

Advice on Painting your car

When it comes to painting your car, you don't have to be a professional to achieve a showroom finish. Thanks to the quality of paints and lacquers on the market, you can save yourself a fortune when touching up slight damage or re-spraying repaired bodywork. However, the key to effective spray painting is preparation and patience - compromise on either and the results will be glaringly obvious...

Tools/ material needed:

Abrasive papers, rust treatment (if required), cellulose thinners, **masking tape**, primer, paint and lacquer. Plus masks, gloves and overalls (if required)

1) Warm and dry conditions are ideal for spray painting, as aerosols don't always work best in the damp and colder temperatures hinder drying time. If it's not warm and dry outside, work in a well-ventilated garage. Wear overalls or old clothes - goggles and a mask will keep stray droplets of paint away from your eyes, nose and mouth.



2) To prepare for spraying, use aluminium oxide abrasive paper (graded at 80grit) and rub the surface to be painted down to bare metal. Apply a rust treatment product if required, following the manufacturer's instructions and allowing it to dry fully



3) The area to be painted should now be clean and dry - any traces of dirt or wax can be removed using cellulose thinners. [Mask off any areas not being painted using masking tape and paper \(to avoid hard edges, increase the area to be painted by moving the masking tape back gradually as you apply each coat of paint\).](#)



4) Holding the spray can approximately 25cm away from the surface to be painted, apply a number of coats of primer at 15-minute intervals until the area is

evenly covered. Go an inch over the original layer of paint to help it blend in (to create an even softer edge, peel a smooth movement from side to side. It is best to apply several light layers of paint, as applying too much paint in one go can create sags and runs.



5) Allow at least 24 hours for the primer to dry thoroughly, then rub down with 120grit wet and dry paper until smooth. Clean the area with warm, soapy water, rinse, then dry fully.



6) To start painting, shake the can vigorously for two minutes to ensure the paint is thoroughly mixed. Apply a number of coats at 15-minute intervals, shaking the can between each one.



7) If you're using a metallic colour, allow the paintwork 24 hours to dry then rub it down with 1200 grit wet and dry paper. It should lose its gloss appearance and take on a dull, matt finish. Clean with warm, soapy water, rinse and dry.



8) Now apply two coats of lacquer, separated by a gap of 15-minutes. Halfords are launching a new petrol-resistant lacquer for fuel tanks/motorbikes etc. If the finish looks patchy, apply another coat or wait until the surface is completely dry before rubbing it down and starting the lacquering process again.

