

# 10 Must Have Supplies

for Painting Furniture

By: Natalie Dayton | Creator behind A Ray of Sunlight

There are SO many paint products and brands out there! Here's our list of the ***must-have products that you need when you paint furniture.***

Obviously, you can use so many more products than just 10, but **these are the things that we use basically every single time we paint a piece of furniture.**

**Below I'll go into more detail about which exact product I use and recommend, and why I do.**

Annnnd if you're wanting to paint a large project or multiple projects, I have an extra list of things that will make your life SO much easier!

**\*\*Keep scrolling past this first list to see that list.**

*\*The product links in this resource are affiliate links. I earn from qualifying purchases. All opinions are my own!*

## **10 Must Have Products When Painting Furniture**

1. Screwdriver
2. Cleaner
3. Wood Filler
4. Sandpaper
5. Vacuum with Hose and Brush Attachment
6. Tack Cloth
7. Primer
8. Paint
9. Paint Brush
10. Topcoat

## 1. Screwdriver

Most furniture has some sort of hardware that needs to be removed before you paint.

Think drawer pulls, hinges, and knobs.

These things all typically are held on with a screw or two, and they just need to be unscrewed to remove them.

You don't need anything fancy!

[My favorite screwdrivers](#) are the kind that can change from phillips to flat, so I don't have to search around for another screwdriver.



## 2. Cleaner



The most important first step to painting furniture is to clean the surface really well.

Years of gunk, grease, oil and grime probably has built up.

And all of those things can compromise how well the paint can stick.

So, we always clean each piece of furniture down with a cleaner / degreaser to remove all of those things.

My favorite to use is [Krud Kutter Cleaner Degreaser](#). It cuts through grease and grime really well!

But if you don't have any on hand, my next go to cleaner is just good ole **dawn dish soap** in hot water.

### 3. Wood Fillers

To fix broken corners, chipping veneer, or just filling in old hardware holes so you can put new hardware on. Or even just filling in the basic little scratches.

We have three types of wood filler on hand at all times for these repairs.

#### Wood Filler

The first is just the [basic wood filler](#) to fill in the little scratches and dings. Basically, anything less than 1/8" deep.



#### Bondo

My second go to wood filler is [Bondo](#). It's a bit stinky, but it is great for [repairing chipped veneer](#), [fixing broken corners](#), and a whole lot of other repairs.

It's a thinner consistency that makes it really easy to spread. You can also put it in a mold to mold it into different shapes if needed. (Check out this [replacing missing trim](#) tutorial)

It dries really hard in about 30 minutes so you can move onto the next part of your project (unlike wood filler that takes a really long time to dry if you use a lot of it).

#### KwikWood

And then my favorite, filler that isn't as well known is [KwikWood](#). It's thicker, kind of like clay.

It dries hard in about an hour, it doesn't stink like Bondo!

And it's my [favorite way to fill in old hardware holes!](#)



## 4. Sandpaper

Yeah... you COULD get away with painting furniture without sandpaper... But you won't ever find me doing it that way.

We use sandpaper to scuff sand the surface of the furniture. It's what we call scuff sanding, and it really really **helps paint stick to furniture** (especially slicker surfaces!)

But we also use sandpaper to **sand in between coats of paint to make the paint really soft and smooth.**

And in between coats of polyurethane for the same reason.

We also use sandpaper to **sand down wood filler** smooth, and to shape it if we need to.

And one last way we use sandpaper is to **distress the paint for a farmhouse**, distressed look.

**But all sandpaper is NOT created equal.**

We started out using the cheapest stuff we could find because I didn't know any better.

Annd then I got sooo frustrated with the cheap stuff ripping and losing it's roughness within a few seconds of using it.

So we tried a few other kinds, and landed on [this kind of sandpaper being the very best!](#)

It lasts longer, so really you're not spending any more money on it than the cheap stuff that doesn't last very long.

I personally use a lot of 220 grit and 400 grit sandpaper

I use [220 grit](#) for scuff sanding, sanding down wood filler, and distressing.



[400 grit](#) sandpaper is great for in between coats of polyurethane because the 220 grit is a little too scratchy and rough.

I also like to have an assortment of courser grits like [80 grit](#) and [150 grit](#), on hand for when I sand furniture down to bare wood. It also comes in handy for sanding down wood filler too!

## 5. Vacuum with Hose and Brush Attachments



Why in the world do you need a vacuum for painting furniture?!

To suck up all the dust of course!

But seriously, after any sanding, it's so nice to suck up the leftover dust instead of trying to wipe it off.

I personally use my [shop vac](#), but before I had a shop vac, I used my household vacuum that had a hose and brush attachment.

## 6. Tack Cloths Pick Up Dust Like No One's Business

A [tack cloth](#) is basically a super sticky cheesecloth.

It picks up the remaining dust (after you vacuum most of it up) so you're left with a completely dust free surface.

And that's a big deal if you want a professional looking finish on your furniture.

IF you don't get rid of the dust before you paint, you'll end up with little specks and rough spots all over in your paint.



Obviously, you can get away with not using a tack cloth, and you can use a lint free rag instead. But they just don't get rid of the dust like tack cloths do!

Quick Tip: I personally like to wear some disposable gloves when I use a tack cloth. Otherwise my hands get all sticky and weird feeling from touching the tack cloth.

## 7. Best Primer For Painting Furniture

Not all primers are created equal.

They aren't made for the same things either.

Some just help with coverage. These are the primers that are built into latex paint.

Some help the paint to stick.

And others are made to block things (like wood dye, wood stain, and wood tannins) from showing up in your paint.

A super common misconception is that chalk paint (and a lot of other paints) doesn't need a primer.

It's partially true.

Chalk paint has excellent adhesion. But that's only part of the story.

Some furniture, like laminate (Ikea!) furniture is super slick and chalk paint needs a primer below it, to help it stick.

(Yep, I tried straight chalk paint on laminate before. Didn't work out so well.)

**Another huge reason to use a primer, is to fight against stains that bleed through the paint.**

It's called bleed through, and it's a real pain.

But you can stop bleedthrough from ruining your paint job by priming with a stain blocking primer before you even paint.



My absolute favorite primer for blocking bleedthrough is this [clear shellac](#).

It works especially great on with chalk paint, mineral paint, and acrylic paints (General Finishes Milk Paint.)

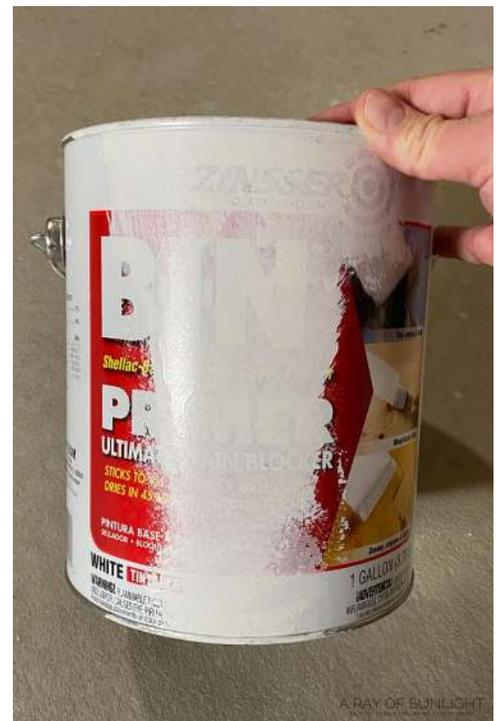
It has worked well with every paint I have tried it with, but I can't guarantee that it works well under all paints... cuz it's technically not a primer haha.

[BIN shellac based](#) (not synthetic!) primer is great at blocking bleed through too!

These primers both are amazing with adhesion too and work SO GOOD on laminate furniture!

I use the clear shellac when I plan to distress the paint, and I use the BIN shellac primer when I don't distress, or if I am painting white.

You can use a waterbased primer for laminate or stain blocking too, but honestly, they just aren't going to be as good.



[Watch this video on the best primers for laminate furniture and see how 4 different primers stood up to a scratch test.](#)

## 8. Paint

There are so many different types and brands of paint that it can easily be confusing!

I totally get it! Honestly, most types of paint will get the job done.

But, each type of paint can help you create the finish you're looking for easier.

Chalk style paints are best for distressed finishes. That doesn't mean that you can't get a super clean and modern finish with it.



But an enamel paint will give you a non distressed, super clean look easier, and you don't need to topcoat it.

Check out this post on the [best type of paint to use on furniture](#) to learn about the different types of paint we love, and which type of best for the finish you want.

### Some of my Favorite Paints

- [Country Chic Paint](#) (Chalk Paint – Topcoat Needed)
- [General Finishes Enduro Poly](#) (More like an Enamel – No Topcoat)
- [Behr Chalk Paint](#) (Topcoat Needed)
- [Fusion Mineral Paint](#) (Mineral All in One Paint – I like to Topcoat for sheen)
- [Sherwin Williams Emerald Urethane Trim Enamel](#) (No Topcoat)
- [Heirloom Traditions](#) (All in One – No Topcoat)
- [General Finishes Milk Paint](#) (Acrylic – I Topcoat)
- [Paint Couture Paint](#) (Acrylic – I Topcoat)
- [Melange ONE Paint](#) (All in One – No Topcoat)

## 9. Paint Brushes

As simple as it may seem, a paint brush can actually make or break your painted finish.

A really cheap paint brush like a chip brush or a paint brush from the dollar store will shed bristles in your paint.

But they also will make it harder for the paint to not have brush marks in it.

So, instead of grabbing a dollar paint brush, spending a few more dollars on a high quality paint brush will help you get the look you're after!

My favorite brand of paint brush is hands down, the Zibra paint brushes.

They come in all sorts of shapes and sizes (which is my personal favorite thing about them!)

But they are also really good quality and they don't break the bank!

(Yeah, I've also spent \$40 on a super high end paint brush before. It's amazing, but man it hurts to spend that much on a paint brush!)



[My absolute favorite Zibra paint brush is the Round paint brush.](#)

Since it's round, it gets into details, trim and spindles with ease.

Seriously. If you test out a regular flat paint brush out against a round paint brush, you'll be amazed by how the round brush makes it easier to paint details.

It also works great on flat surfaces too! So it's my number one paint brush for painting furniture.

My other favs are the [triangle, fan, and chiseled wedge brushes.](#)

I also love [Country Chic Paint's Oval Paint brush](#) and [Staalmeester Paint Brushes](#). But they are more expensive. (Totally worth the investment though to me!)

## 10. My Favorite Topcoat



Most furniture paints (chalk, mineral, acrylic, and milk) really benefit and basically require a topcoat.

(Note: Enamel or alkyd paint doesn't require a topcoat. Actually, you shouldn't topcoat them. But they have a much longer dry time.)

Sure, you could just not seal the paint, and you might be okay. But the paint won't end up being as durable or wipeable.

And then there are all of the topcoat options. You can choose from polyurethane, wax, or hemp oil.

My absolute favorite topcoat is water-based polyurethane.

It's the most durable option (besides oil based polyurethane, but oil based will amber, or turn your paint yellow.)

It lasts the longest, and I love that you can choose which sheen you want it. So you can choose a matte, satin, semi-gloss or gloss sheen for your furniture.

But not all polyurethane is created equal.

[My personal favorite is Varathane Water-based Polyurethane!](#) Hands down, it's the best one!

I've had problems with another brand yellowing my light paint.



But Varathane is super easy to access at Home Depot or Amazon.

I personally like to spray it on with my paint sprayer, but the next best way is to wipe it on with a [damp sponge](#).

Another great option is to spray it from a spray can. But, I really don't like Varathane's version of polyurethane in a spray can.

[Minwax has the best spray poly in their spray cans](#) (both oil based and water based poly).

# Must-Have Tools for Larger or Multiple Projects

If you're working on a very large project or many projects, here are a few extras that really make the job so much easier!

- Electric Screwdriver and/ or Power Drill
- Power Sander
- Paint Sprayer

## Electric Screwdriver and/or Power Drill



The very first “big” investment I made for projects was a power drill.

Power drills in general are such a good thing to have around for all DIY projects around the house.

A simple black and decker drill can work... but those aren't very heavy duty, and they won't last very long when you're working on many projects all the time.

So, I eventually upgraded to this [power drill](#).

Honestly, there are so many brands to choose from with power tools, but I don't think you can go wrong with Ridgid, Makita, Dewalt or Milwaukee.

Yeah, you'll spend a little more on them upfront, but they will last through more projects, and have more power while working on those projects too!

After a few years, I was given an [electric screwdriver](#), and man oh man, the game was changed!

I love love love how lightweight, and small it is to remove hardware.



It makes the job go SO much faster too!

Yeah, you can use the bulkier power drill to make removing and putting hardware back on. But a small electric screwdriver is SO NICE!

## Power Sander

My next bigger investment was a power sander.



A power sander can make your project go so much faster, especially if you're trying to sand something down to bare wood.

(like if you want to stain the wood, but you don't need to sand things down to bare wood to paint them.)

I started out with [this basic orbital sander](#).

It worked great for flat surfaces!

But they aren't very good for getting into corners, or sanding anything that isn't flat.

So, eventually, I upgraded to this [SurfPrep sander](#). It's an investment, but it's been totally worth it because of all of the projects I'm constantly doing.

The SurfPrep is smaller, it's a rectangle (so it fits in corners), and you can use foam pads with it so you can sand spindles and round things with it!



It also easily connects to your shop vac system to suck up most of the dust!!

If you aren't ready to take a leap into the SurfPrep world, a [mouse sander](#) can help you get into corners too.

[SurfPrep also has foam pads that you can use with your orbital sander or mouse sander!](#)

## Paint Sprayer

And then when we moved out of our 2 bedroom, upstairs apartment, we invested in a cheaper paint sprayer to make painting go SO MUCH FASTER!

It also doesn't leave you with brush marks! (And I'm a huge fan of a perfectly fine finish, without brush marks!)



I started with this [beginner paint sprayer](#).

Annnd I was terrified.

I had no clue how to use it. How to thin paint for it, how to clean it, how to even just use the dang thing.

But I went for it and I never looked back!

I used that paint sprayer for 3 years.

But I got frustrated after a while because I wanted a perfectly fine finish on my furniture without having to mess around with my paint sprayer every time.

So I did a ton of research and landed on this [professional paint sprayer](#).

It's powerful enough that I don't have to thin paint (even chalk paint!), but I still do because it creates a better finish when I thin it a bit.

It was a pretty penny, but I can't even recommend it enough if you want a really nice finish on your furniture (without the hassle!!).



Since then I have tried other entry level sprayers, and I can honestly say that I love my [Wagner FLEXiO 3000 paint sprayer](#) almost as much as I love the Fuji!



I can't even believe I am saying that. But it works very well, and is very portable. It's budget friendly, around \$180.

It can spray thick chalk paint, though I still thin it out to make it spray a better looking finish.

It's so easy to clean (5 minutes!) and the finish looks just as good as with the Fuji.

I hope these lists help you out!

I honestly started with the very basics and bought a few things here and there as they fit into my budget.

**Start with what you can, and the most important things, and then build up your supplies and tools as you can!**

*Best of luck!!*

*Natalie*