roller can't reach easily. For example, paint a 3-inch strip out from door ledge or at corners of room; then use roller.

To stipple, use thicker paint—varying

thickness with degree of stippling you want. You can use a roller, sponge or brush.

For limed or pickled finish, brush an oil stain or paint over sealer coat; then wipe off. Finish surface with wax, varnish or shellac, depending on effect wanted.

Casein or emulsion paint (including rubber base): For walls and woodwork. Easy to apply with brush or roller. Takes little stirring; uses water as thinner. Touched-up places don't show. Dries in 1 to 4 hours to dull finish. Goes over most surfaces, even wallpaper if paper is smooth and secure. If used over new plaster walls, apply primer coat first.

Alkyd-resin-base paint: For walls and woodwork. Gives durability without high gloss. Put on with brush or roller. Can be used on dry, bare plaster, wall-board, wallpaper or previously painted surfaces. Dries in 4 to 16 hours. Paint uses odorless thinner. Can be obtained in spray-can form for touch-up work.

Alkyd-resin-base enamel: Fine for kitchen, laundry or bathroom. Dries in 16 to 24 hours. Solvents are turpentine or petroleum spirits.

Oil-base paint: For walls and woodwork. Can buy it in flat, eggshell and matte finishes (appearance varies from very dull to some sheen). To thin, use turpentine or mineral spirits. Use good, wide long-bristle brush to spread paint out. If painting new surface, put on primer coat. Allow paint to dry 4 to 16 hours.

Oil-base enamel: Higher gloss. Fine for kitchen, laundry or bathroom. Dries in 16 to 24 hours.

Texture paint: For walls. Thick enough so it can be given a textured effect by using sponge, brush, or rough roller over painted surface. Quick drying, so work on small area at a time. Follow manufacturer's directions.

Masonry paint: For stone, brick or cement blocks. Methods for mixing and applying vary, so follow directions given for product. Paint is easy to apply.

Dripless alkyd paint: For ceilings. Of jelly-like consistency. Does not drip or run on surface. Easy to apply. Comes in choice of colors.

Gloss enamel: For woodwork and doors. Put on over undercoat. Be sure undercoat is sanded and absolutely clean first. Follow directions on can. Let dry 24 hours.

Interior Varnish:

Gives tough, protective finish to wood. Comes in high gloss or dull. Can go on over an oil-base finish, either paint or varnish. Use soft, long-bristled brush. Drying time is 16 to 24 hours.

Wallpaper:

Choose cool, damp day to hang paper so paper doesn't dry too soon and crack. Cut paper in lengths, matching pattern. Cut off edges so lengths don't lap over one another.

Paper ceiling first. Let ceiling lengths

extend down side walls several inches. Use chalk line as guide for first strip.

Spread paste evenly on paper out to edges. Fold each end to the middle; lift strip and adjust and smooth it to wall with a clean, dry cloth.

Water-sensitive wallpaper: Use where paper won't get much abuse. May fade or streak. Low in cost. Can be given spray finish to protect surface.

Water-resistant wallpaper: Use in living room, hall or bedroom where only occasional washing is needed. Fast color in both pattern and background. Can take occasional sponging with water and a mild detergent. Medium price range. Can be given spray finish to protect surface.

Plastic-coated or plastic-impregnated wallpaper: Both save on care, but plastic-impregnated is more durable. Both excellent for bathroom, kitchen, hallway or dining area. Can take grease stains or crayon marks and be wiped off. Higher in price.

Wall Fabrics:

Can cover rough or cracked walls. Most common type has sturdy fabric backing coated with protective surface either of plastic, oil paint or lacquer. Special adhesive may be recommended for application.

May use wall canvas (neutral in color); then paint over it.

May use ordinary cloth such as bur-lap or dress fabrics (all-over prints). Be sure fabric is preshrunk and sunfast. Avoid stripes and plaids; they're hard to match.

Fabrics take more stretching and smoothing than wallpaper. Put paste on wall rather than on cloth. To protect surface, apply protective spray.

Other Coverings:

Flexible sheeting (linoleum-like wall covering, enameled sheeting, flexible laminates, woven woods): Compare types of flexible sheeting for durability, ease of care. Some are more serviceable than others. Cuts evenly. Fits around corners. Follow manufacturer's directions for installation.

Rigid sheeting (plastic laminates, plastic sheets): Comes in specific widths; seam lines covered with metal strips. Calculate space needs carefully because seam lines may be conspicuous.

Plastic laminates resist heat and stains; are long-wearing and easy to clean.

Plastic-coated sheeting consists of hardboard with plastic finish. Durable but affected by humidity.

Wall tiles (ceramic, cork, plastic, metal, leather): Ceramic tile good for

kitchen, bathroom, hall or game room. Cork good for living room, study or library. Plastic tile good for kitchen, bathroom or shower stalls. Metal—made of aluminum with baked on enamel—good where hard use called for. Leather—unusual wall finish. Follow manufacturer's instructions to install these. Some take special adhesives.

Woodwork (doors, windows, trim, furniture, wood-paneled wall):

Can use flat, semi-gloss, enamel, rubber-base, emulsion, stain, interior varnish, shellac or penetrating seal.

Washable paints usually recommended for woodwork. Enamel, if high gloss, isn't wise for large areas.

For all except penetrating seal, may need preparatory liquid (primer, sealer or undercoat) if surface hasn't been finished before, if old finish has been removed or if light color is put on over dark.

Refinish as you would a piece of furniture. (See "New Finishes for Old Furniture," HE 28 Revised.)

Care

Painted Walls, Woodwork:

To keep clean, dust regularly with soft brush or use broom or clean brush covered with clean outing flannel.

If they need washing, make sure paint is washable. If so, dust wall first; then prepare light suds of mild soap or detergent in softened water. Wring out cloth or sponge in suds. Work from bottom of wall up, using steady strokes. Work in small area; rinse with soft water to prevent streaks, spots. Dry after rinsing.

Badly soiled painted walls may need whitening treatment. Apply carefully with cloth moistened in hot water. Wipe off, rinse and dry.

Wash enameled walls like a dish. Avoid strong soap. Try any of the following solutions:

- 1 ounce sal soda in 2 gallons of water.
- ½ ounce laundry soda in 2 gallons of water.
- ¼ ounce trisodium phosphate in 2 gallons of water.

If using commercial preparation for cleaning walls, read label and *carefully* follow manufacturer's directions. Trisodium phosphate is common ingredient of commercial cleaners. Effective if used correctly. If not, can destroy wall finish.

Sodium metaphosphate is added to cleaners to soften water. Helps dissolve dirt. Does not injure paint.

Sulfated fatty alcohol also in commercial cleaners is a "soapless soap" either as powder or paste.

If washing removes paint luster, wax wall to restore luster, give added protection and make future cleaning easier.

Don't clean calcimined walls with

water—they'll streak. Wipe with dry cloth.

Wallpaper:

Washable: Always test wallpaper's washability. Test in inconspicuous place.

If washable, use mild soap solution. Dampen sponge or cloth in solution; squeeze out excess moisture. Work from bottom up, washing one strip at a time. Slightly overlap each strip to prevent streaks. Dry wall with soft cloth. Might use clear, lukewarm water without soap on light, washable papers.

Non-washable: Use homemade or commercial cleaning paste. If using commercial cleaner, follow manufacturer's instructions *exactly*.

To make homemade paste cleaner use:

- 2 cups flour
- 1 cup warm water
- 2 tablespoons kerosene
- 2 tablespoons salt
- 4 tablespoons ammonia

Mix all together; then cook in double boiler until paste no longer sticks to your hands when you roll it between your fingers. Cover and cool.

To use a paste cleaner, keep folding part of cleaner under as it becomes soiled.

Another cleaner is soft, stale bread. Use inside of loaf, handful at a time. As bread soils, use fresh supply. Rub across wall in long, even, vertical strokes. Don't press too hard to wall.

To remove fresh grease spot, place blotter against wall and apply hot iron. Repeat 2 or 3 times. Don't scorch wall. Or, apply thick layer of Fuller's earth or talcum powder. Leave for 24 hours, then brush off. To take off finger marks, use art gum.

Wall Fabrics:

Use method for washable wallpaper.

Other Coverings:

Flexible sheeting: Use cleaner and type of wax recommended by manufacturer. Or use mild detergent in softened water and sponge or soft cloth. Rinse and polish with chamois. Wax if recommended.

Rigid sheeting: Use mild detergent and warm water. Rinse, buff with dry cloth. Use wax on plastic-coated sheeting if desired.

Tile (ceramic, plastic, metal): Use mild detergent and warm water. Wipe with damp cloth each day.

Cork (prewaxed): Follow manufacturer's directions. Dust periodically.

Woodwork:

Same method as for cleaning painted walls. Wax after cleaning.