



# INSTRUCTIONS FOR BASIC WALL STENCILING – PAGE 1

**These instructions will take you step-by-step through your stenciling project. Please read them all before you start your project!**

## HERE'S WHAT YOU'LL NEED

1. Stencil(s)
2. Sample board (poster board, cardboard etc)
3. Latex or acrylic paints, including some basecoat paint
4. Dense foam roller with rounded ends, stencil brushes
5. Paint tray or a large styrofoam plate
6. Low tack painter's tape, Spray adhesive (optional)
7. Cutting Edge Stencil level (optional)
8. Paper towels or rag, cleaning tools & liquid soap
9. Step ladder (optional)



## GETTING STARTED



Very important: Work out your technique and color combinations on a sample board first. It is always a good idea to **make a sample**. Use a wall in the garage, a piece of cardboard, or even an old pizza box as your sample surface. Make sure you like your color combinations and are comfortable with your stenciling technique before hitting the real wall!

Make sure your walls are clean, dust free and in good condition. Any cracks or chips should be repaired, filled, primed and painted prior to stenciling. All base coats should be fully dried for at least 24 hours prior to stenciling. You can stencil over latex house paint, faux finishes, plaster textures, wood, furniture, paper, fabric and even some wallpaper.

Position your stencil on the wall where you like it, and tape it to the wall with few pieces of low tack blue painters tape. We love using Scotch Blue 2" painters tape.

Do not use regular white masking tape because it's way too sticky for most painted surfaces and will likely pull off the base paint when you remove your stencil. You can also use a spray adhesive to achieve even cleaner edges.

If your stencil needs to be perfectly vertical or horizontal, use our innovative clion Stecil Level (pat. pend.) to help with positioning. This step is not necessary for organic looking designs like branches, birds etc. Simply place them where you like them

Load your foam roller by rolling it over the paint a few times until it absorbs most or all of it. Use only dense foam rollers with rounded edges. These are available on our website.





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Now pour some acrylic or latex paint on a foam plate or a paint tray. You don't need much, about 2-3 tablespoons of paint is enough to start with. Get your dense foam roller (or stencil brush) ready. Now blot off the excess paint on a folded paper towel by rolling it back and forth a couple times. There should be no visible paint on a roller surface, it should look almost dry. Remember, it's better to have less paint on your roller, than too much paint.

**About paint:** Any waterbased paint should work. Craft acrylics are great, regular latex paint will work but the best in our opinion is the new line of Benjamin Moore paint called Aura. This paint is opaque and covers really well with 1 coat. It has just the right consistency and is also eco-friendly. OK, now you're ready to stencil!

### STENCILING WITH A ROLLER

Roll the stencil with your roller using light to medium pressure. Excessive pressure may cause paint bleeding under the stencil. Be careful not to roll over the outside edges of the stencil! We design most of our stencils with at least a 1" frame to give you some rolling room. Strategically placing blue masking tape on the narrowest edges can help prevent "roll-overs".



You can easily check how you're doing by carefully un-taping and lifting one corner of the stencil and **taking a peek**. Do you like what you see? Is it enough pressure or can it use a little more paint? If it's too pale, just put the stencil back and roll it a couple more times back and forth, slightly adding more pressure. When stenciling lighter colors over darker colors, you may need 2 coats to achieve good coverage. Let the 1st coat dry for a couple of minutes and then roll the stencil again.

always a good idea to remove it somewhat slowly so the blue tape doesn't accidentally pull off any background paint. Continue stenciling by repositioning your design until all walls/repeats are done. No need to clean the stencil in between repeats. Each stencil is good for many repeats before it will need to be cleaned.

Now remove the stencil and enjoy your artwork! A note for the impatient: Don't just yank the taped stencil off the wall! It's always a good idea to remove it somewhat slowly so the blue tape doesn't accidentally pull off any background paint. Continue stenciling by repositioning your design until all walls/repeats are done. No need to clean the stencil in between repeats. Each stencil is good for many repeats before it will need to be cleaned. It's time to clean the stencil when your paint build-up starts to compromise the design.



If you would like to do your next repeat in a different color, make sure that the previous color has **completely dried** on the stencil so it will not transfer to your next print. It's a good idea to clean the stencil if you want to flip it over to create a mirror image.

We recommend a **separate foam roller for each color**. You can certainly use the same roller by cleaning it well under running water and drying it as much as possible before the next use.

When you need to **take a break** from stenciling in the middle of the project, just cover your paint tray with a plastic wrap, and tightly wrap a piece of plastic or foil around the roller to prevent the paint from drying up.

When you're ready to **re-decorate**, lightly sand your walls and simply roll 2 coats of basecoat paint over your stenciling and it's gone.

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### STENCILING WITH STENCIL BRUSHES

You can also use **stencil brushes** to stencil your design although it is much faster with a roller. For smaller, more intricate designs, multi-colored and shaded designs, it's better to use a stencil brush. You'll need to dedicate a **separate brush for each color**. Load your brush with paint by simply squeezing a dollop of acrylic paint onto a foam plate or a into a paint tray, then dipping just the tip of your brush into the paint. Distribute the paint on the brush tip by doing a few circles on a foam plate. Now, lightly rub off some paint onto a folded paper towel and you're ready to stencil. Your brush should have very little paint on it. Remember, less paint is better for stenciling!

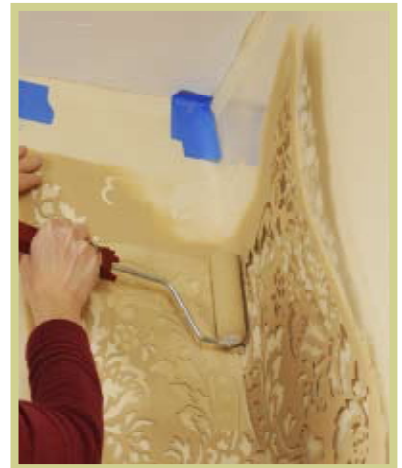


It's best to use a **dabbing motion** or a light **circular motion** with your brush. Just dab or swirl in a light sweeping circular motion, covering all of the design. You can add various colors where needed by dabbing with a different color next to a first one. Create dimension with shading by adding a darker color like Raw Umber acrylic to the edges of the openings. Just make sure to avoid a straight sweeping motion towards the edges of the openings, since that can force the paint under the stencil and mess up your work.



### TIPS, TRICKS AND OTHER NOTES

**Corners:** First, don't be intimidated. Corners are no big deal if you follow our instructions. For best results, tape and stencil one wall at a time. Secure half of the stencil in place leaving the other half unattached. Roll it straight into the corner ( or use your stencil brush), then carefully un-tape the finished half while holding the stencil in place with your hands. Now secure other half with tape and roll that half into the corner. Now you can remove the stencil. Don't worry about filling every little bit of design in the corner crease. The eye fills these gaps and makes it look completed even if there are some unstenciled areas left. A few more corner tips: Taping the stencil to both walls at once usually does not produce a good result. Using spray adhesive may help with holding a large stencil in place when working on corners.



**Mistakes:** Usually it's enough to just wipe off a fresh mistake with a wet cloth, baby wipe or moist q-tip. It is always a good idea to have some basecoat paint at hand in case you need to correct bigger mistakes. In this case, just re-roll or re-sponge your basecoat over a dry mistake. It may take 2 coats to cover. Let it dry completely and now you're ready to re-stencil the area.



A word or two about **bridges**. Bridges are the small sections of the stencil pattern that hold the stencil together. Some people prefer to paint over the gaps left by the bridges when the stenciling is complete. Doing this can sometimes improve the look, but is not always necessary. In general, we try to design our stencils in such a way that the bridges blend with the flow of the organic designs and are not too obvious, or in a way that they contribute to the pattern. If they still bother you and you want to make them go away, simply paint over them by connecting them with a small artist brush. This hand painted touches can be a lot of fun.



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**About spray adhesives:** Yes, you can use them with our stencils, but we personally don't like them. **The pros:** The stencil sticks to the wall very securely without any tape, and the seepage will be minimal, even with a sweeping brush motion or some pressure on your roller. That means cleaner crisper edges which is great. Adhesive can come in very handy with large stencils or ceiling stencils. **The cons:** Sometimes particles of adhesive transfer to the wall and leave a sticky residue. This can happen if you've sprayed too much adhesive and didn't let it dry a little bit before putting the stencil on the wall. The fumes are also unhealthy for you and your family. Lastly, the stencil will end up sticky, making clean-up and storage a bit challenging. In our 20+ years of stenciling we find that blue tape is all you need to secure your stencil. Our stencils are made of a thick, sturdy plastic that will cling to the wall and make stenciling easy and fun.

If you decide to go with adhesive, lightly mist (not drench!) the stencil with a well-shaken can of spray adhesive (preferably outside and far away from other objects). Let it dry for a minute, and then place the stencil on a ceiling or wall. It's good for 1-3 placements, then it will need to be re-misted. We prefer Elmer's spray adhesive. It has just the right tack. Clean-up tip: Spray the stencil with Simple Green to help to remove adhesive residue.

### CLEANING, STORAGE, REPAIRS

**Cleaning and Storage:** The stencil will eventually accumulate a thick layer of paint after many repeats, so it will have to be cleaned. You can let it dry completely and simply peel off the paint skin, or you can give it a brief soaking in a tray or tub of water and then wash off the paint. Best cleaning method we have found is to place the stencil on a flat surface like a large baking tray, and scrub it with a dish cleaning brush under running water. The paint comes right off and the stencil doesn't get entangled or damaged this way. Please don't let pieces of paint go down the drain. It's bad for your plumbing and for [the environment!](#) Always insert a mesh strainer into the drain hole and then shake out the paint pieces into a trash can.

After the stencil is clean, place it on paper towels to dry, and pat it with a roll of paper towels to speed up the drying process. For a large project it may be smart to purchase 2 or even 3 stencils to save time on cleaning. Store your stencils flat, in large drawers if you have them, or under the bed interlaced with paper. Alternatively, you can hang them clipped to a clothes hanger, but don't store them rolled, unless it's the only option.



**Cleaning brushes:** Brushes are best cleaned under running water using this smart cleaning tool (see pic.) which helps to get out all the paint particles. Add a drop of Murphy's Oil soap for better cleaning and for conditioning of your brush bristles. Liquid soap also works.

**Repairs:** If you accidentally break one of the "bridges" in the design while stenciling or cleaning, you can easily fix it by attaching small pieces of clear packing tape on both sides of the break.

