

· Opaing · Marbling · Stippling · Wood-graining · Malachite · Metallic finishes

THE COMPLETE BOOK OF

Decorating Techniques

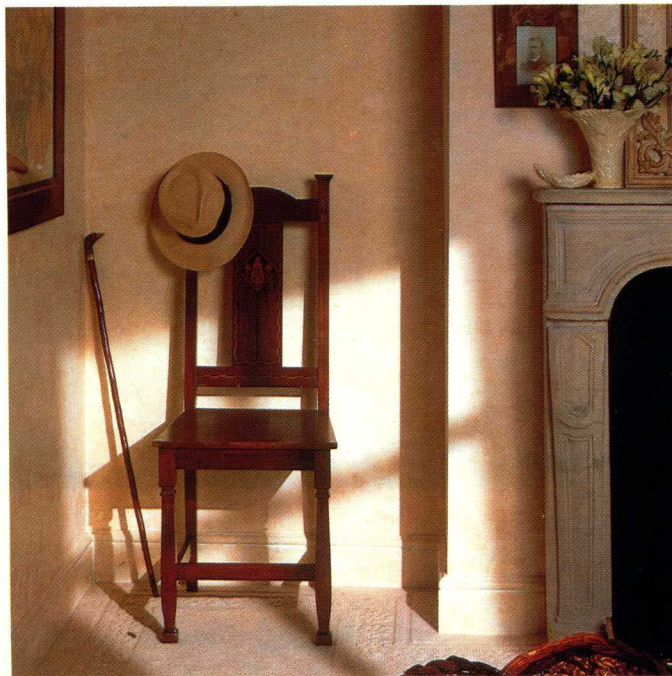


LINDA GRAY
WITH JOCASTA INNES

· Dragging · Spattering · Trompe l'œil · Colour-washing · Combing · Rag-rolling

THE COMPLETE BOOK OF

Decorating Techniques



LINDA GRAY
WITH JOCASTA INNES

Macdonald Orbis





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The complete book of decorating techniques.

1. House painting — Amateurs' manuals
2. Interior decoration — Amateurs' manuals

I. Title II. Innes, Jocasta

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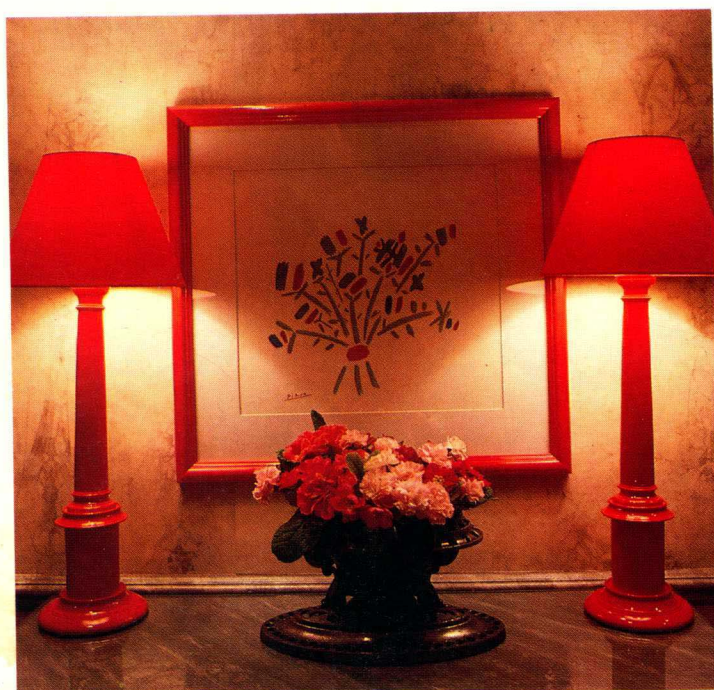
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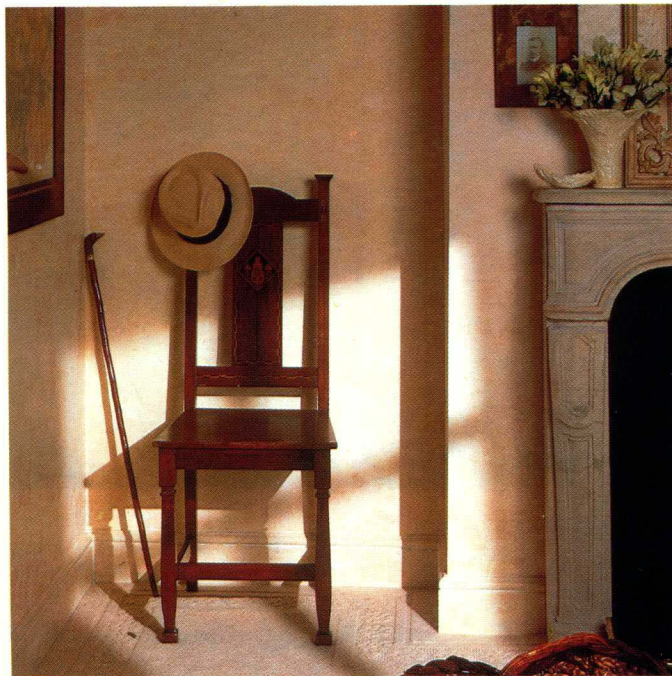
Decorating Techniques





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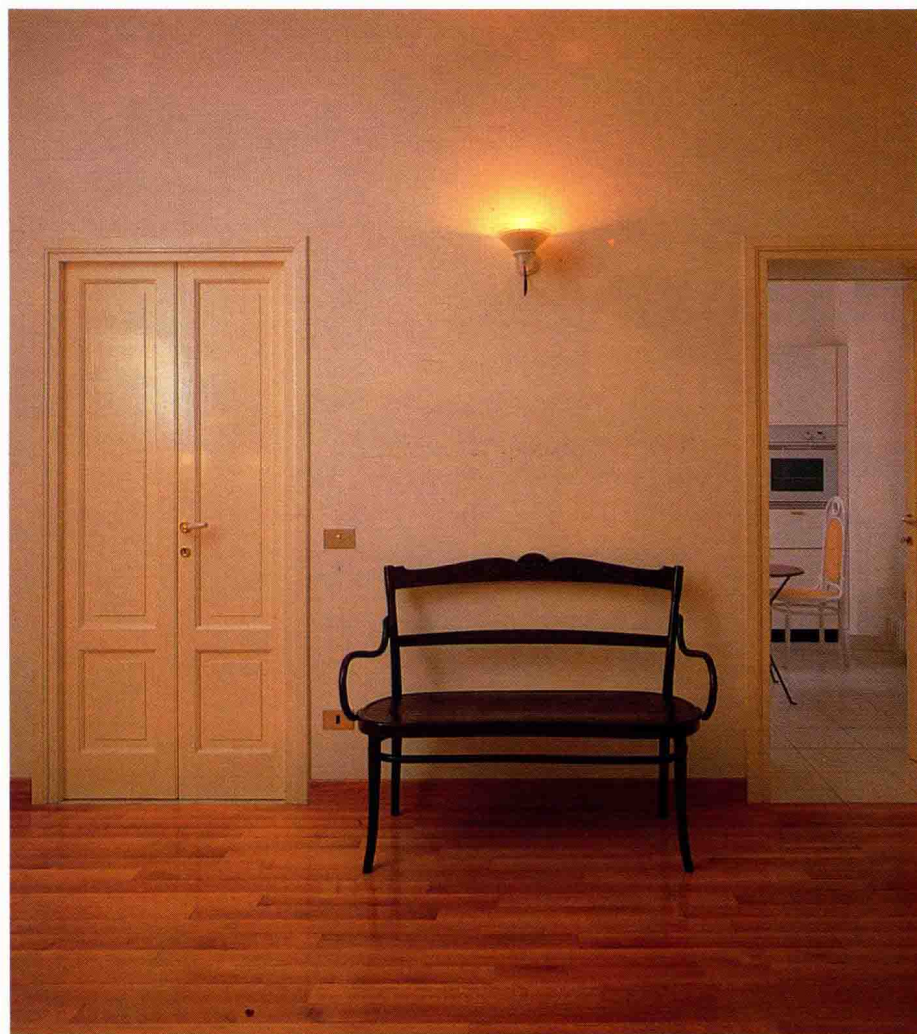
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Introduction

This book is dedicated to all those who have ever thought of decorating their homes and regretfully decided that it was too difficult. It takes you from the basics of painting and papering right through to fashionable paint treatments like simple sponging and ragging plus realistic tortoiseshell and marbling effects which can turn a piece of chipboard into a work of art. There are plenty of room sets to inspire you and every step is illustrated to show just how it's done. Why diy? Because it improves your home and gives you the satisfaction of knowing that the job's well done. It's good, creative fun, saves you money and reflects your tastes and ideas.

Below A glossy white staircase winds upwards and is echoed by ceiling beams in high-shine white.





Far left An avant-garde staircase sets the tone for this monochrome hallway, with stippled walls in subtle grey and a geometric rug for cool sophistication. Top This wooden bench, a focal point between a pair of interesting double doors, sits on an immaculate sanded and sealed floor.

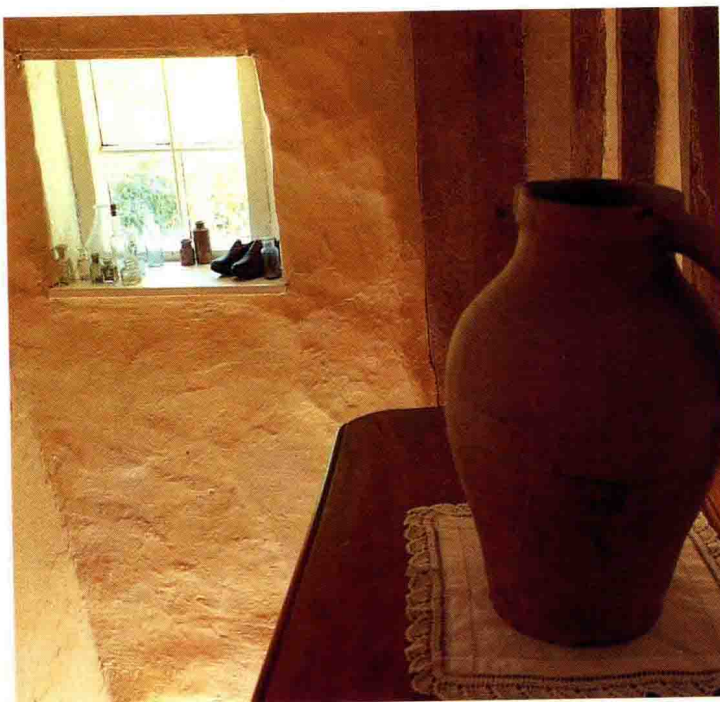
Left Once you have chosen major paint and wallpaper treatments, don't neglect accessories, such as these toning blue-grey vases, which add the finishing touches to a room, giving it character and appeal.

First Steps

Decorating can be fun, but nobody pretends that the preparation is anything but a chore. It's messy, time-consuming and often takes far longer than the decorating itself. Yet it is essential, because paint can't hide a rough surface and new wallpaper may not adhere to old wallpaper, or to greasy walls.

The same principles apply to ceilings too, of course. And make absolutely sure that before you start you have assembled all the essential equipment – nothing could be more irritating than having to break off work and trek to the local diy store in all your finery. Study this chapter carefully and master the techniques – then the fun can begin!

Smoothly finished surfaces create a sophisticated, elegant mood (right), whilst rough-textured walls echo the natural feel of wood and terracotta (below).





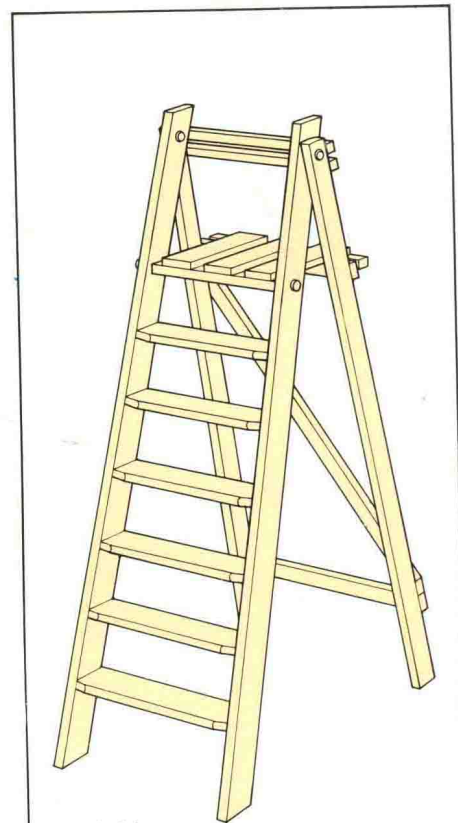
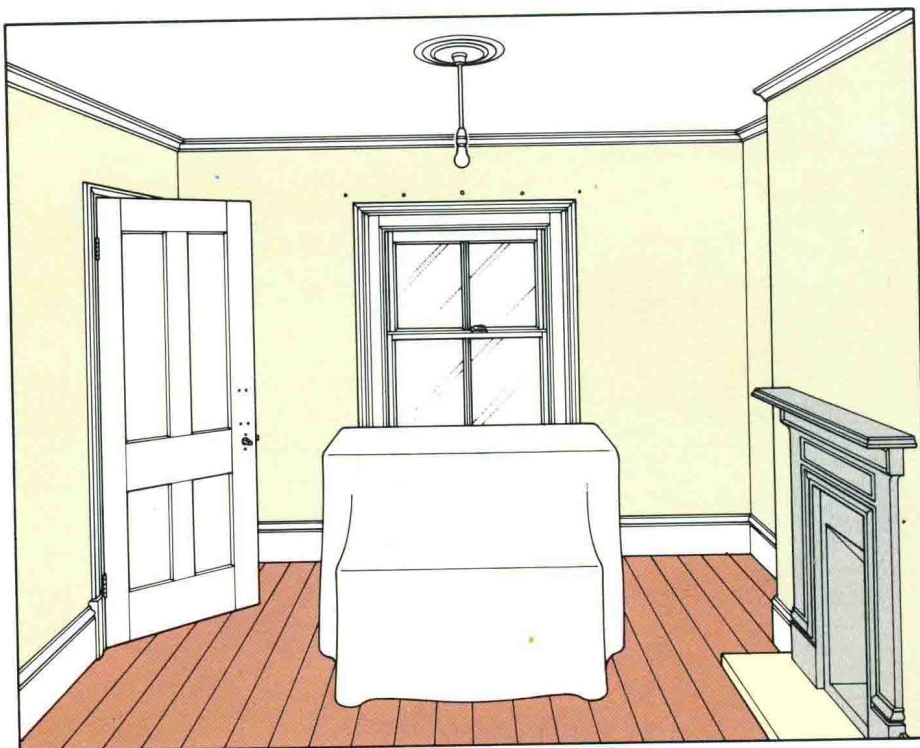
If your home is still new you may find that you have only a few cracks to fill in and sand, and that washing down will complete the process, but in an old house there may be layers of wallpaper to remove and defects in plaster to repair. Make the task easier by moving out as much furniture as you can from the room where you plan to work (see below). Shift the rest to the middle of the floor, covering it with old sheets for protection. Remove the curtains and take up carpet if you can, or, if you can't, cover it with a layer of polythene plus a sheet to soak up spills. (Don't use newspaper – it moves too easily and has a tendency to leave newsprint.) Take down light fittings, curtain rails and picture hooks so that the room is as clear as you can make it. Don't forget to cover yourself with jeans and an old shirt (pullovers may leave fluff on fresh paint) and a headscarf if your hair is long. Wear a pair of old sneakers and leave them at the door when you go out so you don't walk paint throughout the house. Before you start, collect all the equipment you need for the day

and bring along a radio and plenty to drink. Decorating is thirsty work and you'll need a supply of soft drinks or milk to minimise the effect of dust and chemicals. Finally, work out a realistic timetable for your project and aim to complete one section at a time. Even if you are tackling a whole house task by task rather than room by room, try to finish one room first so that you have somewhere to sit, or sleep, in relative comfort.

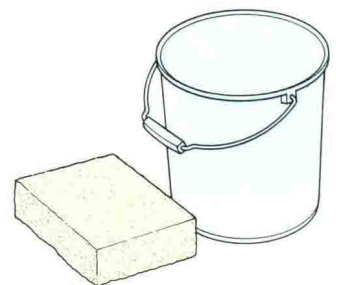
Equipment

You will need:

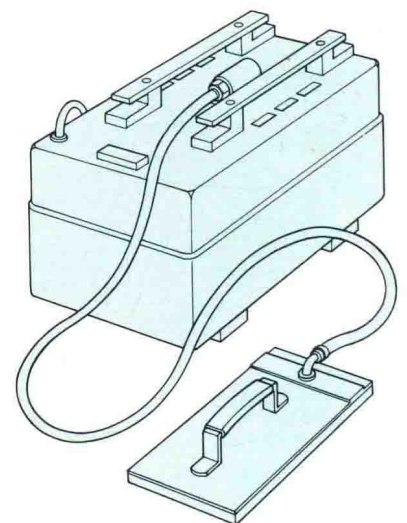
- a stripping knife or scraper with a wide blade for removing swathes of wallpaper or paint.
- a flexible filling knife for pressing filler into cracks.
- a sanding block (buy one or use an offcut of timber) plus silicon carbide paper which can be used wet or dry – it's more expensive than sandpaper but gives a finer finish.
- a bucket of warm water and liquid detergent for washing down walls and stripping off wallpaper.
- a large sponge.
- a wire brush for scoring the



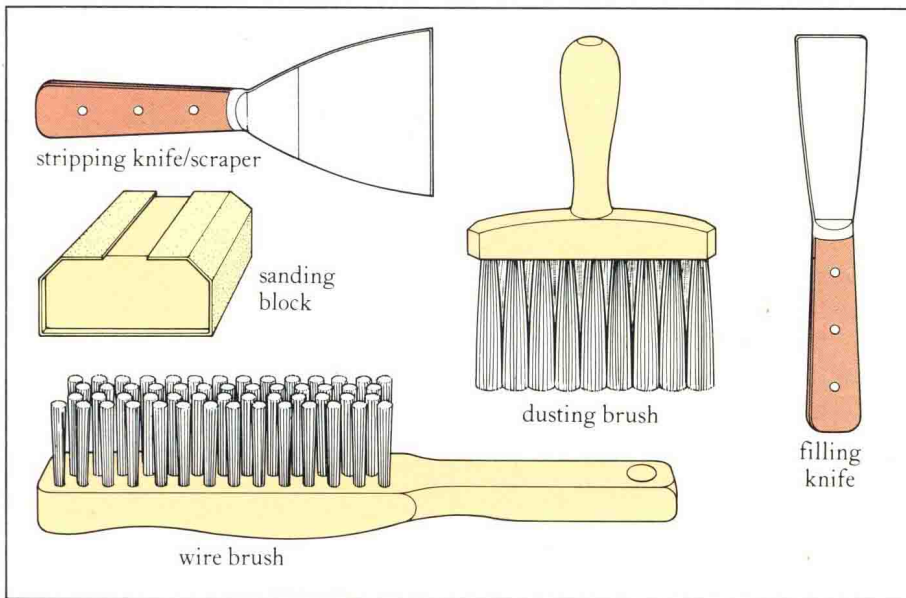
stepladder



bucket and sponge



steam wallpaper stripper (to hire)



surface of stubborn wallcoverings to allow the water to penetrate.

- a dusting brush to remove debris from the wall surface.
- a stepladder with a firm platform.

- a steam stripper if you are tackling a large area or removing several layers of old wallpaper.
- full-size ladders, planks and a hop-up if you are decorating awkward areas like stairwells.

Safety First

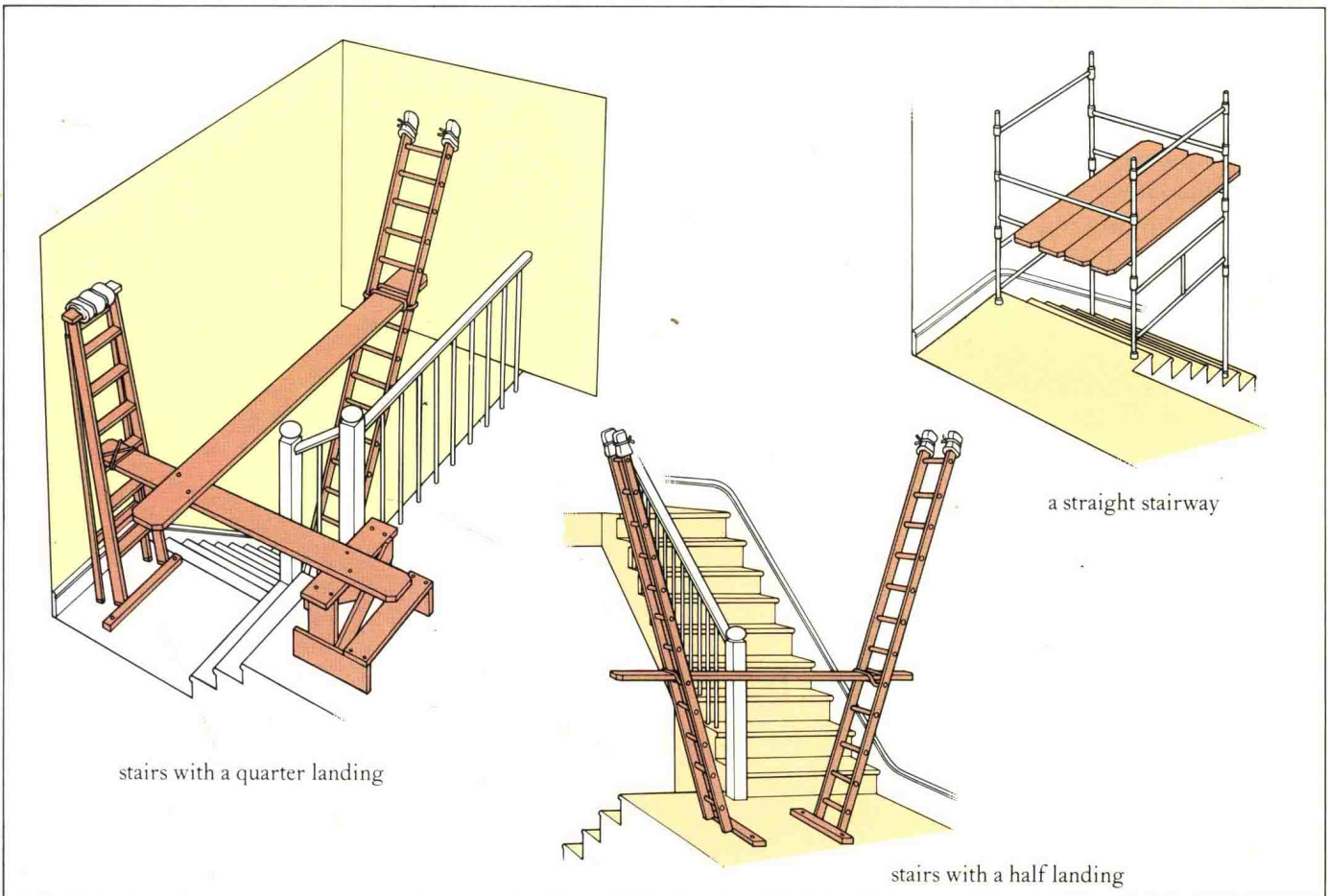
For awkward areas like stairwells safe access is all-important.

Stairs with a quarter landing: you'll need a full-size ladder at the bottom of the stairs plus steps, a hop-up and two planks arranged in an L-shape. Nail a batten to the quarter landing to keep the steps in place and nail the planks together, and to the hop-up, for complete safety. Tie some padding around the top of the ladder and the steps so that they don't mark the walls.

Stairs with a half landing: nail two battens to the floor of the turn to support two ladders facing each other and lash a plank securely from one to the other.

Ban everyone from the area while work is in progress!

A straight stairway: hire a tower with adjustable feet and a wide platform.



Stripping Wallpaper

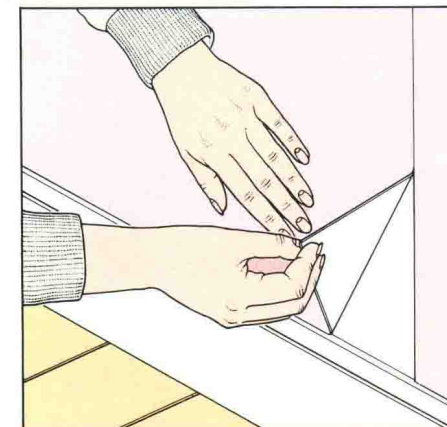
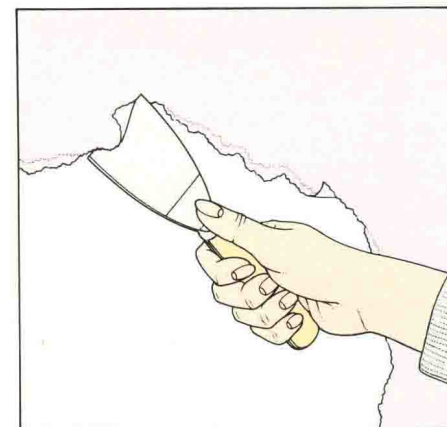
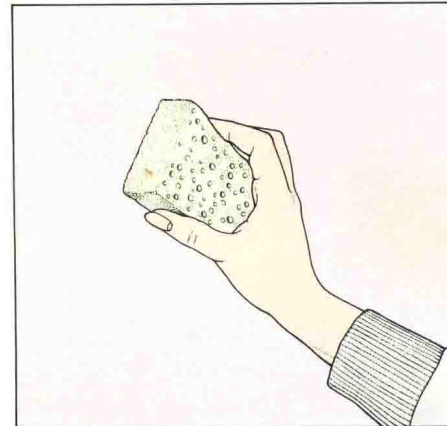
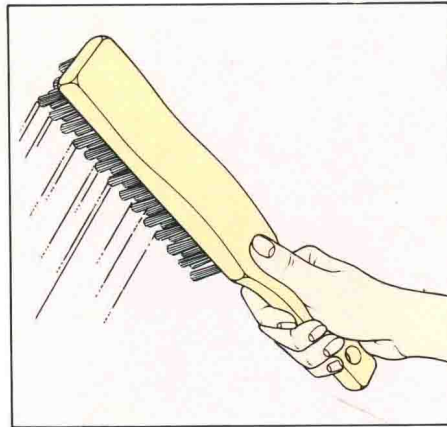
Always remove old wallpaper before redecorating if:

- . . . there are already several layers on the wall.
- . . . the wallpaper is peeling in several places.
- . . . the colour is dark and likely to bleed.
- . . . it has an impermeable surface.
- . . . it is affected by damp.

Remember that any flaws, bumps or joins will show through if you paint or paper on top of existing wall-covering. In addition, the weight of the new paper or paint may pull it away from the wall. That's why it's nearly always better to remove wallpaper before you redecorate, however unappealing the prospect may be.

To remove wallpaper, first run your hand over it to assess its type. If it has a glazed or water-resistant finish, if it's made from vinyl or is a speciality wallcovering like hessian or grasscloth, try peeling it away at the skirting level corner. These wallcoverings often have a paper backing designed to remain on the wall while the top strips smoothly away. If this is in good condition, use it as a lining, if you are redecorating with paint or a heavy wallcovering. Remove the backing if you plan to use a light wallpaper (because the joins may show through), or if it is on top of another layer of wallpaper, or if it does not adhere closely to the wall.

Ordinary wallpaper is unlikely to peel away so easily but as it is absorbent it can be removed with water. Soak plaster walls with a solution of household detergent and water applied with a sponge. Work from the top down so that the water runs over the wallpaper. (Although you should avoid overwetting, for safety, turn off the electricity at the mains before you douse the area around sockets and light switches.) In theory, you should not use water when stripping plasterboard as it



Stripping wallpaper

To strip wallpaper, especially if it has been overpainted or has a washable finish, score its surface with a wire brush. This will help the water to penetrate the paper more easily.

Make a solution of household detergent and water and sponge it over the wallpaper, working from the top of the wall down. Don't forget to switch off the electricity at the mains when you tackle patches around sockets and light switches.

Once the wallpaper is soaked thoroughly, strip it off using a scraper with a wide blade. Work carefully to avoid making any chips in the plaster, as this will only mean extra work later.

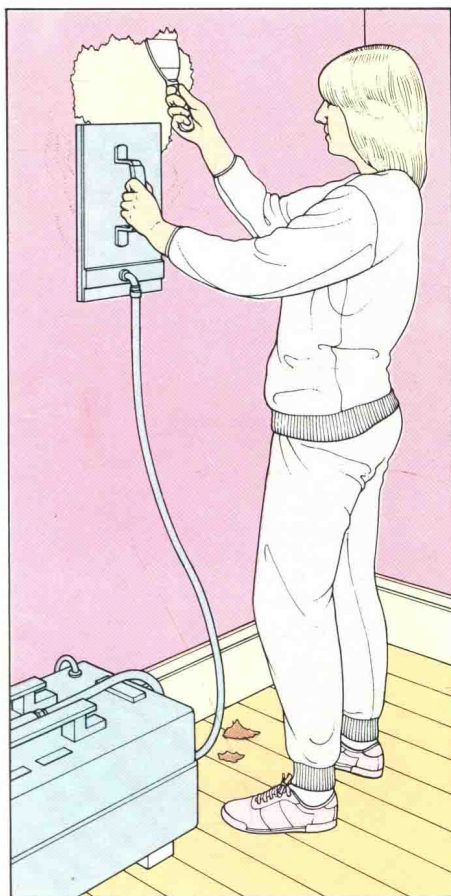
Stripping vinyl

For glazed, water-resistant or vinyl wallpapers which often have a paper backing, carefully peel away the top layer starting at the skirting level corner. If the backing is in good condition, you can use it as a basis for paint or a heavy wallcovering.

may cause the core to swell, but in practice it is often impossible to remove wallpaper any other way. Use the minimum of water and go easy with the scraper as the board is easily punctured. Whatever the surface, work steadily and carefully; any chips you make in the wall will have to be filled in later.

If wallpaper has been over-painted or has a washable finish it may resist the sponge and water method. Score the surface with a wire brush to allow the water to penetrate and leave it to soak for a while before you attempt to remove it with a scraper.

It may be worth hiring a steam wallpaper stripper if you have a large area to deal with or several layers of wallpaper to remove. Fill the machine with water and, when it is ready, press the steaming plate to the wall with one hand while you strip the wallpaper with the other (see below).



Stripping Paint

Usually all you need to do before redecorating painted walls is to wash down, using a solution of household detergent, and then rinse with water. The exceptions are:

... solvent- or oil-based paints, which should be finely sanded to produce a 'key' for the new layer of paint.

... a flawed surface. Lift off flaking paint with a scraper and sand down. Similarly, sand any runs or sags in existing paintwork to produce a uniform finish. Apply a coat of stabilising primer to prevent any further flaking.

... distemper and whitewash. You'll know immediately if these have been used (though they are rarely applied today) because they wash off the wall, leaving a creamy residue on your cloth or sponge. New paint will not adhere to distemper or whitewash: to remove it, use a stiff brush and plain water, which should be renewed when it becomes milky. Finish by washing with detergent solution to banish the final traces. If you can't remove it completely then apply a coat of oil-based primer/sealer before repainting.

Remedial Work

Once you've stripped off the old wallpaper and removed flaking paint, take a look at the condition of the walls. Now's the time to deal with any underlying problems so you can prepare a smooth surface for redecoration.

Mould

Is the mould caused by penetrating damp from the outside, rising damp which has bypassed a faulty or non-existent damp proof course or by condensation? The easiest way to find out is to dry the damp patch temporarily with a hair dryer or fan heater, then stick aluminium foil over the affected area with adhesive tape, making sure that the edges are

completely sealed. Leave for one week, then examine the results. If there are drops of moisture on the surface of the foil, the problem is caused by condensation. If the foil is dry on the outside and damp on the underside, you have rising or penetrating damp.

Whatever the cause, the problem must be tackled at source. This may involve quite a bit of inconvenience, but untreated damp will ruin new decorations and may ultimately affect the structure of your house.

Penetrating damp should be traced – the walls may need to be repointed, gutters repaired and so on. Rising damp means that the damp-proof course needs attention.

Condensation can only be cured by correcting the balance between warmth and ventilation. If this is the problem, fit an extractor fan in troublesome areas like kitchens and bathrooms and consider a dehumidifier if your bedrooms or living rooms are affected. Check to make sure that any airbricks are clear, and blocked-in fireplaces have a grille for adequate ventilation.

Once you have dealt with the cause of the damp you can wipe away the mould. Wash with a solution of one part bleach to five parts water. If you're decorating with wallpaper, choose an adhesive containing fungicide. In places where condensation is difficult to control, it may be preferable to use eggshell paint.

Efflorescence

This is the term for the white salts which work their way through new plaster as it dries out. Although it's rarely necessary these days to wait a year for plaster to dry, you may have to delay using wallpaper or solvent-based paints for a few months (though you can use emulsion straight away). If you notice efflorescence, brush it off and then wait a week to see if it recurs. Repeat the process until the salts no longer appear and the walls are dry.