

HOW TO CLEAN PAINTED WALLS

Increased time at home can sometimes mean more marks and muck on your painted walls. Keep your walls clean and fresh without damaging the existing paint with these helpful tips.



How do I clean painted walls? We get that question a lot. Follow these steps to ensure your painted walls stay clean as part of a beautifully maintained home.

Supplies Checklist: Cleaning Painted Walls

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| ✓ Rubber gloves | ✓ Two buckets | ✓ Mild cleaner (dishwashing soap) |
| ✓ Clean dry soft towels and rags | ✓ Clean sponge | ✓ White vinegar |
| ✓ Vacuum cleaner | ✓ Tap water | ✓ Ammonia |

Step #1: Identify the Wall Paint

What type of paint and finish cover your walls? Knowing will allow you to determine the level of exertion you can use without stripping the paint's finish. Latex paint is the most common type found in homes and can be easily cleaned. Darker, flat paints are more easily damaged or rubbed off if they are scrubbed too harshly. Eggshell, satin or semi-gloss sheens are typically more durable than flat finishes.

Step #2: Prep

Begin with two buckets: One for the cleaning solution and one for the rinse water. Get the area around your wall ready by placing towels or rags along the floors and baseboards to catch any excess dirt, dust or water.

Step #3: Remove Surface Dirt

Dust your walls before washing them. Use the brush attachment on your vacuum to gently remove any surface dust and dirt. The towels and rags you placed on the floor will collect any excess dirt that your vacuum doesn't.



Helpful Tip

Never use glass or household spray cleaners on painted walls. They contain strong solvents that can damage the finish.

Step #4: Try Water First

One of the best cleaning agents is simply water. Begin cleaning with a clean, damp sponge and plain water to wash away the easiest stains. This will help you determine which areas will require more aggressive cleaners and exertion.

Step #5: Start Top-Down Cleaning

Begin at the top of the wall and work your way down to eliminate streaks from running down. Work in small, manageable sections, rubbing gently in a circular motion. Once done, dry the area with a clean, dry cloth. If water isn't strong enough for surface stains, try a diluted dish detergent or an eco-friendly, all-natural cleaner like vinegar. Remember that vinegar may yield distinct smells that are unpleasant to some, so be sure to rinse the wall with clean water.



Helpful Tip

The higher the gloss or sheen, the easier to clean. The lower the sheen, the more gentle you need to be.

Step #6: Get Tough on Tougher Stains

For deeply embedded stains—think lipstick and wine—add two tablespoons of ammonia or dishwashing soap to a gallon of warm water. First test this solution in an inconspicuous area and expect some potentially strong smells. If the finish looks the same as the untested area, then continue.

Cleaning Level of Intensity and Paint Finish

From super shiny to flat matte, a [paint's finish](#) adds a lot to the look of your room. But sheen types need different approaches when it comes to cleaning.

- **Flat & Matte—Super gentle**
Removing stains from low-sheen paint is much harder. And constant rubbing or cleaning can result in [burnishing](#). Proceed with caution when cleaning.
- **Eggshell, Pearl & Satin—Gentle**
An eggshell sheen is a homeowner favorite for being easy to clean. Pearl and satin, both of which offer a bit more gloss than eggshell, are highly cleanable. But with all three, it is still recommended that you take a gentle touch when cleaning.
- **Semi-Gloss & High Gloss—More Vigorous**
The most hardy sheens—semi-gloss and high gloss—are more stain resistant and can take a slightly more forceful cleaning approach.

Freshly painted walls? No matter how much you love your new Benjamin Moore-painted walls, make sure the paint has dried for a minimum of 14 days before cleaning them!