

Faux-Finishes

Decorating Retailers Can Help You Get Started

Faux-finishing is the term for decorative painting techniques. Sponging, ragging, rag-rolling and color washing are some of the more popular finishing techniques.

These techniques are so popular simply because they're easy, inexpensive and offer a truly customized look. Plus, as an added bonus, they're easy to correct... Simply repaint and start over. All you need are the right tools, some instruction and a little practice.

Decorating retailers can help with the first two of these requirements and offer all the necessary products to get the job done right. Give the decorating centers in your area a call and find out what they have to offer.

The Right Tools

Each faux-finish project has different requirements, so make a list of the products you'll need for your individual project... But the following checklist can serve as a general guide:

Preparatory Tools and Supplies

- putty knife(s)
- sandpaper
- tack cloth(s)
- primer
- masking tape
- drop cloths

Application Tools and Supplies

- glaze
- coatings [paint--base coat and top coats, varnish, stain, etc.]
- pigments
- paint tray(s)
- brushes and rollers
- sponges, rags, plastic bags... etc. [project-specific]
- water bucket

Clean-Up

- soap and water [for acrylic paints and glazing liquids]
- mineral spirits [for alkyd paints and glazing liquids]

Additional Items

- rubber gloves
- small sponge brushes [good for stenciling]
- how-to materials

Color Washing



Color Washing is one of the fastest and softest finishes to do. Consider doing multiple color washes to achieve your desired effect.

As with any finish on stone, the goal is to enhance the natural beauty, not hide it... so work with the idea of "washing" a bit of color into the stone, starting very thin and working up to the desired finish.

It is highly recommended that you first practice the technique in order to achieve your personal "ideal" result. For example, your personal preference may be the result of applying the lighter color underneath and finishing with the darker color mix.... or visa versa.

Recipe

The ratio is entirely up to your discretion, but a good starting point for finishing stone is a mix of 15:1 - [15 parts water to 1 part paint]

Step One:

After mixing, apply two coats of white Acrylic Satin finish and let paint dry for several hours.

Step Two:

Most any glaze or latex varnish can be used to do this technique. Mix your glaze in the ratio of 10:1 – [10 parts glaze to 1 part paint].

Here, Ginger Whip and Shadow Beige have been used. For a more subtle finish, add more glaze to the mixture.

Step Three:

Pour your glaze mixture into a paint tray. You can use a sea sponge, cellulose sponge, or cotton rags. Dampen [not wet] your applicator with water before beginning. Then dip it in the color mixture. Working in medium size sections, rub the mixture into the stone in a circular motion [for a muted non-directional effect]. If you are using a glaze which dries quickly, be sure to blend the edges.

Step Four:

Soften any texture marks of each section with a soft bristle brush, or soft cloths.

Step Five:

Work the next section into the one previous. Continue until surfaces are complete.

Step Six:

Repeat steps three through five with second glaze color.

Ragging Off



Negative Ragging produces a very soft finish, but one of the more difficult ones to master. For your first time, always work with a partner.

As with any finish on stone, the goal is to enhance the natural beauty, not hide it... so work with the idea of washing a bit of color into the stone, starting very thin and working up to the desired finish.

It is highly recommended that you first practice the technique in order to achieve your personal ideal result. For example, your personal preference may be the result of applying the lighter color underneath and finishing with the darker color mix.... or visa versa.

Recipe

The ratio is entirely up to your discretion, but a good starting point for finishing stone is a mix of 15:1 - [15 parts water to 1 part paint]

Step One:

After mixing, apply two coats of the base color. In this example, Airy Blue. Let dry for several hours.

Step Two:

Most any glaze or latex varnish can be used to do this technique. Mix your glaze in the ratio of 10:1 - [10 parts glaze to 1 part paint].

Here, Fig and Kodiak Grey have been used. For a more subtle finish, add more glaze to the mixture.

Step Three:

Pour your glaze mix into a paint tray. You will need several moist, lint free rags [sheeting]. Immerse one rag into the glaze mixture and wring out as much as possible. Blot the excess glaze onto a piece of cardboard. At this point, you can apply a pattern by rolling, dabbing or rubbing the rag across the stone surface.

Our sample has been done by dabbing the rag onto the surface.

Step Four:

Repeat step three using the second color.

Smoothing



Smoothing is a very dramatic technique that will enhance the texture and drama of your stone.

As with any finish on stone, the goal is to enhance the natural beauty, not hide it... so work with the idea of washing a bit of color into the stone, starting very thin and working up to the desired finish.

It is highly recommended that you first practice the technique in order to achieve your personal ideal result. For example, your personal preference may be the result of applying the lighter color underneath and finishing with the darker color mix.... or visa versa.

Recipe

The ratio is entirely up to your discretion, but a good starting point for finishing stone is a mix of 15:1 - [15 parts water to 1 part paint]

Step One:

Apply two coats of the base color and allow to dry for several hours. [Here, Shadow Beige is used].

Step Two:

There are two types of glazes that can be used with this technique; oil glaze and latex glaze. This example uses an oil glaze.

- **Oil glaze:** Mixed to Kodiak Grey and Downy Grey.
- **Latex Glaze:** Mix your glazes in a ratio of 10:1 - [10 parts glaze to 1 part paint]

Step Three:

Cut thin plastic [drop sheets] to the dimensions of the surface you are smoothing, adding about a foot or two extra.

Step Four:

Start in a corner and roll the glaze onto the stone with a 5 - 10mm lint free roller sleeve. Roll as close to the edges as you can. With a stippling brush, stipple up to the edges that are missed with the roller. **Hint: Avoid linear roller marks by rolling it randomly over the entire surface.**

Step Five:

Starting along one edge or corner, take your sheet of plastic, and press it into the stone, then chase out the air bubbles. You can see the pattern you are creating through the plastic. [Be careful not to leave imprints of the palm of your hand]. When you are satisfied with the pattern and texture, remove the plastic.

Stone Washing



A grainy, highly textured technique which captures the natural essence of stone.

As with any finish on stone, the goal is to enhance the natural beauty, not hide it... so work with the idea of washing a bit of color into the stone, starting very thin and working up to the desired finish.

It is highly recommended that you first practice the technique in order to achieve your personal ideal result. For example, your personal preference may be the result of applying the lighter color underneath and finishing with the darker color mix.... or visa versa.

Recipe

The ratio is entirely up to your discretion, but a good starting point for finishing stone is a mix of 15:1 - [15 parts water to 1 part paint]

Step One:

Dilute a small amount of latex paint with water.

In this example, Raw Umber and Black was used to keep a warm tone finish.

Step Two:

Dampen [not wet] a cellulose sponge with the first paint mixture, scrubbing it into the surface. Before it dries, use a clean sponge to remove most of the color. Repeat the process if you feel you want a little more color. After you have the base color to your liking, allow it to dry fully, [at least one hour].

After the first color has dried, mix the second color to the same consistency and repeat the technique until you achieve the color balance of your liking.

Step Three:

Apply at least one coat of Zero Gloss to the surface.