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Painting

Job's success depends

YOU'VE HEARD it before and you'll hear it again: The success of your paint job will depend on how much time and effort you put into the preparation.

It's nice to see the paint transform your lackluster walls and ceilings into gleaming brightness or unblemished freshness, but the pleasure will disappear quickly if you haven't prepared the surfaces properly.

Proper preparation means freeing the interior of loose dirt, peeling paint, oil and grease. It also means spackling all cracks and holes with spackling compound or patching plaster. The patches should be primed before the final coat of paint goes on, but read the label on the paint can to determine the manner of treatment.

Some professionals and many do-it-yourselfers apply a primer even when no patching has been done.

It is especially important that any gloss be removed from the surfaces, since new paint does not adhere well to slick or shiny walls and ceilings. The gloss can be steel-wooled, sanded or given a coat of a special liquid that

dulls the shine. Unlike a few years ago, oil and latex paints can be used fairly well over each other, but a primer will ensure an excellent result. The assumption is that you will be using a good paint, since it is poor economy to choose a low-quality paint when it is your own "elbow grease" that is being utilized. Latex paints have little or no odor and make it easier to clean up after the job is completed.

FOLLOW THE RULE-of-thumb that a high gloss paint usually is more washable, resists moisture and wears well, which is why it is preferred in kitchens and bathrooms. Flat paints are the choice in most living rooms and bedrooms, being easier on the eyes. A semi-gloss paint is what the name implies, about halfway between the gloss and flat.

The ideal way to prepare a room for painting is to remove everything from it, but this may be impractical. At least take out the lighter objects, moving the heavier pieces to the center of the room and covering them with a dropcloth or whatever is handy.

And the same rules

AP — Painting the outside of a house is never easy, but there's a certain amount of satisfaction in watching the paint work its magic.

But getting the surface ready for the paint is another matter. Caulking cracks, countersinking popped nails, scraping blistered and peeled areas, removing mildew, priming where necessary and performing the other preparatory steps all add up to plain work without the visual compensation of the actual painting.

Yet you must perform the preliminary phase of the operation with some degree of dedication or you will pay for it later.

A house not adequately prepared may look very much the same as one that has been given the full treatment, but it is only a question of time before the difference is seen.

The let's-get-it-over-with process begins to peel, blister, check or flake. The take-your-time-but-do-it-right formula pays dividends in the form of a continuous good appearance.

Poor paint, or the failure to handle the brush, roller or spray gun properly often gets the blame for what is nothing more than inadequate preparation.

IF YOU DO NOT have the time or the inclination to get the house ready to paint, don't do it.

Check on whether the paint you plan to use will work well on the kind of surface you are covering. Oil-based, alkyds and oil-modified alkyds all are excellent for wood siding, but the majority of do-it-yourselfers prefer latexes because they have blister resistance and, since water is the solvent, they make cleaning up a lot easier.

Once regarded as "less likely to cover" than other paints, they now have good hiding ability. Some can be applied even over a damp surface. Read the label on the container to see whether a primer is required, especially if the latex is being put over an oil paint designed to chalk.

If brick or other masonry is being painted, be sure you have an exterior paint formulated for use on such surfaces. Oil paints do not work well on any material containing cement, which has an alkali content that attacks the paint.

Exterior wood shakes or shingles usually are stained, although they can be painted. Once they have been