

# HOW TO ROLL BACK THE YEARS

## Interiors

Thinking of painting your home? Interior designer **Jamie Hemsall** shares professional tips for creating the perfect finish.

A FEW weeks ago, I recommended refreshing your paintwork to help give your home an economical lift. It is amazing how much paint tones discolour in a relatively short time as they react to the everyday environment. If you want an example, lift off pictures that have been hanging on a wall for a couple of years to see the discolouration from the pigment underneath.

This is not a sign of poor workmanship or inferior paint; it is just a fact of life.

If you are inspired to repaint a room (either freshening the existing tone or redoing your scheme entirely) you want to ensure the finish is perfect.

There is nothing worse than a poorly-executed paint job. Colour choices aside the key to good decoration is preparation – both in planning the job and ensuring surfaces are in a fit state to be worked upon.

Steve Waterhouse of Rotherham-based, M&S Decorators, wisely recommends that if you are going to take on a project

you should “treat it like work and not a hobby” ([www.mandsdecorators.co.uk](http://www.mandsdecorators.co.uk) – 07802 416837).

Before rushing out to buy a tin of emulsion, take time to estimate the quantities of paint and time you need to spend on the job. Calculate the square meterage of the areas that you are painting (differentiating between woodwork and wall space) and work on the basis you will need to apply at least two coats. This will allow you to determine the quantity of paint you will need. If in doubt, speak to a professional or paint retailer who should be able to help work out the correct amount.

Underestimating paint requirements leads to time delays as you break off to purchase an extra tin and, if you are having a colour mixed, can potentially lead to slight tonal discrepancies.

Steve Waterhouse says the errors he often sees are people not allowing enough time or buying cheap paint. His advice is to allow a 10 per cent



contingency for costs and 25 per cent more time than you think. This cautious approach helps ensure you finish the job in one go. The quality of paint can have a significant impact. Cheaper paints can be a false economy, particularly when you are changing the colour of a room.

They tend to have less pigment and take more coats to cover, so can actually cost you more in some circumstances. It is worth visiting a trade paint centre for your materials, where staff are usually happy to share their knowledge and point you in the direction of items the professionals use.

It is important to buy the right finish for the right surface. Flat matt is perfect

for ceilings as shiny finishes catch the light and show every brush and roller mark. If you are decorating high traffic areas such as halls or kitchens, opt for washable paint finishes such as Little Greene's Intelligent Emulsion or Johnstone's durable matt.

Avoid gloss on woodwork, this is a harsh finish and can be a difficult product to work with; a more contemporary option is eggshell which has a softer look to it. Steve Waterhouse also swears by good quality brushes and rollers as these help to achieve an excellent finish. His advice is to buy trade standard tools, but to be prepared to wash and look after them properly – if you do, they will serve you for years.

Even after all this you are still a long way from applying

any paint to the wall. Anyone who has ever engaged a professional decorator knows that time taken to prepare your surfaces is a significant part of the job. Steve says, “it is the preparation which you can't see that makes all the difference in the end to what you can see!”

When you do let loose with the brush, take your time!

It is vital to be patient and build up layers, rather than applying one thick coat. Think of painting as an act of love for your home and you are definitely heading in the right direction. If all this sounds too much to take on, then it can be more cost-effective (and a lot less bother) to hire a professional. Sometimes it pays for everyone to stick to what they are best at.

■ [www.jamiehemsall.com](http://www.jamiehemsall.com)

**BRAND NEW COAT:** Refreshing the paintwork in your home can have a remarkable effect. Left, beware of false economies and go for good quality brushes and rollers as well as avoiding cheap paint that isn't up to the job.

## STEVE'S TOP PAINTING TIPS

**TREAT your walls with as rough a sandpaper as necessary. Remove runs and bits stuck in the old paint. If the paint is split and flaking, scrape back to a firm edge and sandpaper until smooth. If you are working on an old property, it may be better to strip everything off with a product such as water washable nitromors. Remove any old filler and reapply, also fill any new holes and cracks. A good quality powder filler is better than ready mixed as they are easier to sand back to a smooth finish.**

■ [www.mandsdecorators.co.uk](http://www.mandsdecorators.co.uk)



**PROFESSIONAL FINISH:** The key to a successful paint job lies in planning ahead and preparing the surfaces properly. It is worth visiting a trade paint centre and asking the experts for advice.