



## Jamie Buckingham

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### Perils of painting your home indoors

Painting the inside of your house can be fun. I want to share some insights I picked up while doing it recently.

First of all, prepare the surface. This means removing all pictures, mirrors, switch plates, door knobs and light fixtures. If you take the door knobs off, however, be sure and remove the little gadget that fastens the door when it slams shut. Otherwise, you'll be locked in the bathroom for three hours while your wife is at the beach.

Ceiling fixtures present no difficulty. Loosen them with a screwdriver, pull them down, wrap them with newspapers and tape them. While you are taping the paper around the fixture, the black wire may come loose and make a big fat spark. This leads to igniting and phoning and fleeing and firefighting and questioning for arson. However, if the newspaper has first been soaked in water this cuts down the possibility of fire, although it does increase the possibility of electrocution.

Every piece of furniture and every inch of carpet must be covered. If there's a tiny hole in the drop cloth, that's where the paint will spill. Plastic sheeting was recommended to me by the paint store man. It is inexpensive and works fine as long as you don't panic and thrash around when you get caught in it.

All cracks should be filled with some kind of patching compound. The paint store man suggested first widening the crack with a beer can opener. I don't drink so I used a cold chisel. I found that widening a crack can dislodge a chunk of wall which was holding up a bigger piece of wall which in turn was supporting several square feet of ceiling plaster. I saw where painting could lead to my house falling down, so I just settled for putting on lots of paint over the crack and hoping no one slammed the door.

Preparing windows is fun too. The paint store man told me how to replace the old putty. This is done by prying it loose with a putty knife. I didn't have one so I settled for a butter knife which I used until I heard a "click" followed by a jagged line appearing across the window pane. Next I removed the glass with a cloth-covered rock, and removed the window frame with a hammer. (Actually, it was my son's scout axe since I couldn't find the hammer.) New window panes cost \$5.00, \$2.50 for the glass and \$2.50 for the putty.

Actual painting can be done with brush or roller. Rollers are best for ceilings since they have a socket where you can attach an extension pole. The socket is designed to come loose when the roller is directly overhead.

The paint store man advised me to buy good brushes. This is one bit of advice I spurned. I've bought expensive brushes before and know that after I finish painting the brush either dries out and is thrown away, or is put in a jar of turpentine until the turpentine evaporates a year later and the brush dries out and is thrown away.

Cleaning up after painting is simple — and fun. Throw away the brushes and rollers immediately. Gather up all the drop clothes and throw them away too. Place the lid back on the paint can. The little gutter around the rim will be full of paint. When you hit the lid with the back of your son's scout axe, a funny thing will happen. It's the perfect end for a perfect day.