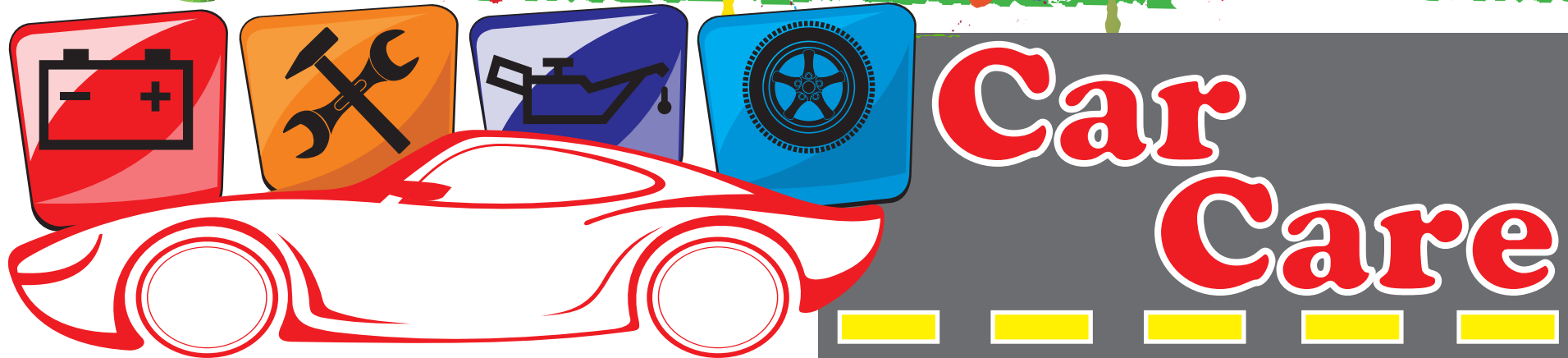


Spring Home Improvement



15 PAINTING MISTAKES TO AVOID

Get expert advice on how to avoid all painting mistakes, like paint on wall plates, doors, surface problems.

Skipping the Tape

Do you have the skills to get straight lines around the woodwork, windowsills and doorframes? Grab the painter's tape and get the nice, clean edges you want.

Painting Without Primer

Primer gives paint a good surface to adhere to and brings out the true color of the shade you've chosen. Going without it can lead to poor results.

Impatience

You took the time to fix every imperfection with patching compound. Wait. Make sure it's completely dry before you sand and prime. Otherwise, all that patching was a waste of time.

Paint Buildup on Pad Edge

When using edge pads around ceiling edges and corners, make sure to wipe off excess paint frequently to avoid marking the surface.

Brushing When You Should be Rolling

For a large interior area, a roller will do a better job in less time. Select the right nap roller for your sheen of paint and try to avoid pushing the roller into the wall when you paint.

Underestimating How Much Paint Needed

The pros say you need one gallon for every 400 square feet. Plan ahead and you can avoid running back and forth to the store with a paint swatch in your hand.

Assuming Walls are Clean

Paint looks much better when it has a good, clean surface to stick to. Wash your walls before painting and get professional results you can be proud of.

Painting When the Humidity is High

When the air is full of moisture, water-based paint takes longer to dry. If the weather winds up more humid than



expected, take the day off and wait for a dry day.

Skipping the Surface Prep

Your new paint won't stick to glossy, dirty walls that are in bad condition. Take the time to prep, or you're bound to have problems down the road.

Paintbrush Abuse

When using latex paint, wet your brush bristles with water and shake the brush dry before you dip it in the paint. The brush will hold more paint and deliver better results.

Buying any Paintbrush

When you're choosing paintbrushes to use with latex-based paint, nylon/polyester blends produce the best results. Turns out polyester is good for something besides sport shirts.

Painting with Furniture in the Room

Getting paint off your furniture is a lot of work. If you can't move it out of the room, at least make sure it's completely covered with a drop cloth.

Failure to Protect the Floor

Paint has the amazing ability to go all the places you'd least expect it to. Before you pop the can open, make sure you have a drop cloth over everything and the edges are taped.

Polka-Dot Doorknobs

Unless you like the look of splattered paint, we recommend that you slip plastic bags over your doorknobs and tape the edge to avoid unsightly paint splatter.

Painting the Wall Plates

Want professional-looking results? Take five minutes to remove the wall plates and tape around your light switches and electrical outlets.

■ Metro Creative Connections

Prevent pressure washing injuries this season

Exposure to the elements can take its toll on the exterior of a home. Dirt, mold and mildew can compromise the look of a home and yard, which is why many people begin the spring season by dusting off the pressure-washing machine and making resolutions to strip the dirt off of siding, furniture and patios. However, serious injuries can result if a pressure washer is used improperly. Getting schooled in pressure-washer safety is essential to preventing a trip to the emergency room. It can be easy to

underestimate the power of a pressure washer. An electric-powered machine may generate up to 1,000 pounds per square inch (psi) of water pressure. Gas-powered machines are even more dynamic, offering pressure up to 4,000 psi. That force coupled with wet surfaces can easily cause falls, slips and abrasions. Pressure washers may even cause blindness when chemical cleaners are used in conjunction with the pressure washer.

It is advisable to leave pressure washing to a professional. However, for

homeowners who do choose to try this cleaning method, safety precautions are essential.

- Dress properly by donning rubber-soled shoes to prevent slips on wet surfaces.
- Wear protective eyewear to shield the eyes from any projectiles or injury from the water spray itself.
- Wear sturdy gloves with grips so you can have a firm hold on the nozzle while cleaning.
- Be sure to read all of the safety precautions and operation instructions in the manual prior to operating the pressure washer. Do not use a washer if the instruction manual is missing.
- Remove any debris surrounding the area you will be cleaning. This may include sticks, rocks, toys, and any other items that can be blown around with the pressure washer spray.
- Use a safety harness if you will be using a pressure washer while on a ladder or elevated surface.
- To lessen the chance of high-pressure injection (HPI), which is when

water and other debris penetrates the skin resulting in deep-tissue damage, broaden the spray on the nozzle so it isn't piercing like a needle. HPI can cause infections so great that they may require amputation.

- Use an extension cord that is water-resistant and acceptable for outdoor use. Ensure there are no breaks in the cord to minimize the chance for electrocution.
- Avoid hot water and steam pressure washers to eliminate the chance for burns.

Thousands of people are estimated to be hospitalized due to pressure-washer injuries. Many of these injuries can be prevented simply by heeding safety precautions and following the rules of operation.

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