

MILK PAINT BUYERS GUIDE





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Bring eco-friendly color to your world by painting furniture or adorning everyday items with Real Milk Paint®. Just as suitable for creating a two-tone palette for your home's exterior as decking out drywall in your master suite, this durable medium contains no volatile organic compounds (VOCs) to keep indoor air quality high and adheres well to a vast array of surfaces for decorative flexibility. Whether you're a builder looking for a competitive edge with clients seeking sustainable options, a craftsman looking to recapture the rustic aesthetic of yesteryear in your handmade goods or a hobbyist who wants high-quality options for decorating arts and crafts, Real Milk Paint® has you covered — literally! — with 56 beautiful matte colors from basic and bright to primary and pastel, all with a smooth finish. To learn more about milk paint in general and [Real Milk Paint®](#) in particular, keep reading this milk paint buyer's guide to find out how this all-natural, nontoxic medium can take your DIY projects up a notch or 10.

WHAT IS MILK PAINT?

The perfect paint for furniture, walls and decorative items alike, milk paint — aka casein paint — is an all-natural, nontoxic paint that contains milk protein mixed with raw materials like chalk, clay, lime and infused with natural pigments. Used by humans for all of recorded history and even before, this ancient medium utilizes what nature has to offer for a sustainable way to add beauty to dwellings, personal items and handmade products. This versatile medium contains no VOCs for a safer way to paint indoors or to cover items destined for indoor use. Since milk paints are made from all-organic materials, they're also biodegradable and compost easily to further boost their eco-friendliness. Many milk paint formulations are also food contact safe, so you can use them to decorate everything from kids' toys and kitchen utensils to serving platters and candy dishes.

BENEFITS OF REAL MILK PAINT

So aside from eco-friendliness, what makes milk paint ideal for customizing home decor or adorning your next furniture project? First, these formulations are versatile enough for practically any surface. From smooth surfaces such as metal, plastic, and laminate, milk paints adhere well, though they require mixing with our Ultra-Bond Adhesion Promoter. Next, you don't need to prime or sand most surfaces before painting them with milk paints, reducing the amount of prep work you put into your project. Additionally, Real Milk Paint® mixes with our Outdoor Additive, making projects painted with the formulation tough enough to handle the ravages of UV rays and inclement weather while better resisting mold and mildew.

Another benefit of using this medium to paint walls, furniture and kitchen cabinets includes no odors or need for ventilation during use. Since these sustainable paints have no VOCs or harsh chemicals, you can use them indoors, even in tight spaces, without air-quality concerns — both when you're painting and afterwards when the surfaces you cover dry. Additionally, milk paints offer a matte finish that you can seal with a variety of top coats and finishing products, including oils, glazes, creams and waxes. Simple to distress and antique due to their already-rustic appearance before finishing, milk paints make a great choice when you're upcycling found furnishings or customizing farmhouse, country, cottage and lodge-style home decor.



Lastly, milk paint finishes offer long-term endurance, whether you use them to cover surfaces indoors or out. Once dry and sealed, milk paint continues to cure for added durability over time. You can wash sealed milk paint surfaces with soap and water for a quick refresher as needed. Milk paint, especially in powder form like Real Milk Paint®, also offers a versatile consistency, allowing you to thin it down for whitewashing and pickling or thicken it for more intense single-coat coverage. Typically mixed at a 1:1 ratio with water, milk paints brush onto surfaces smoothly for ease of application and dry quickly so you can add secondary coats sooner and complete your projects faster.

HOW TO MIX REAL MILK PAINT

As noted above, when mixing powdered milk paint formulations such as Real Milk Paint®, you typically combine them with water at a 1:1 ratio. Before you start mixing, however, be sure to consider the amount of surface area you need to cover with the milk paint you mix and plan your mixture accordingly. This medium bonds best when you mix it right before use, but if you find you mixed too much milk paint, it stores easily in airtight containers for up to 2 weeks without spoilage or drying out so you can use it again as needed. To mix milk paint, follow this process:

- 01 | Measure out one part Real Milk Paint® powder and one part water.
- 02 | Add the water to your container first, then dry scoop the powder.
- 03 | Blend with a stir stick, whisk, or shake in a can with marble for roughly 5 minutes to mix the paint.
- 04 | Let the mixture settle for 20 minutes to let any foam die down.
- 05 | Stir the mixture again, grab a brush and start painting.

The typical consistency for milk paint is like heavy cream or thin pancake batter. Keep in mind that in some instances you may want a thinner or thicker paint consistency. For example, if you want to apply Real Milk Paint® to larger surfaces like garage doors, panel fences or the sides of barns, consider thinning your milk paint mix down by adding more water for faster application with a sprayer. Likewise, if you want heavier coverage, add less water to your milk paint mixture.

Since Real Milk Paint® inevitably foams when mixed, you can avoid waiting for the foam to subside by premixing your colors the night before you paint or adding our [Anti-Foaming Agent](#) to the water and powdered paint mix. This step is also where you need to mix in any other additives from the Real Milk Paint® that you're using to achieve the effects you desire, including [Outdoor Additive](#) for furnishings destined for your porch, patio or garden and [Ultra-Bond Adhesion Promoter](#) to help colors stay put on nonporous surfaces.

HOW TO APPLY MILK PAINT

Before you apply milk paint like Real Milk Paint® to surfaces, you need to do a little prep work. First, use a clean, lint-free cloth and Tri-Sodium Phosphate to strip away all the grime and dust so you have a smooth working surface for milk paint application. In most cases, you can use Real Milk Paint® on raw wood and previously milk-painted surfaces without the need for sanding, but if you're working with items that have slicker surfaces, including laminate and plastic, you should lightly sand them before you start painting. This is when you need to tape off any areas you don't want to paint and place the item you're painting on a drop cloth to protect your flooring while you paint.



Once you complete your prep work, it's time to gather your supplies. Different brush types create different effects, so consider the look you want to achieve before application. For instance, foam brushes and rollers provide smooth, even coverage free from brush marks, while chip brushes come in various sizes to help you get into cracks and coat hard-to-reach spaces. Our premium brushes boast high-quality bristles, helping them hold onto paint well for excellent coverage with every stroke. These brushes do leave behind brush marks, making them a great choice for distressing, weathering, and antiquing furniture and home decor.

Start painting by dipping your brush into your premixed milk paint, then adding a quick first coat to your piece. If you're working on a flat surface, add color to corners and edges first, then brush across broader spaces. For upright areas, however, you need to change up your strategy and work from the top down, making sure to capture any drips and smooth them out with your paintbrush as you go. Drying times for your first and successive coats range between thirty minutes to a couple of hours, depending on the surface you're painting and the ambient environment.

Keep in mind that when your first coat dries, you may not like the results you see. The first coat of Real Milk Paint® typically has a variegated appearance, especially when used on raw wood. There's no need to panic and scrap your project, however — second and third coats applied in the same fashion as the first coat deliver a more smooth, consistent finish with a dead flat matte look. Once your final coat dries, remove all the taped-off spaces and move on to the milk paint sealing phase of your DIY project.

REAL MILK PAINT SPRAY PAINT METHOD

If you want to cover a large surface area quickly, consider using the spray paint method rather than a brush. Suitable for covering walls, fences, kitchen cabinets and floors in a flash, a spray gun reduces the amount of time and effort necessary for a top-notch paint job and reduces the amount of product you need so your Real Milk Paint® goes farther. To use the spray paint method, thin down your milk paint formulation, mix it thoroughly to break up any chunks, then strain it to remove any residual pieces that might clog the tip of your spray paint gun.

Next, test the mixture in your sprayer until you get the optimal consistency for free-flowing milk paint application. Keep in mind that you may have to thin it down as much as 30% to prevent clogging, and experiment with tips and settings to see which results you like best. In general, though, Real Milk Paint® has no problems flowing through a 1.8- to 2.0-millimeter spray tip, though if you want heavier coverage, consider using a texture paint gun that works with thicker mixtures. Once you achieve coverage you like, start painting. Prevent pooling by spraying the paint onto surfaces in thin, light coats, allowing the paint to evaporate and darken before adding more.

SPECIAL EFFECTS WITH REAL MILK PAINT

When you want to achieve a trendy aged effect without lots of sanding or effort, consider special effects finishes by the Real Milk Paint®. Our [Chippy Paste](#) puts you in the distressing driver's seat by providing complete control over paint chipping and flaking. To use this special effects product, simply apply it between layers of Real Milk Paint®, flick the area with a stiff brush when dry to get the look you want, then seal with your choice of top coat. Likewise, our [Natural Crackle Paint Finish](#) simplifies creating faux aged finishes, helping you create heavy alligator aging and fine glass-like hairline cracks with minimal effort. To use this product, apply it on the surface you wish to crackle, then apply your Real Milk Paint® color on top of it.



HOW TO SEAL MILK PAINT

To maintain durability over time, Real Milk Paint® requires a sealer, and the Real Milk Paint Co. carries numerous finishing options that work beautifully with the medium. We especially recommend using wax for sealing milk paint.

FINISHING OILS

If you want a water-resistant barrier for your project, consider finishing oils to seal your milk paint colors. For instance, our **Pure Tung Oil** keeps out water and soluble salts for an enduring finish, and it doesn't darken with age, keeping the Real Milk Paint® color beneath it true over time. Formulated to resist mildewing and bleeding, this food contact safe oil finish has a light nutty odor for pleasant use and mixes easily with **Citrus Solvent** to boost its absorption power. If you don't want to mix it up yourself, we offer Half and Half, a premixed blend with one part Pure Tung Oil and one part Citrus Solvent.

Our **Hemp Oil** offers a hypoallergenic finishing oil option, with no need to dilute it with solvent to attain optimal absorption. The thin viscosity helps Hemp Oil sink deep into milk-painted surfaces, with quick curing times between 15 and 30 days. Completed projects you wish to use outside benefit from sealing with our **Outdoor Defense Oil**. Ready for use over Real Milk Paint® colors right out of the bottle, this nontoxic sealer formulation combines Pure Tung Oil, Zinc and Pine Oil, creating a reliable barrier between diverse surfaces from wood to concrete and the elements. It's important to note that any oil-based finish will usually shift the color of the milk paint to a darker shade so doing some tests before finishing will reveal the final color of your project.

FINISHING GLAZES

Retain the ability to paint over milk paint colors later by finishing your home decor or furniture project with our **Finishing Glazes**. Formulated with low VOC for safety and odor-free application, these water-based finishes provide a washable protective finish for easy care and long-term durability, and they come in tinted formulations for a quick, nearly effortless way to add a patina of time and a gorgeous matte finish to your pieces. Choose Mocha, Espresso or Mahogany to capture the ideal aesthetic for everything from coffee tables and nightstands to bathroom vanities and kitchen cabinets. Keep in mind that our Finishing Glazes darken the milk paint colors you use and do a test beforehand to ensure you get the look you desire.

FINISHING CREAMS

Get your choice of a dead flat, low sheen or gloss finish with **Finishing Creams** from the Real Milk Paint®. Designed to maintain the integrity of milk paint colors, these low-voc sealers allow surfaces to be repainted later with no need for stripping beforehand. Surfaces sealed with these water-based formulations are washable after 24 hours for fuss-free care, and after-project cleanup requires only soap and water for a seamless finishing experience. Additionally, our Finishing Creams work great as a resist when you're sealing milk-painted surfaces with our Finishing Glazes. By using our colorless dead flat or low sheen Finishing Creams between the painted surface and our Finishing Glazes, you lock in the Real Milk Paint® to prevent the color from darkening too much over time.



FINISHING WAXES

Finishing waxes put a layer of protection between you and furnishings you adorn with Real Milk Paint®. Available in a variety of formulations to suit every decorative need, our finishing waxes impart an environmentally friendly topcoat to your projects with easy-to-apply formulations that rub on smoothly with clean, lint-free cloths or specialty wax brushes. For example, our [Zero VOC Wax](#) lends depth and beauty to surfaces with its tinted formulations, while our clear [Wood Wax](#) formula is safe for food contact, making this top coat a great choice for finishing kitchen surfaces and items covered with Real Milk Paint®. Similarly, our Soapstone Sealer works on stone, brick, and concrete, among other surfaces for added finishing versatility. It's important to note that the waxes mentioned above will shift the color of the milk paint to a darker shade.

Our carnauba wax options — [Clear Carnauba Wax Paste](#) and [Carnauba Wax Flakes](#) — confer durability and excellent resilience and provide the most sheen from our wax lineup. [Good Ol' Brown Wax](#) imbues a hint of color for a lightly glazed effect that complements rustic furniture designs. Available in Clear, Antique Mahogany, Antique Brown and Antique Pine, [Mylands Wax](#) combines beeswax, carnauba wax, and shellac wax for a lustrous finish suitable for high-end furniture restoration projects. Last, but not least, [Soft Wax](#) comes in clear, ebony, white, gray, and dark brown, drying hard with a matte to satin sheen to protect furnishings while adding a gorgeous patina.

COVERAGE AMOUNTS PER CONTAINER SIZE

As a general rule of thumb, a cup of Real Milk Paint® covers approximately 30 square feet with a single coat of color. Following that thought, a pint of milk paint covers 35 square feet, a quart covers 75 square feet, and a gallon covers 280 square feet. With that in mind, a pint container should cover two to three small tables or accent chairs, a small vanity, desk or bookcase or a large headboard. A quart container should hold enough paint for a dining table with extension leaves, a tall hutch or china cabinet, a king-size headboard and footboard or an armoire, chest or dresser. If you want to use Real Milk Paint® to complete a larger paint job on porches, patios, walls or garage floors, just measure the space and use the 1-quart-to-75-square-foot formula to order the optimal amount of product for your DIY project. 2 coats are generally recommended for full coverage and finding the amount of paint needed should include that.

SURFACES SUITABLE FOR MILK PAINT

A versatile addition to your artisan arsenal, Real Milk Paint® adheres beautifully to numerous porous and nonporous surfaces. When painting most porous surfaces, you don't need to prime or sand them before application of Real Milk Paint®; however, nonporous surfaces require a little additional prep work before you can unleash your creative expression. Simply sand lightly to add some tooth to slick surfaces like laminate, and mix your milk paint color with Ultra-Bond Adhesion Promoter to ensure it stays put. Surfaces that accommodate Real Milk Paint® application include:

- Raw wood
- Concrete
- Masonry
- Plaster
- Metal
- Painted wood
- Stone
- Drywall
- Plastic
- Glass

HOW TO CLEAN UP MILK PAINT

All you need to clean up after painting furniture with Real Milk Paint® is some soap and water. Our eco-friendly formulation uses natural pigments and binders in a water base for fuss-free cleanup — no scrubbing required!

More durable than chalk paint and more eco-friendly than latex paint, milk paint offers a safe, flexible way to take your decorating game to the next level. See where your creativity takes you by picking out a project, choosing some Real Milk Paint® colors that fit the theme and completing your design with our innovative line of eco-friendly paints and sustainable finishing products, and keep this milk paint buyer's guide on hand as you work to make the most of your fun new project materials.