

HOW TO PAINT A BRICK FIREPLACE

With the right attention to the prep work, you can easily give any room with a fireplace a whole new look.



Updating an old brick fireplace with paint is a do-it-yourself project that delivers a high amount of impact for relatively little effort. The key to getting the best results? Do the prep work properly before putting brush to brick.

Supplies Checklist: Painting a Brick Fireplace

- ✓ Wire brush
- ✓ INSL-X® All-Purpose Citrus Cleaner
- ✓ Vacuum
- ✓ Degreaser or trisodium phosphate (optional)
- ✓ Sponge
- ✓ Painter's tape
- ✓ Drop cloth
- ✓ Paintbrush
- ✓ Paint roller with a thick-nap roller cover (1/2" or 3/8" recommended)
- ✓ Roller extension pole (optional)
- ✓ INSL-X® Aqua Lock® or Fresh Start® High-Hiding All Purpose Primer (046)
- ✓ Regal®, Aura® or ADVANCE® interior paint
- ✓ Safety goggles or glasses, mask, and gloves

Step #1: Brush Out Debris

All painting projects require a sound and clean surface, so start by thoroughly brushing your fireplace with a stiff wire brush. Pay special attention to the mortar lines between the bricks to remove any loose debris, then assess the mortar to make sure it doesn't need any repairs before you begin painting. Once the brushing is done, carefully clean up all dust using a vacuum with a brush attachment from the surface as well as the floor.



Important Safety Note

You should always use personal protective equipment (PPE) when working on any project to avoid breathing in dust or getting any particles in your eyes.

Step #2: Wash the Brick Clean

Now that you've removed all loose debris, it's time to give the brick a deep clean to remove any accumulated soot or other mineral residue that could leach through your new paint. Try [INSL-X® All-Purpose Citrus Cleaner](#), a biodegradable, phosphate-free concentrate that you dilute with water to your desired strength, or a solution of soap and water. Be sure to spot test it first on a small side area to make sure it doesn't cause any discoloration. To wash the front of the fireplace, thoroughly rub the cleaner into the entire brick surface with a sponge, then wipe it with a clean sponge and fresh water. If any soot or other residue remains, a degreaser or trisodium phosphate can also be used for a deeper clean.



Key Watchout

Bricks are porous and absorb a lot of water, so allow them to dry for 24 hours before priming and painting.

Step #3: Prime the Brick

After you've taped off the edges of your fireplace and trim, use a paintbrush to prime all the mortar lines between the bricks, being careful not to leave any unprimed spots. We recommend a high-quality acrylic latex primer like [Fresh Start® High-Hiding All Purpose Primer \(046\)](#) or [INSL-X® Aqua Lock®](#). Once the mortar is primed, use the roller to prime the face of the brick surface more quickly (1/2" nap roller cover or 3/8" nap roller cover will give you the best coverage, depending on the texture of your brick). A second coat of primer may be necessary to prevent any remaining soot or mineral staining from leaching through, especially if you are using a light paint color. Note that due to the absorbency of the brick, you will likely need more primer than you would for a similar size wall surface. For best results, allow the primer to dry overnight.



Helpful Tip

A roller extension pole can make it easier to reach the higher areas of a floor-to-ceiling fireplace.

Step #4: Paint Your Brick Fireplace

To ensure you don't end up with any missed spots, carefully paint in all the mortar lines with a brush first. You can then use a roller to cover the face of the bricks with paint more quickly. If you have a floor-to-ceiling fireplace, use an extension pole to reach the higher areas. A second coat of paint is recommended to ensure a long-lasting, consistent finish.

Choose the Best Paint Color and Sheen for Your Brick Fireplace

Neutral colors like [white](#) and [gray](#) are the most common colors for painting a brick fireplace, but this is a project where you can be creative. Bold and contrasting colors can make your fireplace a true focal point. Benjamin Moore offers 3,500+ color options to choose from in trusted, high-quality products such as [Regal® Select](#), [Aura®](#) and [ADVANCE®](#) interior paints. [Sheen or finish](#) can also enhance the visual effect. Lower sheens such as matte or eggshell will keep the natural texture of the brick with fewer visible imperfections, whereas a higher sheen such as semi-gloss will reflect more light and can make future cleaning easier.



Important Safety Note

Only paint the outside of your fireplace, not the interior of the fire box. Anything exposed to open flame requires a specialized, high-heat product.

Step #5: Paint the Mantel and Trim

Here are some design tips for painting your mantel and trim to get started:

- If you have a built-in bookcase or baseboard that's connected with the fireplace mantel, use the same color throughout for consistency.
- For a sleeker, more modern look, you can paint the mantel the same color as the fireplace and walls. Consider a bolder piece of artwork above it or brighter accents on the mantel.
- An eye-catching color creates a focal point in the room, and a fireplace provides just the right amount of surface area to consider a [bold color](#). Pull a color from existing small accents in the room. If the accents are relatively light in color, choose a shade—or a few shades—darker.
- A [black](#) or [white](#) mantel offers a simple yet classic look. A black mantel frames the fireplace and anchors the room, providing stability. A white-colored mantel has a timeless appeal, giving you the flexibility to change small accents throughout the year.

THE BEST PAINT OPTIONS FOR BRICK FIREPLACES



Regal® Select Interior Paint

A trusted brand for more than 60 years, Regal® Select Interior is formulated for easy cleaning in a wide variety of sheens.



Aura® Interior Paint

With our exclusive Color Lock® technology, Aura® Interior paint delivers brilliant, rich, everlasting color.



ADVANCE® Interior Paint

A premium quality, waterborne alkyd paint that offers a full line of durable high-end finishes for doors, trim, and cabinetry.