



INSTRUCTIONS FOR DIMENSIONAL STENCILING – PAGE 1

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

*Dimensional Stenciling is a type of stenciling when one uses plaster or textured material instead of paint.
This will make your stenciled image raised or 3-dimensional.*

HERE'S WHAT YOU'LL NEED

1. Stencil(s)
2. Sample board (poster board, cardboard etc)
3. Plaster of your choice
4. Trowel, metal or plastic spackling knives
5. Glaze, tints or universal colorants
6. Whizz roller for glaze application, spray bottle
7. Low tack painter's tape, Spray adhesive (optional)
8. Fine grit sandpaper
9. Paper towels or rags
10. 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 are 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. Raised stencils look best over textured plaster backgrounds, but you can also use them over flat paint or faux finishes.

For the Prehistoric Fossils we first apply a coat of colored plaster to the walls. You can use either texture paint, joint compound or one of the many fine decorative plasters available on the market. Our favorite is Versiplast by DuRock. We prefer to custom tint our plasters with universal colorants but you can also get your plaster pre-tinted to the color of your choice. Apply 2 coats of plaster with a trowel or spackling knife to achieve your desired texture. Lightly misting the surface with a spray bottle is very helpful for achieving a nice texture. Let the plaster dry between coats and fully dry before the next step.



Decide on the placement of your stencils and position them with long pieces of low tack painter's tape. We love using Scotch Blue 2" painters tape. You can use stencil spray adhesive to secure your stencils as well. This helps to achieve even cleaner edges. 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. For stenciling you can use either the same plaster material that was used for your background, or a different one, like Lusterstone, Venetian plaster or Crackle paste. For a more dramatic look, use a lighter or darker colored plaster than your background. Here we used dark beige Venetian plaster (Behr, Home Depot) for our fossils. Your plaster should be about cream cheese consistency. Do not use plasters that are too runny.



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PLASTER STENCILING TECHNIQUE

Stir the plaster well and put some of it on your spackling knife. Trowel right over the secured stencil keeping the angle of your knife almost parallel to the surface. Try to avoid going back and forth too many times since it may disturb the stencil and create undesired seepage underneath. You can just barely skim the stencil for the slightly raised look, or apply the plaster thicker, covering all of the design for a highly dimensional raised look.



When your design is fully covered with plaster, lift the stencil straight up while the plaster is still wet. If you see any imperfections in your design, you can carefully correct them by hand by using a small spatula or a toothpick. Let your stenciled design dry fully. Make sure to clean the stencil before the plaster has dried on it. (See cleaning tips)

Now that your raised designs have dried, you can gently polish them with a stainless steel knife or sand them with a piece of sand paper. Use fine sandpaper (220 grit) to avoid deep scratches.



For the realistic fossil look, try adding small patches of plaster here and there as if the fossils are partially “buried” in layers of sediment.

You can also experiment with adding fish scales to your dimensional fish by troweling plaster through a piece of plastic mesh like the kind that onions are sold in. Just lay the mesh where you want to see some scales, and trowel the plaster through it like you would do with a stencil. Remove the mesh to reveal realistic fish scales.



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FINISHING TOUCHES

Next, we want to glaze the surface with a brown glaze to give it age and drama. There are many glazes available on the market to choose from. Our favorite is Auqa Glaze by Faux Effects. It stays workable for long time before drying, thus allowing you the longest time to achieve the desired mottled glazed look.

Follow the manufacturer's instructions for tinting or adding color to the glaze. Here we mixed a little bit of raw umber universal colorant into the Aqua glaze.

Some plasters like joint compound or texture paint are too porous to be successfully glazed without a sealant. In this case, roll a coat of waterbased clearcoat before glazing and allow it to dry fully. Test the absorbency of your plaster by applying a little glaze in the least noticeable corner. If the glaze dries too quickly you may need to seal the plaster with a clear coat. Specialty plasters like Versiplast do not require sealing because they are designed for easy glazing.



For larger areas you may want to wipe the surface with a damp sponge or rag prior to glazing to “give the plaster a drink”. You can also use a spray bottle to lightly mist the plaster surface.

Apply the glaze to your plastered wall with a whizz roller and immediately mottle the glaze with a rag or paper towels. It is very easy to wipe off excess glaze with a full roll of paper towels. Rotate the roll between each wipe, and gradually remove saturated towels as you mottle the glaze on your wall. When glazing a large surface, work in smaller 3'x3' sections and always keep a “wet edge” (strip of wet glaze on the edges) to avoid dry overlapping lines.



After this glazing process is done and dry, you can apply a darker glaze around the stenciled fossils to further accentuate them. When the glaze is fully dry, you may want to further distress the surface by lightly sanding everything with fine sandpaper to reveal more texture and highlights.

TIPS, TRICKS AND OTHER NOTES

Mistakes: If you are unhappy with your stenciling result, simply scrape it off while it's still wet and wipe the surface with a damp cloth. Now you can try again after cleaning the stencil.

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 well-shaken 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.

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CLEANING, STORAGE, REPAIRS

Cleaning and Storage: Immediately after each imprint, lay the dirty stencil on a paper towel or newspaper and gently scrape off the excess material being careful not to break the bridges. Then dunk the stencil into the tray with soapy water for a quick soaking. Never allow the plaster to dry on the stencil!



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.

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.

