Bring Your Own Chair

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Looking for ways to refinish furniture or other treasures?

It is interesting to me that “What Goes Around Comes Around”. Remember that saying? Remember in the 60s-70s when everyone was “Antiquing” furniture? We still are, the products are just different. Our mothers or grandmothers probably never distressed anything though.

I have discovered there are many, many ideas and techniques! Find something you like, and go with it. But, Experiment with other techniques. You will find numerous blogs, Pinterest boards, etc. with good information. Spend some time with your computer searching through some of this information. One blog I found helpful was InMYOwnStyle.com. She does lots of comparisons with the different methods and products. Go to the hardware or paint store and spend some time researching the products available. Then pick a project to paint and HAVE FUN!

Some phrases you should know:

**Chalk Paint**—Can be purchased or make your own. It is a latex paint with a bonding agent. Recipes are below. Chalk paint usually requires no stripping, no sanding, no priming. It provides a porous surface that accepts wax for a rich patina. I used the Plaster of Paris recipe. You will find your own mixture for thicker or thinner paint.

**Paste Wax**—is just a soft furniture polishing wax. It can be used clear. Or your choice of stain can be mixed into it to age your piece. Wax adds patina to your piece and protects it, even from water rings. Brush on or rub on with a soft cloth. After it has a chance to dry you need to buff it, an old towel works well for this process. You can also purchase colored waxes usually referred to as “aging wax”.

**Glaze**—Working with glazes gives any painted piece the depth in a similar way that colored waxes do to chalk paint. Colored glazes are also available to purchase. You mix glaze with your paint and a little bit of water.

**Distressing**—this is not how you feel when you think about taking sandpaper to your newly painted item. Distressing is using sandpaper or a wet cloth to “distress” your painted piece, usually in natural looking wear patterns. When you use a colored wax it accentuates this area. You are making something look old and worn, like your favorite boots or pair of jeans.

**Dry Brushing**—Works best on a dark surface, because of the contrast. The key is the amount of paint on your brush and speed. Barely dip the very tips of the brush into the paint and wipe or dab a little of the paint off on a rag, plate or waxed paper. The success of this finish depends on the wood NOT being completely covered. Paint should be quickly applied to the section you are working on with a light hand. Dry brushing could be layered with different colors for a desired effect.
DIY CHALK PAINT RECIPES

Non-Sanded Grout

1 Cup Paint
2 T Non-Sanded Grout
Water

In a mixing container mix grout with water, adding a little bit at a time until you get a nice smooth consistency. Add more water as needed to break up the powder. Once the powder is mixed thoroughly with water, add the paint and stir well.

Plaster of Paris

3 Parts Paint
1 Part Plaster of Paris
Water

In a mixing container mix Plaster of Paris with water, adding a little bit at a time until you get a nice smooth consistency. Add more water as needed to break up the powder. Once the powder is mixed thoroughly with water, add the paint and stir well.

DIY CHALK PAINT RECIPE

Calcium Carbonate

Mix:
2 Tablespoons Calcium Carbonate Powder
1 Tablespoon water

Mix well into one cup of latex paint

To make a quart: Mix 8 Tablespoons of Calcium Carbonate Powder and 4 tablespoons of water to one quart of latex paint.

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How to work with a Clear Mixing Glaze:

You mix the glaze with your paint and a little bit of water:

- 4 parts Clear Mixing Glaze to 1 part paint and about 1 tablespoon of water. For increased transparency, use more glaze than paint.

You apply the mixture liberally over a dry painted surface. The glaze/paint mixture is semi-transparent and very slow drying; this allows you ample time to run a dry brush or rag through to expose some of the base color giving the finish more depth. The glaze mixture is not shiny when dry - it provides a satin finish. You can leave as is or protect it with a coat or two of non-yellowing polyurethane

Making your own Aging Wax:

You will need a soft paste wax such as Johnsons, Minwax or other brands. Pick an oil based stain such as Minwax Stain, usually a dark color

Take a small amount of wax and put into a separate container with a lid, so you can store any excess. You can soften the wax by putting you wax can in hot water, if it isn’t very soft. Add stain a little at a time, mixing well until blended and smooth.

Using a cheap paint brush or soft cloth, brush lightly over chalk painted item. Let dry for 10-30 minutes. Now take a soft cloth or piece of an old towel and buff until you have the desired patina.

If you want to control your stain, wax piece first with clear wax and then follow with aging wax.
9 Tips for Upholstery

1. If you are just starting out, I recommend starting slow. Choose an easy piece like a small footstool or a chair seat. Keep in mind that round is more difficult to keep wrinkle free.

2. The type of fabric you need should be heavy weight. Think drop cloth and heavier. Upholstering something in a simple cotton will not last long so choose your fabric wisely.

3. You will also need to pull all the existing staples and old fabric out of the furniture you are working on. You can use a screw driver or invest in a tool to remove them.

4. Depending on the age and condition of the piece, you may need to replace foam and batting. This can be expensive. Finding foam mattress toppers can be cheaper than buying foam from a craft store. You may find batting regularly at garage sales.

5. A staple gun will work. Upholstery tacks also work on certain designs.

6. Once you master the chair seat or foot stool, choose something a little more complex.

7. The more seams, piping and removable cushions a chair has, the harder it is.

8. You can learn a lot by taking a chair apart. It shows you the pattern, the cuts around the arms and legs and most importantly, which part to upholster first. You can use the old fabric as a template to cut out your new fabric. If you think you really need it, take pictures while taking it apart so you can remember how to put it back together.

9. Now go out and pick up a chair or grab that one that has been sitting in your basement and get started.
Beware of Second Hand Lead

A newly recognized pathway of exposure to lead is Second-Hand Lead. This possible exposure to lead can come from the use of old building components that are "salvaged" and resold to consumers who use them for remodeling work. Also the new home decorating fashion that uses antique, collectibles, old dishes and toys and second-hand furniture with damaged paint.

In December 2010 Journal of Environmental Health magazine the authors purchased 28 used consumer items in the US from second-hand stores, antique shops and salvage centers. The items included, toys, ceramic and pewter dishes, a window shutter a salvaged window and miscellaneous decorator items. Nineteen of these items exceeded the federal standards for lead.

Lead has been banned in paint in the United States since 1970. It was used to aid in drying, increase durability, maintain a fresh appearance and resist moisture that can cause corrosion. Lead paint is hazardous and can cause damage to the nervous system, stunt growth, delayed development and kidney damage. The danger is in eating paint chips and breathing paint dust, especially in small children.

If you have furniture that is covered in lead-based paint and you want to refinish it, you should follow extra precautions by using these steps.

- Before you begin, you need to make sure that you have an area to work in that is well ventilated. The fumes that will be let off when lead paint is stripped can be very toxic, so it is best to work in an area that is either outdoors or in an open space, like a garage with windows and doors.
- Place plastic sheets down on the ground to catch all of the lead paint chips and prevent them from getting into the ground. You also need to wear some protective equipment, including goggles, a paint mask, rubber gloves and some old clothing.
- Apply the stripper by pouring some paint stripper into a disposable bowl that you can throw away when you are done. Make sure to use a stripper that will work on lead-based paint. Follow the directions on the stripper to remove the paint.
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