



# propdaddy creations

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## **PAINTING A VINYL FLOOR**

### **PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

Your success in painting a vinyl floor starts even before you pick up a brush or roller. Good planning and preparation will save you time and money (and aggravation) over the long term.

Plan your work carefully. Ask yourself:

- Where will I paint the floor? Gym? Parking lot?
- How long will I need this space for?
- Do I have enough help to get the job done in the time I have available?

Don't start your project until you have all the answers! Schedule your work. Identify who will be available to work, and when.

Determine how much time you will need for initial preparation, for applying each coat of paint, and for detail work. Remember to include time for the paint to dry. The best time to paint a floor is in the summer, when you have the option of working indoors or out.

Also, there is less activity occupying a school gym in the summer than during the school year. So you should be able to leave your floor open undisturbed for several consecutive days.

Prior to painting any floor, new or old, you need to wash the floor with a mild soap solution and rinse it thoroughly. For new floors, this removes the oil film that is put on the floor by the manufacturer to make it easy to open the first time. And of course for old floors, you need to wash off the old dirt.

Next, use medium sandpaper to lightly sand the surface to remove old paint and dull any

shiny surfaces, even on new floors. Wash the floor again.

Preparation is the most critical step in the entire paint process. If the floor is not prepared properly, paint will not stick to the floor and you will probably experience chipping and flaking.

### **PAINTING**

There are two basic methods to apply color, texture and pattern to a vinyl floor - vinyl ink and paint. Additionally, there are a variety of paints and painting techniques, each with their own distinct advantages and disadvantages. In this article we will look at the more popular and reliable techniques.

#### *Vinyl Ink*

The vinyl ink technique is by far the best method for applying color to a vinyl floor. The ink will actually penetrate the vinyl and become part of it. The ink does not crack, chip or peel. It can be purchased in a good but limited variety of colors.

There are a number of good suppliers of vinyl ink. Here are just a few:

-- NazDar, Chicago - 1-800-736-7637

-- Akzo - Georgia - 1-800-431-7001

-- Ronan - Aquacote bulletin enamel - 1-718-292-1100

Vinyl ink does have some drawbacks. The ink is quite expensive (about \$150.00 per gallon). Product guides indicate that 1 gallon will cover as much as 3500 sq feet (or essentially the entire vinyl floor), so you may not have to buy more than 1 gallon. However, you can't just

run to the home improvement store and buy another gallon, so you may want to consider having extra on hand. Since the ink is designed to penetrate the vinyl, this method is primarily for new or unpainted floors. Vinyl ink must be applied in a well ventilated area, so you may have difficulty securing a place indoors to work. The vinyl inks generally require 24 hours to dry, however manufacturers recommend 48 hours.

### *Spray Paint*

The next best thing to vinyl ink is vinyl paint, the kind you buy at the automotive parts store for repairing vinyl seats or vinyl tops. Generally, this paint comes in a spray can and is great for spot painting or for creating a variegated pattern. However, it is difficult to obtain a flat color look using spray cans. Coverage is also a factor - a single can costing about \$5 will cover (2 coats) approximately a 10 foot square, which calculates to about 50 cans to paint an entire floor. If you're on a tight budget, enamel spray paints are a good substitute at about \$3 a can. Like vinyl ink, spray paint must be used in a well ventilated area. Overspray is always a concern, especially to the custodian and the school principle, so make sure everything in the room is properly covered. If you're working outdoors, the slightest breeze will make it difficult to direct the spray precisely.

### *Latex Paint*

Latex paint is the most popular method of applying color to a vinyl floor. Its popularity is largely due to color selection, affordability and availability. Interior latex is available or can be mixed to virtually any color. Quality interior latex can be purchased for as little as \$12 per gallon at most home improvement or national franchise department stores. That being said, I will tell you that in my opinion the best latex paint on the market for this application is NOT inexpensive and is NOT readily available - Muralo Ultra Waterborne

Satin Acrylic Latex Enamel. At about \$30 per gallon, Muralo is not for the budget conscious ensemble. Muralo is a high tech latex specially designed not to chip, flake or peel from almost any surface. Muralo is designed to remain flexible even after it is dry, which is important when you're constantly folding the floor. Unfortunately, this paint is not widely distributed, so you'll have to check with the company ([www.muralo.com](http://www.muralo.com)) to determine a distributor near you.

If you can't get Muralo paint, I recommend Behr paints, which are available at Home Depot. Easier on the budget at around \$20 a gallon, Behr paints are extremely durable, provide great coverage, and dry relatively fast.

If you can't get either Muralo or Behr paints, my best advice is to obtain a copy of the paint specifications from their websites and talk to a paint store consultant for a good substitute.

Latex paints can be applied by brush, roller or paint sprayer. Most interior latex paints can be recoated within 4 hours, (Muralo dries in 2 hours) so if you plan your work properly, you should be able to recoat the same day. The key to using paint is to apply several THIN coats rather than one thick coat. If the paint is applied too thick, even the best paints it will chip and peel. Thin the paint with 1 part water to 2 parts paint. Some paints cannot or should not be thinned so check the label to be sure.

### *Cement Paint*

Though I have never used it personally, several colorguard directors have told me that they use cement paint for their floors. Color availability is not as good as latex, but application and drying time is about the same

### *A Word About Color*

Tinted paint is comprised of "pigment" which provides the color, and "base" which provides the ability to bind to a surface. In my experience, darker colors do not stick to vinyl

floors as well as the lighter colors. The darker the color, the more pigment that is needed to create the desired effect. And the more pigment you use, the less base there is in the mix, so there is less binder to stick to the floor. Consider this when you choose your paints and colors.

*Disclaimer: Results may vary depending on numerous variables i.e., quality of preparation, quality and porosity of the vinyl floor, quality of the paint, etc. The techniques stated herein are offered for advice only with no guarantee, implied or otherwise, of success or quality.*

## **LET IT DRY!**

Whether you use vinyl ink or paint, you must allow your floor to dry completely prior to using or folding. I recommend a minimum of 48 hours to allow the floor to dry thoroughly. I try to paint on a Friday and leave the floor cover out the entire weekend to dry prior to folding.

## **MAINTENANCE**

Once the floor is thoroughly dry and you're ready to fold it up, lightly powder the floor with baby powder, then sweep the entire floor with a soft broom (not a bristle broom). This procedure helps to keep the paint from sticking to itself when it's folded up. You should re-powder the floor from time to time to reduce problems with sticking paint. A word of caution - once the floor has been powdered, it may be slippery, so be very careful.

If you use paint, you may still have to touch up the floor at times throughout the season. If you use vinyl ink, you shouldn't have to touch up.

## **QUESTIONS**

If you have questions, or need further assistance, feel free to contact us at:  
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