

## Do It Yourself

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### Painting a Door

From "[Ask DIY](#)"

episode ADI-210 -- [More Projects](#) »

**Q:** What's the proper way to paint my front door?

**A:** (Brad Staggs, *Ask DIY* Home Repair expert): Not a lot of people know how to paint a front door properly. Follow these steps:

Materials:

Slot screw

Sawhorses or sturdy work table

Primer

Caulk

Putty knife

180-grit sandpaper

Paint

Angled sash paint brush

Four-inch foam roller

1. Remove the door before you paint. Use a slot screwdriver to remove the hinge pins (**figure A**) and then remove the other half of the hinge from the door (**figure B**). That way, you won't get paint on the hinges. Remember the front door will be heavy once the hinges are no longer holding it in place, so you might need a friend to help you lift it onto some sawhorses.
2. Take any other hardware off the door, including the door knocker and the peephole, which is usually two snap-together pieces. Also make sure you remove the doorknob (**figure C**) with a screwdriver. Usually, you'll need to take out four screws, two that hold in the latch and two that hold the doorknob itself.
3. Prime all six sides of the door, including the inside, the outside, the left and right edges and the top and bottom. Any surfaces you don't prime will absorb moisture.



Paint the cross boards on your front door with the grain.



Figure A



Figure B



4. Visually inspect the door for surface cracks and caulk any you see (**figure D**) with a caulk gun and a putty knife. Let the caulk dry and re-prime the spot.
5. Use a fine-grit sandpaper, such as 180 grit, to sand the surface smooth of paint drips and the like, particularly in the crevices of the panels (**figure E**). Then use an old paintbrush or a tack rag to brush off the dust from sanding.
6. Start painting over the primer with an angled sash brush, painting the corners of the raised panels first (**figure F**). Work from the top panels down to the lowest. Don't use too much paint or let the paint puddle.
7. Use a four-inch roller to apply the paint to the raised panels, rolling with the grain of the wood. Remember you'll need several coats.
8. The rails are the door boards that come across and the stiles go up and down. They meet with a diagonal seam at the corners of the door. Make sure you don't paint across that seam. Instead, paint the stiles with their grain, which will be up and down, and the rails on their grain, which will be side to side, and stop your brush stroke (and the roller) at the seam.
9. Paint the door with several coats, continuing to use the angle brush first and then the roller. You may need even more coats if you're working with a dark color.

Figure C



Figure D



Figure E



Figure F

### More Questions for Brad:

**Q:** I have a door that will not stay open. What could be the problem?

**A:** You could have a spring-loaded hinge, which is designed to make the door always shut behind you. If you don't like that, replace the spring hinge with an ordinary hinge. If that's not it, chances are your door has been hung at an angle, not plumb, and gravity is pulling it shut. If that's the case, you'll need to move the hinges in the door so it hangs straight down.

**Q:** I can't get my doorbell to ring. I bought a new button for the outside and a whole new system for the wall inside. Help!

**A:** If you've actually replaced the button and the wall unit indoors, you probably have a wiring problem.

To solve it, you can chase down the wires through the wall, you can run new wires or you can take the system back to the store, get your money back and buy a wireless doorbell unit.

**Q:** How do you remove mirror tiles that are glued to the wall?

**A:** First, make sure you wear gloves, safety eyewear and a long-sleeved shirt to protect you from any pieces of glass that fly off the wall. Then use a long-handled scraper to pry the tiles off. Because some drywall with probably come off, too, prepare to do some drywall repair at the same time.

**Books:**

*How to Paint: A Complete Guide To Painting Your Home*

by Creative Publishing

ISBN: 086573190X

Creative Publishing International (1999)

5900 Green Oak Dr.

Minnetonka, MN 55343

Phone: 800-328-0590 or 612-936-4700

Fax: 612-988-9108

*Painting: How To Paint Walls, Ceilings, Trim and Exteriors*

by Jeff Beneke

ISBN: 080697057X

Sterling Publishing, Inc. (1998)

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