

10 WAYS TO BOOST YOUR FURNITURE DESIGNS

Stencils



Stenciling is when paint - or stain - is used to add a pre-made design to furniture. It can be used all over or as an accent on drawers, side panels, or drawer sides. Using a stencil can add a unique feel to your design. The featured example has a vine stencil trailing up from the bottom corner and growing to the top.

Stencils are usually made in a thicker plastic sheet that can be used over and over again by cleaning after each use. You can either use a smaller brush or sponge applicator or have fun with finger painting!

BONUS!

Using a thicker medium than paint, you can create **RAISED STENCILS**. These add dimension with the decorative detail. You can use wood filler, putty, or other mediums to swipe over the stencil. Once it dries, it becomes a raised design. Use on drawer fronts, side panels, or all over.



Raised stencil

Decoupage



Decoupage is gluing decorative paper onto the furniture. This can be a great detail to drawer fronts or door insides for a pretty surprise. Since the paper is not usually very large, it's typically used on smaller areas.

You can use scrapbook paper, decoupage tissue paper, napkins, and even wrapping paper. I've also used fabric to decoupage special areas (such as the featured example). The paper or fabric is often glued using Mod Podge, spray glue, or other furniture glue. Once dry, it is often layered with Mod Podge or a topcoat for extra durability.

Transfers

Transfers are designs pre-printed on thin transparent sheets. These are a great way to add intricate designs to your furniture.

Using pressure, you rub them on with a hard, flat tool provided and peel away the non-stick backing sheet. Make sure the transfer is completely stuck to the furniture before pulling the backing sheet away, as the transfer is delicate and can break.



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Moldings

Rubber molds are used to create 3-dimensional details to add to furniture. When you see raised items or detailed carvings on vintage furniture, these are often made of wood themselves, or plastic if it's a less vintage piece.

There are several mediums being used with molds today. Some are hot glue, air-drying paper clays, or epoxy.

Moldings can even be wrapped around table legs and curves when they are removed from the mold before fully drying and still flexible. They're often attached to the furniture using wood glue.



Blending

Blending is where one paint color subtly blends into another, giving the paint finish a lot more depth and interest. It can sometimes create a watercolor or layered effect. It can be done with multiple colors but is often two colors that mesh together to form a third color. When it's done subtly and smoothly, it creates a shadowed effect.

Blending is achieved using water to join the two colors together as you brush them into each other. Blending is also how an ombre effect is achieved.



Texture

Texture or faux texture can be created using brush strokes in various directions or even other tools such as paper towel, tin foil, plastic or metal combs, or sponges.

Various techniques can create what looks like linen, denim, or other woven-looking textures using paint. Often it requires various shades of paint that will showcase the lines or imprints left by the brush strokes or tools. For example, a light color as the base and a darker shade painted on using the strokes in a different direction or using the tool while the 2nd color coat is still wet.



Wallpaper

Embossed - or raised - wallpaper is so much fun to use on furniture. It creates 3-dimensional architecture to your piece. The best thing is you can paint over it.

Sometimes painting it in the same color is just enough added touch while in other designs you may only lightly brush paint over the raised areas for a different look.

The wallpaper is first glued onto the furniture with wood glue just like you might do with other decoupage paper.



Wash

Paint wash or stain wash finishes are where the paint or stain is mixed with an amount of water to thin it. This means less color is going onto your furniture which allows some of the original wood grain to show through.

A stain wash is great for the tops of pieces when you want to celebrate the wood but tone down the original shade if it's too orange or red. A paint wash is great, too, for a more shabby or rustic finish.

Another way to achieve this rustic finish is to wipe away some of the paint before it dries to reveal the wood beneath.



Layered

A layered effect is often done with multiple colors or shades of color. This adds depth and dimension to the design. It can also be done by not covering the piece in totality with the new color or not covering all the furniture to allow some original wood to peek through.

Either way, this is a very appealing, imperfect finish that's perfect for the modern farmhouse decor that's so loved today.



Chippy

A chippy finish is done by distressing. This simply means a portion - however large you'd like - is removed from the painted finish. Often you'll see this done along edges and corners to mimic years of age and use. Other times, this will be done over larger portions of the furniture for an extra rustic finish.

The chippy effect can be done by sanding after painting, using vaseline on strategic areas before painting (where the paint will not adhere), or wet distressing by removing some of the paint before it dries.

Milk paint is also known for its natural tendency to create a chippy look.

I hope this cheat sheet gave you the BOOST you need to understand other design techniques you can use in your furniture makeovers.

happy painting!

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