



Painting Popcorn

By Michelle Marie Kinney

Today, many homebuilders consider acoustic textured ceilings passé. Some say it looks like cottage cheese. However, acoustical texture (also known as “popcorn”) is common in many homes, apartments and condos.

Over the years, the walls of a room are repeatedly painted. Yet, the ceiling is often ignored. As time goes by, the ceiling starts to appear dingy and dirty. How does one remove the dingy look? The answer is simple yet messy. Paint it!

For some reason, the thought of painting a popcorn ceiling is considered a superhuman event. It isn't. However, a word of caution: As long as the popcorn texture was correctly applied to the drywall, it can be painted without danger. If the texture was applied to another surface such as acoustic tile, plywood, wood beams, or other wood surfaces, the texture is more likely to peel off as the paint is applied.

Assuming the texture was originally applied correctly to drywall, you can go ahead and paint. Using white ceiling paint will make the ceiling appear fresh, new and clean.

Understand that you will need to apply at least two coats of paint, and possibly even three. The unpainted texture will absorb paint like a sponge, requiring you to reload your paint roller quite often.

The first coat of paint will need to be generous, but be careful to not over-saturate the popcorn. If the popcorn becomes too wet, it will come off the ceiling. You will quickly get a feel for the right amount of paint to use. As paint is applied you will notice some popcorn comes off onto your roller. It can't be avoided. Don't expect the first coat of paint to look good either. Keep in mind that as the first coat dries, the ceiling will look patchy and uneven.

When the first coat of paint has completely dried, apply the second coat. With the second coat of paint you may be more aggressive with the volume of paint applied because the first coat of paint will have helped seal the texture. You should notice less popcorn coming off the ceiling on this second coat. Let the second coat dry completely. Any more coats of paint after this are at your discretion.

Hints:

- * You can buy paint rollers designed for textured surfaces. The fibers are longer and the roller will hold more paint than a standard roller. Since the textured roller holds more paint, it will also be heavier.
- * Consider using a paint stick. A paint stick is like a broomstick that screws into the handle of a paint roller. Using a paint stick will help you avoid using a ladder.
- * Use drop cloths and prepare your room well. This is a messy project!

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