


Learn More About It

Exterior Surface Prep Tips

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Preparing the surface is the most important part of any painting project! If the paint doesn't have a smooth, clean surface to adhere to, it simply won't look very good or last very long. You will probably need to spend as much time on surface prep as you will painting. Follow these steps:

1. Outdoors, pressure washing is usually the best way to begin your surface prep. You may want to hire a professional to help you with this part of your project. Pressure washers can also be rented for a fairly reasonable cost—check your phone book. If pressure washing isn't appropriate, you'll need to scrub the surface with a good detergent solution using a brush like the Wooster [Straw Boss](#)® for hand scrubbing or the [Work Horse](#)™ for extension poles. Rinse with clean water and allow the surface to dry *completely*.
2. After washing, you'll still need to touch up with a hand scraper or wire brush to remove the remaining bits of flaking paint or rust. The Wooster [Prep Crew](#)® wire brushes are very helpful here because they have more bristles to work faster and durable wrap-around handles to protect your fingers. The Wooster [Sky Scraper](#)® also works well for this, especially on wood. 
3. If you are repainting over a semigloss or gloss paint, the gloss should be removed by sanding or else the new coats of paint may not adhere. A liquid cleaning/dulling agent can sometimes be used instead of sanding.
4. Fill gaps or cracks with a good elastomeric caulk. Splinters in wood can be repaired with putty. If you're dealing with stucco, repair cracks with patching material. The object is to make your surface as smooth and as strong as you can before repainting.
5. When the patch is dry, sand it lightly and feather the edges of any rough areas so they're level with the rest of the surface. Spot prime to "seal" those areas. If you're working on metal, sand the entire object so that any rough areas are level with the rest of the surface. (The smoother the surface, the better it will look after it's painted.)
6. Wash the surface with a good detergent solution to get rid of dirt and dust. Rinse thoroughly with clean water and allow it to dry *completely*.

Here's A Key To "The Professional Look"

7. Use the proper primer on the entire surface if it is newly constructed, stained by water or smoke, prone to mildew, rusted, or aged. Your paint store can provide recommendations. Primer really helps to seal and even-out the surface. The paint will go on smoother, adhere better, and last longer.

Tape off window frames or any other areas that you don't want painted or coated with a stain. (Note: Tape will help to avoid paint smudges and drips, but it does not guarantee a sharp edge. You should still paint carefully, trying not to touch the tape.)