

# Prepare Your Space

- **Best Light:** comes from a North Facing Window. If you are right handed, put your left side facing the window. If you are left handed, put your right side facing the window. This will eliminate shadows from your hand over your support.

**TIP:** North light changes the least throughout the day. It is a cool light. Light from the East is OK after the sun quits shining through the window. South and West light is warm, and varies as the sun crosses over...this will affect the way color looks when painting. (just as color on your walls looks different in different rooms.)

If you have none of these natural light sources, you'll need to compensate with good lighting. I like Ott lights or similar daylight type light. It may be necessary to have a cool light (florescent) on one side and a warm light (incandescent) on the other. Test this, because you don't want any shadows! Can't paint in the dark!

- **Table:** Any flat surface that allows you to sit up straight. You'll want to be able to bend over your work. I sit in a desk chair...a dining room chair works fine until it starts to get hard on your behind! You'll need around 24 square inches for your palette, support, iPad or computer, and any containers for liquid. Many artists advocate standing while painting, but unless you are painting large you won't need as much arm movement.
- **Easel:** Great if you have a table top easel...they are inexpensive. However, painters have painted with their support propped up in a facing chair, or holding their board in

their lap! A stack of books placed on a non-skid mat works too.

**TIP:** In most cases, you will want your work parallel to your eyes, about eye level. Your measurements will be distorted if you are looking at your painting from an angle.

- **Extra things to gather:**

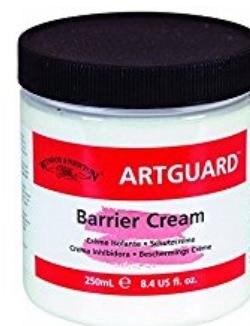
**General:**

**Safety:** Please, do not use plastic gloves. They inhibit your touch...get in the way, and are a factory for germ growth inside. While some of the ingredients in artists quality paint are toxic, it is a very small amount. I've been told that the microscopic paint particles are larger than our pores. If you have some sort of auto-immune issue, follow your doctor's orders. In the old days, paints were extremely toxic and most of those Old Masters still lived to ripe old ages.

There are products on the market that make cleaning of your hands easier: "*Gloves in a Bottle*" is readily available in stores or online. *Winsor Newton* makes an artists quality creme for the same purpose. There may be others, but these are the two I have used. I definitely use the barrier cream when working with pastels because they tend to dry my hands out.

**Paper Towels:** **Viva** is best for the softness and absorbency.

Cheap, embossed paper towels don't absorb enough to work for our needs. I use Scott Shop Towels from Sam's...similar, but thicker. I've been known to use the box as a foot rest with the towels pulled up for easy acces! I keep one in my left hand. Any liquid laundry detergent (I use Wisk), or Murphy Oil Soap.



Choose one with fewest additives and softeners. (for cleaning oil brushes). I keep some Wisk in a small bottle by my sink.

If you care about your table or TV tray, put something protective under your painting area. Small spray bottle, sold for \$1 in the travel accessories at WalMart.

**Watercolor:** Any container for water. I am currently using two small glass jars (yogurt containers) because my space is not perfect and the jars are so cute! I also have a larger pottery bowl. Empty mason jars work great and are heavy enough not to tip over. Kleenex is handy when watercoloring (or a roll of toilet paper), and if you practice environmental strategies, use a washable old cotton t-shirt or diaper.

**Oil:** Any kind of metal container to hold couple tablespoons of OMS (odorless mineral spirits). I teach a minimalist method that uses very little OMS. A brand called Turpenoid (odorless turpentine, or TURP) is interchangeable with the Gamsol in your kit. It is imperative that you use Artists Quality because what you get in the house paint aisle is unrefined. I use a metal container about 4" tall with a lid that snaps firmly with a gasket and brackets to lock the lid down. I've seen inexpensive ones at WalMart. **BUT**, I've seen Mr. Les use a clean tuna or dog food can!



Just a few days ago I learned that you can reuse the sediment left in the bottom of the can, add a bit of oil and make a fabulous neutral color paint...No waste!

**Pastel:** Dust is about the only issue with pastel...a couple of damp paper towels or old towel all work...If you are seriously working with them, good ventilation might be called for. Never blow on it or encourage the dust to get in the air. For our purposes,

we will use damp paper towels under our work to catch the dust that falls.

**Encaustic:** Any household item that won't be used for anything else will work to make texture marks. Lids from medicine bottles, pieces of yarn, small sticks from the yard, piece of plastic canvas, pointed object like a pencil, sturdy paper towel roll or even better, the cardboard roll from waxed paper/foil, tissue paper scraps. a woven produce bag, anything that will make a mark!

Safety one-sided razor blades,

a HOT hairdryer, Craft Heat Tool (around \$20 at Hobby Lobby or Michaels), OR a creme brûlée torch. I alternate between a Heat Tool and a small butane torch from Harbor Freight (around \$5) It is very similar to a creme brûlée torch. This tool is essential because each layer of encaustic has to be slightly melted to fuse to the under layer.

Optional: An old pancake griddle or single hot plate (I found one at thrift store for \$5), a metal cooking sheet and aluminum foil to catch drips. Wax melts around 200 degrees not much hotter than candle wax, so your electric kitchen range would work with a metal cookie sheet on top.

**Miscellaneous:** Painters Masking Tape, preferably the standard beige color; standard width **AND** 1/4" tape (for the color charts). I have been known to use an xacto knife and vertically slice my strips. 1/4" is much easier.



There may be other things added as we work through things!