



# Trick or treat

Expert tips on tackling those awkward and difficult spots with professional prowess



Photography: (right and portrait) Taubmans

Words **Tony Fawcett**

**T**hey're the things that can make painting a nightmare – those fiddly bits: the cornices, windows, knobs and the like – the ones that take up so much of your time and attention.

But master them and painting can be a breeze.

And, happily, they're not too hard to master, says professional painter Roy Evans (**pictured below left**).

Roy, a painter for more than 40 years and a consultant with Taubmans, says the trick is to take your time and be patient. In his case, he reckons he has developed the patience of a saint.



### COMMON MISTAKE

Painting over old switches and power points. They can turn out looking tacky. If you don't like them, maybe it's time to buy some more modern ones.



Photography: Mark Taylor

### Around light switches

### and power points

If you're lucky enough to have modern light switches, you can take off the covers. First, paint your wall and then, when finished, remove the covers and paint underneath just far enough for the cover to go over.

If switch covers don't come off, use one-inch masking tape to cover the light switch (or power point) before painting. Or, if you are confident, cut in freehand.

Importantly, Roy says, you must remove the masking tape before it dries.

He says most professional painters only use masking tape to stop paint being spattered from a roller – but most modern rollers rarely spatter, so it is not a major concern. ☺

## COMMON MISTAKE

Using masking tape at the cutting-in point and then removing the tape to discover paint has got in under the tape. Masking tape rarely provides a 100 per cent seal.



Photography: Taubmans

## Window frames

Roy recommends painting window frames with a 63mm (two-inch) brush.

After sanding down with sandpaper, and cleaning and dusting, apply an undercoat and two finishing coats. Roy's preference is Taubmans 3 in 1 (a water-based, all-purpose primer, sealer and undercoat) and two coats of acrylic gloss.

He likes to start in the middle of the window frame and work out – and again he doesn't advise using masking tape.

"A lot of DIYers can't cut in very well and they end up spending more

time masking up than actually painting," he says.

When cutting in, he aims to stay as close as about a millimetre from the edge, although occasional painters probably won't match this.

On outside windows, Roy opts for external acrylic finishes, except on sash windows where there is the possibility of the thicker acrylic paint actually sticking to other surfaces.

In this case he will use an oil-based paint that is generally thinner.



Photography: Mark Taylor

## Gloss or matt?

It's a matter of personal preference, although Roy opts for gloss enamels on doors and frames and areas where there is heavy traffic.

Semi-gloss paints can be better on children's walls because they are easier to clean, he says. Flat or matt finishes are generally the go on ceilings, unless special effects are wanted. ➔



**COMMON MISTAKE**

Using cheap and nasty brushes. Roy says a good brush and a keen eye are all you need.

**The cornices**

Cornices are those strips, sometimes quite fancy in period homes, between walls and ceilings.

Roy estimates he has painted hundreds of kilometres of them in his time and says they're not to be feared. He recommends the use of a 75mm (3-inch) polyester-nylon brush, nothing smaller.

"Polyester-nylon brushes don't wear out as easily as the old hog's bristle, they apply paint beautifully and they're easy to clean," he says.

First, ensure the cornice surface is right for painting. It needs to be free of peeling

paint, dirt and dust. Generally, a light sand and clean will achieve this. Don't paint until it is dry.

"In the commercial world, we spray cornices because it's a lot quicker but in the domestic situation I'd suggest a brush, painting down on the actual shape of the cornice to the point where it touches the wall. From this point up is regarded as ceiling. When you do your walls, you cut in to this point."

Roy recommends that if painting your wall in a very light colour, paint everything the same colour.



**COMMON MISTAKE**

Putting painted handles back on before they are totally dry.

**Wardrobe/cupboard door handles**

The simplest way is to remove the handles and paint individually and replace them once dry, especially if handles are a different colour to the door or cupboard.

If they are screw-in handles, Roy suggests removing them and screwing them partially into a piece of board, so they stand upright in a line, and then painting them. If the handles can't be taken off, paint them freehand or apply masking tape before painting.



**TOP TIP**

To clean up fresh paint spots, wrap a cloth around the end of a putty knife and wipe them off.