

# ASK THE PURDY PAINT DOCTOR

## HELPFUL ADVICE FOR PROFESSIONAL PAINTERS

By Bruce Schneider, Training Coordinator and End-User Marketing Manager, Purdy

**Q: Is using a wire brush a no-no when cleaning a paintbrush? (I don't mean a comb; I mean a wire brush that cleans metal, etc.)**

PD: To clean dried paint from the exterior of a paintbrush, try brushing the paintbrush with a stiff nylon bristle brush, which is much less destructive than a wire brush.

To properly care for the brush, use a professional-quality brush comb to clean paint from the inside of the paintbrush every time you clean up. Doing so will markedly increase brush life. Never use a wire brush to clean your paintbrush. While the wire will remove dried paint, it will also remove the flags or split-ends at the end of the filaments. In short, regular use of a brush comb enhanced painter performance while the use of a wire brush actually degrades painter performance.

**Q: What happens if you use an oil-based bristle brush with latex paint? Will the paint permanently damage the bristles or is there a way to rejuvenate the natural bristle?**

PD: Natural bristle performs well with oil-based paints or varnishes, however, it is not recommended for use with water-based latex paint. Just like human hair, the natural bristle goes limp when saturated with water. The best way to rejuvenate a natural-bristle brush which has been used for a latex application is to first thoroughly clean and dry the bristles. The water from the latex paint and from washing will have leached the natural oils out of the brush. To bring the brush back to its original softness, use raw linseed oil (not boiled). Put a dime size drop in the palm of your hand and work it into the dry bristle. You may need to repeat a number of times to get the brush completely repaired. Then comb out the brush and put it back in its cardboard keeper until your next use. (With Purdy brushes, the product packaging is in fact a brushkeeper in which you can store the brush between jobs. As with combing out a brush after each use, proper paintbrush storage is another smart way to extend product life and performance.)

**Q: I am using a black china bristle brush to apply an oil-based paint to an interior door. I have noticed quite a few very short black bristles coming off the brush. I believe it is the flag ends breaking off. Is there something I have done wrong with brush maintenance to cause this and can the brush be saved?**

PD: I cannot speak for all manufacturers, however, all Purdy bristle brushes have oil in the bristle to help keep the brush soft and supple. This oil can evaporate and will leech out of the bristle after numerous cleanings in solvent. As with the previous question, the best solution is to replenish the oils with raw linseed oil (not boiled). The linseed oil will be absorbed into the bristle and should keep the bristle from fracturing.

**Q: What is the advantage of using a 100% nylon brush?**

PD: 100% Nylon brushes tend to be softer and suppler than their Nylon/Polyester counterparts. While Polyester helps stiffen a brush and lowers the reaction to heat and humidity, it also makes a brush a little more "scratchy". When applying interior enamels or water based clears, a 100% Nylon brush will provide optimal performance. On the other hand, the Nylon/Polyester mix will be a better choice in hot, humid outdoor environments.

**Q: What is the best brush for water-base polyurethanes?**

PD: The Purdy Syntox brush family is designed especially for use with water-based polyurethanes. This product line has all the benefits of natural Ox hair brushes, which with oil-based finishes were the tool of choice by experienced pros who desired a pristine piano-like finish. Syntox features solid, round, tapered (SRT) filaments which are 20% softer than Ox hair and can last up to 5x longer. As an added bonus, these brushes can be used with water-based and oil-based finishes.

**Q: I've lost the cardboard covers in which I store my paintbrushes. What do you recommend putting them in when not in use to keep the bristles straight?**

PD: If you misplace your brushkeeper, a very good substitute for the original cardboard packaging is actually glossy magazine paper and a rubber band. Fold the paper to fit the size and shape of your brush and use the rubber band to hold it together.

The Paint Doctor is the alter-ego of Bruce Schneider, who serves on the IUPAT trade-school curriculum committee. With 30+ years of paint industry experience, if Bruce doesn't know the answer to your question, he likely knows who does. Most questions are answered within 48 hours.

Got a paint project question? Visit [www.purdycorp.com](http://www.purdycorp.com) and click on the "Ask the Paint Doctor" link.

