



HOW-TO BOOKLET #3150

DECORATIVE PAINT FINISHES



TOOL & MATERIAL CHECKLIST

- Dropcloths/Masking Tape
- Turpentine/Paint Thinner
- Oil or Latex Base Coat Paint
- Oil-or Water-base Glaze
- Lint-free Cotton Rags or Cheesecloth
- Artist's Oils or Artist's Acrylics/Universal Tints
- Paint Brush and Roller
- Roller Trays (2)
- Large Sponge

Read This Entire How-To Booklet For Specific Tools and Materials Not Noted in The Basics Listed Above

Decorative paint finishes are a simple and inexpensive way to add elegance and beauty to walls, furniture, cabinets and more. In most cases, the process consists of putting a transparent color glaze over a solid base coat of regular paint.

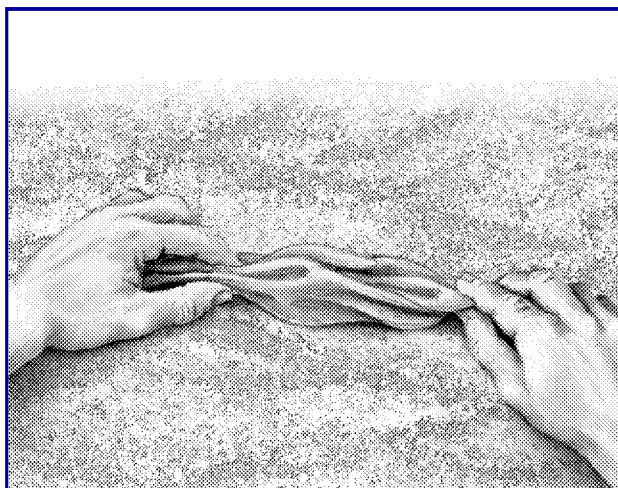
The colors you choose, the opacity of the glaze, the number of paint and glaze layers, and the way you manipulate the glaze coat all combine to create different effects. Some of the techniques work well on large surfaces while others create a pattern better suited for smaller objects. Test your method on paper before beginning an actual project. This will give you a chance to perfect your technique and to make sure you like the way the colors look.

WATER & OIL-BASED GLAZES

The glaze used as the transparent color layer is similar to regular paint except that it has much less pigment. Like paint, glaze comes as oil-based or as water-based latex. Use oil-based glaze over oil paint or latex paint. Water-based glaze can only be used on latex paint.

Both oil- and water-based glaze can be bought at home center paint departments, hardware stores, paint stores and art supply stores. Water-based glaze is an opaque, gel-like acrylic medium that is mixed with water. It gets its color by adding artist's acrylics, universal tints or thinned latex paint.

Oil-based glazes get color from artist's oil paints, universal tints or oil-based paint diluted with thinner. You can make your own oil glaze by mixing three parts turpentine with one part boiled linseed oil and then adding a few drops of paint drier or similar resin. Mix in your own artist's oils, universal tints or thinned oil-based paint. Experiment with colors in small cups before mixing



large quantities. Add color a few drops at a time as it is concentrated. Be sure to remember the ratios used when you find a color you like.

Surface Preparation

It is very important to prepare surfaces correctly before any painting project. Paint will not bond correctly and surface flaws will be highlighted if inadequately prepared. Decorative finishes usually have a gloss that will emphasize cracks and holes.

Surfaces need to be non-porous for the glaze to stand out, therefore priming is an essential step.

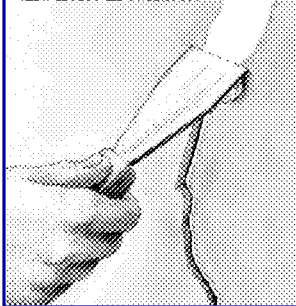
APPLYING THE BASE COAT

When the surface is prepared and primed you are ready to apply the base coat. Remember that the overall effect depends on this color so you must apply it to the surface evenly and without brush or roller marks. Use long, overlapping parallel strokes of the roller or brush. If you are brushing woodwork, be sure to stroke with the grain. Allow adequate drying time between all layers of paint. Paint may feel dry on top but could be wet beneath the skin and will bleed through when you begin dabbing the surface.

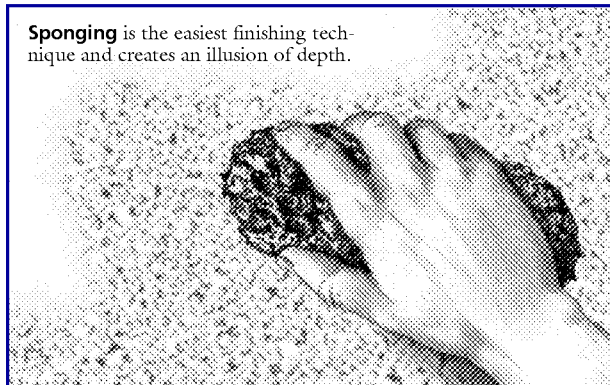
THE GLAZING TECHNIQUES

All of the following techniques employ the same formula of a gloss, eggshell, or satin base color that is seen through the broken color and translucence of one or more top coats of colored glaze. The differences lie in whether the glaze is added or subtracted on the surface and how it is moved about. Results are quite pleasing with simple rags moved skillfully, but can be even more striking by using special brushes and tools.

Proper preparation requires patching and sanding all cracks and holes in surfaces.



Sponging is the easiest finishing technique and creates an illusion of depth.

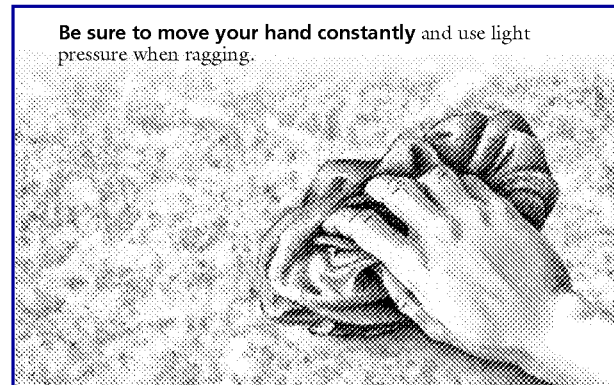


Sponging—for walls, ceilings, flat surfaced furniture and cabinets.

This is perhaps the easiest of all the techniques as the goal is a random, uneven pattern. One of the keys to decorative finishes is to have a consistent flow, even in broken color effects. Keep your hand moving. Over-sponging creates muddled and splotchy areas instead of the fields of dotted color you are after. It's best to use a natural, sea sponge because of the irregular shape but a synthetic sponge can be torn to remove all flat surfaces and edges. Sponging looks best with multiple layers of color over the base. For subtle depth use varying shades of one color over the base; for more vivid shading, use contrasting colors. As a rule of thumb, sponge on darkest colors first and progress to the lighter shades—this encourages depth illusion.

- 1 After patching, sanding and priming, apply the base coat of paint and allow to dry.
- 2 Pour the darkest glaze mixture in the roller tray. Soak the sponge in thinner (mineral spirits for oil-based, water for water-based) and wring it almost dry. The fluid in the sponge will further soften the effect. Do not have so much liquid in the sponge that glaze runs down the surface.
- 3 Load the darkest glaze onto the sponge and dab it on scrap paper first. This will prevent a

Be sure to move your hand constantly and use light pressure when ragging.



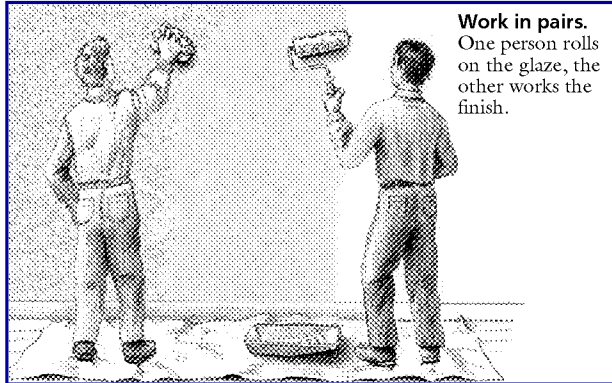
heavy start. Begin moving the sponge in vertical rows across the surface. Allow spaces for other colors; don't try to coat the surface with this color. Move your hand constantly while dabbing with your wrist and turning the sponge periodically. When you are finished clean the tray and sponge.

- 4 When the first color coating is dry and the sponge is remoistened, fill the tray with a second glaze color and begin applying it to the surface in a horizontal pattern.
- 5 Repeat with more colors if desired.

The above procedure is an additive process with glaze. To make the sponging effect more delicate, apply the base coat, let it dry, then roll sections with glaze. Remove some of the glaze by dabbing the wall with a clean and dry sponge. Rinse and wring the sponge frequently in the appropriate thinner. You create the same effect by rolling on thinned paint instead of glaze.

Ragging—for walls, doors, flat surfaced furniture.

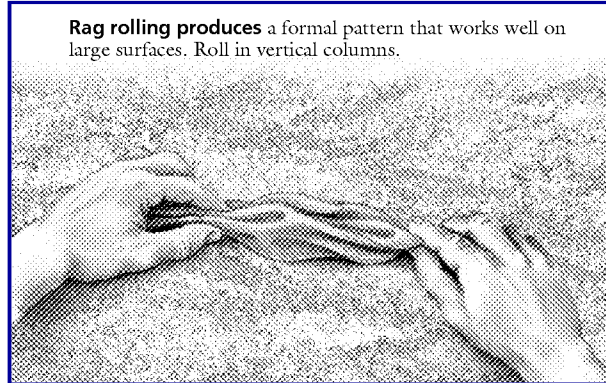
The effect of this finish depends on the colors in your glaze, the contrast to the base coat, and primarily upon what type of material is used to add or subtract one or more coats of glaze. The most common material (for an elegant and mellow effect) is soft, clean, lint-free cotton squares. Cut these squares from old clothing or bedding, but



Work in pairs. One person rolls on the glaze, the other works the finish.

watch for loose threads. Cheesecloth also makes a soft pattern. More striking surfaces are made with lace, canvas or burlap. For the following subtractive method two people are required to apply and work oil glaze over a semi-gloss latex base on the walls of a room. The oil glaze has a longer dry time and thus is more workable, but latex glaze will work on smaller surfaces. Keep the glaze consistency loose and fairly transparent for a true blended effect.

- 1 Prepare surfaces thoroughly, clean any dirt and dust, then prime if necessary.
- 2 Paint all walls in the chosen base color. Use a semi-gloss or satin finish. This coat can be latex paint.
- 3 When the base coat is dry, the first person rolls the glaze on the wall in vertical strips about 3 feet wide. Apply the glaze as a thin but even coating. Too much glaze will quickly saturate the cloth and result in a muddled effect.
- 4 Using a loosely bunched cloth that is moist from paint thinner, the second person begins dabbing at the vertical column of glaze to reveal the base color and blend the glaze. The motion needs to be varied. Try turning your wrist various ways while moving the cloth. Dab at the wall because too much pressure makes “holes” and fingerprints in the finish.
- 5 Progress in a staggered manner while always working the vertical columns of glaze into



Rag rolling produces a formal pattern that works well on large surfaces. Roll in vertical columns.

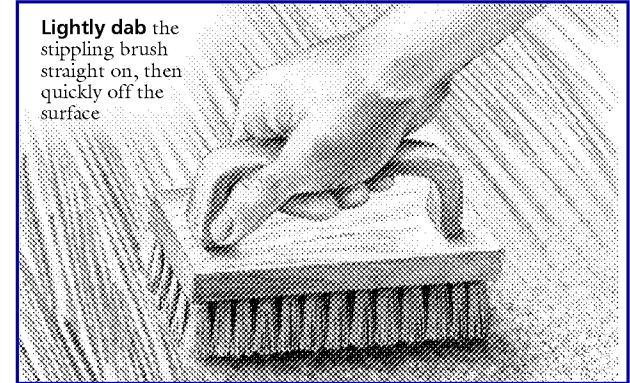
each other. As the second person finishes dabbing a row, the next row should be prepared.

- 6 Always work to a natural stopping spot such as the end of a wall. If you quit in the middle of a surface and allow the glaze to dry, you will not get nice blending. Also remember to wring out or change cloths when glaze is not coming off.

Rag Rolling—walls and doors

This technique works well for large surfaces rather than on furniture. Rolling is much like the ragging technique except it produces a more formal and repetitious pattern. Work with a partner. Use oil glaze on a semi-gloss latex base color.

- 1 Follow steps 1-3 for “Ragging”.
- 2 Take a piece of cotton cloth about 2 feet square and loosely roll it into a cylindrical shape. Dip the roll in thinner to get it a little moist. Starting at the top of the wall roll down a row. Always roll walls in vertical columns.
- 3 Begin the next row by slightly overlapping the previous one. It is imperative to keep a wet edge on the columns for proper blending. Wring out or change any saturated rolls. Remember to work to a natural stop before changing rag rolls. It is not recommended that you roll another color as the finish becomes too busy.



Lightly dab the stippling brush straight on, then quickly off the surface

Stippling—can be done on any surface, even curved molding

This finish is similar to sponging but is much more refined as the glaze is simply moved and transformed with a finely-bristled stippling brush. A stippling brush is a large, square brush with short, very fine bristles. They can be expensive but are worth the price for the finish they make on large surfaces. For smaller surfaces a shoe brush, clothes brush or short stain brush will do the job.

Stippling is more difficult than any rag technique because imperfections will show. Rag application is inherently varied but stippling makes a delicate, slightly elevated, consistent finish. The glaze must be oil to maintain workability.

- 1 Carefully fill all cracks and imperfections in surfaces. Prime if necessary and apply base coat.
- 2 As with other large surfaces, have a partner paint the glaze on the surface in strips just ahead of your progress. A roller makes stipple-like marks naturally so use a brush only in corners.
- 3 With the clean, dry bristles of the stipple brush, gently dab the brush down the vertical row of glaze. Just touch the surface straight on so the glaze is transformed into tiny, raised droplets. If the brush doesn't hit and jump back out it will smudge the glaze and leave a blank “hole” of base color.

- 4** Both workers move across the surface, one painting on the glaze, and the other blending the stippled rows into each other.

Try not to go over areas twice—you'll create gaps. Also be sure to keep the bristles of the brush clean, dry and soft.

Dragging—trim and molding, flat surfaced furniture

Dragging produces a striped effect by pulling a dry brush in rows across a wet glaze surface. Dragging is not recommended for large surfaces because it is difficult to keep the lines straight, but can be done with a plumb bob marking the vertical rows. The base coat can be oil- or water-based satin paint and the glaze should be a very opaque, oil-based liquid applied in a light film.

This technique requires a brush with long clusters of bristles called a dragging brush, over-grainer, or flogger brush. Keep this tool dry and fairly clean while dragging or it will not pick up glaze.

- 1** Prepare the surface by filling holes and sanding or de-glossing any varnishes. Prime if necessary.
- 2** Apply an even base coat and allow to dry.
- 3** Begin by rolling the surface with a complete coat of glaze. Don't worry too much about brush marks; the dragging will incorporate them into the finish.



A dragging brush will create soft lines through glazed surfaces.

- 4** Pull the dragging brush across the surface in a long, straight and steady motion. Move from one end to another end. Never stop mid-point because the lines will be jagged.

- 5** Wipe bristles off before starting the next pass. Keep a wet edge between passes but don't overlap or the stripes will be too narrow at this point.

Combing—flat, small surfaces like tables and cabinets

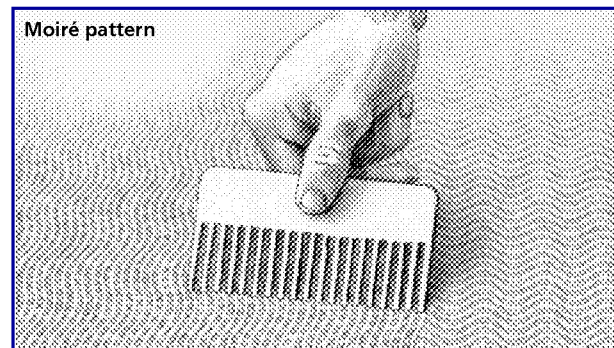
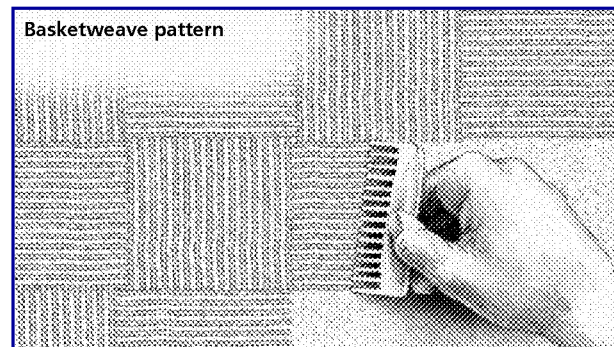
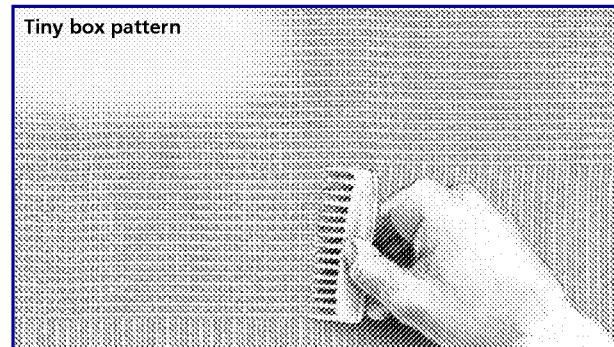
This technique is similar to dragging except it creates a visually more interesting pattern. By using different tools, some which you can make yourself, patterns are created where the glaze is lifted off. As with all the techniques move your hand steadily to a stopping point. If you muddle an area, or stop mid-point, the surface must be reglazed and started over.

Combs are available from art stores or mail-order catalogs. They come in metal, plastic, wood or rubber and have varying teeth width and length. You can create a tooth pattern from heavy stock cardboard or from a plastic lid cut in half. Use a material that will not bend under the pressure of dragging.

- 1** Follow steps 1-3 as above.
- 2** Hold the comb firmly but don't apply too much pressure to the surface. Drag the comb across the surface at slightly less than 90 degrees.
- 3** Wipe off the glaze on the comb after every pass. It is important that the teeth of the comb stay fairly dry or they will just smudge the glaze.

When combing try these finishes:

- 4** Drag the comb in vertical rows across the entire surface then immediately comb horizontally to create a tiny boxed pattern.
- 5** Start at a corner of the surface and make a vertical box pattern several inches long. Pick up the comb sharply and turn it perpendicular to the first box. Make a horizontal box of the same



length beside it. Repeat the vertical then horizontal pattern to create perpendicular boxes.

- 6** Start at the top and go down vertically in a wavy row. Try to follow the pattern of rows when moving across the surface. When complete, begin horizontal wavy rows across the whole surface to make a moiré pattern.