



Equipment

[Paint](#) | [Brushes](#) | [Special brushes for different effects](#) | [Water Pots](#) | [Palettes](#)
[Putty Rubbers](#) | [Masking Fluid](#)

Paint

Buy the best quality paints that you can afford. Artist quality paints vary in price but always buy artist quality.

Most people say that student quality paints are fine for beginners, but that Artist quality paints are easier to use. Why would you buy something that is more difficult to use when you are just learning and things are hard enough?

I bought the student quality watercolour and acrylic paints to start with but for me this has been a false economy. The paints do not have the same colour quality or consistency. I persevered with the student quality far longer than I should have as I do not like to waste money but now purchase smaller amounts of artist quality paints and believe my efforts have been better. The colours are more vibrant and I am getting the colours I expect from the tubes.

Brushes

Brushes have been a similar issue for me. I purchased several cheap brushes to get me started although these were of better quality than the ones provided in the box sets of paints I bought, which are frankly not worth getting wet.

I have learned the hard way to take care of my brushes. I failed to clean some of the acrylic ones fast or completely enough and they have now become unusable. For this reason I am glad I did not invest in the more expensive brushes. Now I am buying brushes which are of higher quality but I am not purchasing the top quality sable brushes as these are very expensive and as an amateur I do not feel this is justified. There are some very good synthetic brushes available. Again buy the best you can afford.

Special brushes for different effects

There are several brushes on the market which enable you to produce different effects. For wet on wet oils the [Bob Ross](#) brushes are excellent, these are not expensive brushes but include 2" brushes and a lot of the Bob Ross technique is done with this size brush, believe it or not. They make working with Bob Ross Oil paints more enjoyable.

There are good brushes for painting trees produced by several well known watercolour artists, and I have experience of the [Keith Fenwick](#) brushes which I have found to be excellent. You would need to check out the effects and see if this is what you want to produce before purchasing these as they are specific for trees and bushes

There are several others on the market, if you like a particular artist and the effect that his/her brushes make that is probably recommendation enough.

There is now an aqua brush which you can fill with water and use with watercolour pencils and/or watercolours. They can also be used with pen and ink drawings and tonal washes.



Equipment

Water pots

I do not purchase any water pots, although there are quite a few good ones which collapse when not in use so if you have a lack of space these may be useful. I use any empty plastic container. I like to save some small ones with lids for when I go outside to paint, which unfortunately is not as often as I would like.

Palettes

You do not need to purchase special palettes, there are so many different types it is very confusing. There are special stay wet palettes for Acrylics, [see our Acrylics Hints and Tips page](#) for more details, disposable palettes for Acrylic and Oils, and ones with lots of little wells around the side of deeper wells for watercolours. If you have ever watched Keith Fenwick on the Painting & Drawing Channel his palette is an old tray covered with cling film, so you can improvise and use whatever suits you, including small white plates or saucers. The tray and cling film method has the added benefit that you do not have to wash your palette after use; I must say this method appeals.

Putty Rubbers

The putty rubber is a super addition to the artists tool box. There are kneadable and kneaded variety.

Kneaded are soft but fairly unyielding and usually get smaller with use

Kneadable erasers are soft and pliable and resemble blutack. It can be shaped for precision work. The residue can be folded and absorbed back into the rubber keeping a clean surface available.

It is ideal for working with soft pastel in particular a portrait which uses coloured paper. You can also use these to help keep your hands clean. This type of rubber is used to press and lift out the marks not rub.

Watercolours can be ruined if you use ordinary rubbers.

Eventually they do get exhausted but in the meantime you should keep them in a sealable bag to stop them drying out.

Masking Fluid

What is it?

Masking fluid is a latex rubber solution for brushing or drawing onto your paper. You let it dry thoroughly which takes just a few minutes and then you can paint over the masked area, which being latex, resists the paint. The same effect can be obtained with a plain thin piece of wax candle, but wax is permanent and you can't subsequently paint over the reserved area.

What is it used for



If you love to paint
join us

Equipment

It is perfect for reserving intricate shapes in your painting, these could be anything from tree trunks to ship masts, light reflecting on walls snow or window frames. When you paint straight across the masked area you get good confident, decisive brush strokes. This is one of the most popular watercolor mediums. Apply masking fluid to all areas where you want to remain white.

How to apply

You can apply the fluid in various ways, for example a color-shaper (this has a rubber tip instead of bristles), an old brush or even a cocktail stick . If you intend using one of your brushes make sure it's an old one and wash it out immediately. Masking fluid dries in less than one minute on the bristles, many brushes have been ruined with masking fluid so keep your better brushes well away.

How to erase

After the paint has dried, remove the masking fluid gently, it is a good idea to use a tissue to gently remove the fluid, if you use your fingers you can leave grease on the surface.

If you must use a finger make sure it is clean and free of paint. You can also use a putty rubber or cotton bud.

The masking fluid rolls up into little rubber balls. The white area can be left as a highlight or tinted as desired.

TIP – Masking fluid is water soluble. If the liquid is not runny enough you can add water to make it more fluid.

TIP – It is bad news for your brushes. It dries within minutes and is impossible once dry to get out of your brushes. Rub the brush on a bar of soap before putting in the masking fluid and this will help wash out the masking fluid after use.

TIP – Use old or cheap brushes which you can keep just for this purpose