

Painting Tip 1: Getting Started

It can be a problem for many of us. "I want to paint but how can I start?"

If this applies to you, I can recommend the following exercise

as a warm-up to your painting sessions.

First of all, it's helpful to release any initial pressure on yourself to "paint."

Let go of any self-expectations, intentions or judgements.

For this exercise, as it's just a warm-up, you're not attempting to make art, or to copy anything or to paint anything that looks like anything.

It's not about making "abstract" art either.

Give yourself permission instead just experiment and enjoy making a painty mess.

BRUSH-CONTROL & WARM-UP EXERCISE

You'll need: As many brushes, bits of cloth and sponge, pencils, felt tips and crayons you have around.

Your paints: a few tubes of different colours in acrylics, or water-colour tubes or pans.

Several sheets of thick paper - an A3 mixed media pad is ideal.

Kitchen roll.

A pot of water from washing your brushes. (Needs regular changing.)

A palette or a few waxed paper plates.

Something to protect your clothes from splashes

Start by squeezing out a few colour blobs on your palette or plate

Take your largest brush

Practice changing your grip of your brush handle - keep it flexible.

You could try holding it near the end of the handle, or with your non-dominant hand.

Dip your brush into one of your blobs of colour - load it with paint.

Drag, push, roll or dot colour on to your first piece of paper randomly.

(it might be useful to stick your paper down at the edges to stop it sliding around.)

Vary your pressure on your brush.

Practice using different parts of your brush - from tip to heel.

Notice the marks you've just made and make other marks which are different to them or which echo them.

Change brushes frequently. Add pencil, crayon, felt tip marks on impulse.

Every now and then, stop and notice.

Are there any marks or series of marks which you like, or find interesting?

Keep going from five to twenty minutes, changing colours, using several pieces of paper, more or less water and go over previous marks with new layers.

Stop when you feel your painting hand and eye are warmed up enough to start the painting you'd really like to make today.

(Keep these papers as a reminder for future warm-ups)

