

module one:

MATERIAL FUNDAMENTALS

1.0 MATERIALS LIST

PAINT COLORS:

- Titanium White
- Cadmium Red Light (*or Cadmium Red Light Hue*)
- Alizarin Crimson
- Cadmium Yellow (*medium or light - avoid an orange-leaning yellow*)
- Yellow Ochre
- Burnt Sienna
- Raw Umber (*Sepia Extra in some brands*)
- Pthalo Green
- Cerulean Blue
- Ultramarine Blue
- Mars-Ivory Black

OPTIONAL ADDITIONAL COLORS::

- Flesh Tint
- Naples Yellow
- Sap Green

RECOMENDED BRANDS:

- Windsor & Newton
- Gamblin
- Grumbacher
- Utrecht*
- Blick*
- Trekell (brushes)

*Good budget quality

BRUSHES

Bristle Brushes

A set of springy bristle brushes (flats or long filberts) in varying sizes.

MEDIUMS AND THINNERS

- Odorless Turpenoid (Thinner/"leaner" - for thinning paint and cleaning brushes)
- Gamsol (Thinner - safer than Turpenoid, but slightly less effective)
- Refined Linseed Oil (slow-drying medium for adding "fat" to paint)

ADDITIONAL SUPPLIES

- Gesso
- Brush Soap
- Razor scraper
- Palette Knife
- Silicoil Jar
- Palette (glass, wood, or plastic)

PLACES TO SHOP

www.dickblick.com - Good general shopping. They have good prices and carry everything.

www.trekell.com - Great brushes, panels in lots of shapes, also carry paints and other supplies.

1.2 MATERIALS GUIDE

One of the most complicated parts of getting started with oil paints is getting a handle on the various materials and their uses.

In this section, I'm going to explain further how each material or medium is used in painting.

Use this as your reference guide so you can flip back to answer any questions you encounter as you work!

PAINTS

This one is pretty straightforward. I want to include some notes on various properties of paints though for your reference.

Different paint colors, as well as different brands, have different qualities to them, from texture, to pigmentation, to drying time.

Generally, higher end (more expensive) brands of paint are thicker and more pigmented. Cheaper brands use less expensive pigments and more oils/binders to thin the paints.

Thus, cheaper paints may be softer, wetter, and more malleable (especially true for some colors, like Alizarin Crimson, an already soft and transparent color).

Knowing your paint will help you navigate how to use it best, and whether or not to use mediums as you paint, as well as what mediums to use.

Avoid using much oil or medium, for instance, with paints that already have good flow. There's no need for it, and it may make your paint too wet or thin to be easily usable.

On the other hand, if your paint is very stiff (colors like Raw Umber are often very stiff), you can add a little oil or other medium to help it flow better.

DRYING TIMES

Another factor with oil paints is the varying dry times of different colors and brands. This isn't something you need to think about extensively, but is useful to know if you're ever in a rush and need something to dry quickly!

NOTE: *There are many factors outside of the paints themselves that affect drying times. Things like temperature, humidity, and altitude all affect how long oil paints can take to dry. In a warm, dry climate, they will dry quite quickly. In a cool, wet climate, they'll take longer to dry.*

Dry times vary not only by color but also by brand. However, below is a list borrowed from information found on several manufacturer's websites about the relative drying time of different colors:

FASTEST DRY TIME:

- Burnt Umber
- Raw Umber
- Burnt Sienna
- Raw Sienna
- Prussian Blue
- Cobalt Blue
- Permanent Mauve
- Flake White or Quick Drying White (yellower)

MEDIUM DRY TIME:

- Pthalo Blue/Green
- Ultramarine Blue
- Permanent Alizarin Crimson
- Yellow Ochre
- Mars/Ivory/Lamp Black
- Sap Green

SLOWEST DRY TIME:

- Cadmium Hues
- Quinacridone Red
- Alizarin Crimson Hue
- Titanium White

BRUSHES

I generally recommend flat natural bristle brushes for general painting, as they're easy to use and can perform a wide range of painting tasks.

However, there are a range of brush shapes that all have their own designed uses, and their own pros and cons. Before I get into recommendations, I'd like to go over that information here.



BRIGHT

Bright brushes are typically stiff, short, square shaped brushes that are flat and broad. The short, evenly shaped bristles are great for working with thick applications of paint.

The ability to use both the wide flat of the brush or the narrow side of the brush to achieve different marks makes it a versatile shape.

They are also great for painting on top of other layers of paint and working wet-into-wet.



FLAT

Flats are slightly different from Brights, with longer bristles and a slightly more chiseled shape at the tip. Because of the slightly longer bristles, they are more flexible and maneuverable over large surface areas.

Just like Brights, they have a broad side and a narrow side, which allows you to make a wide variety of marks.

The flexibility of the bristles gives the ability to create very fluid lines as well, and to make more sensitive marks than a stiffer brush might allow.



FILBERT

Filbert brushes have medium length bristles with an oval shape to the tip. This creates a brush that can get into slightly tighter areas while retaining some of the features of a Bright or Flat brush.

Filberts are great for blending and detail work, but larger filberts can also be used for laying down larger areas using the broad side of the brush.



LONG FILBERT

Long filberts are a great option when you want a little more flexibility and sensitivity, but still want the precision of a filbert.

Personally, I prefer longer, more flexible brushes over short, stiff ones, but the choice is up to you and how you find you prefer to paint.



ROUND

Round brushes are just what they sound like. Rather than having a flat side and a broad side like the previous brush types, round brushes are equally round on all sides, and taper to a point.

These versatile brushes can be used for a multitude of purposes. Softer round brushes are great for blending. Small rounds are wonderful for long, fluid lines and small details.



FAN

A fan brush is easily identifiable by its titular shape. The bristles fan out from a narrow base to create a sparse and wide arrangement of bristles.

Popular especially among landscape artists, fan brushes are exceptional for easily creating textures as well as for blending.

BRISTLE TYPES

In addition to various shapes, brushes also come in a variety of materials, from natural to synthetic. Each type of brush has different strengths and uses.

For beginners, and for the purposes of this course, I mostly use natural bristle brushes which are sturdy enough for oils, easy to maintain, and versatile. They lend themselves well to putting down lots of paint at once, which is especially great for early layers of a painting.

Softer brushes and synthetic brushes, such as Golden Taklon brushes, are generally more delicate and soft and are useful for more detailed work. They will, however, require a bit more care to maintain, such as applying brush conditioner after washing.

I recommend you go into an art store and feel the difference between various brush types to get a feel for how each one will behave, and experiment to see what each type is good for.

RECOMMENDED BRUSHES

Both Blick and Trekell have excellent store brand bristle brushes. You can also experiment with a range of other types as you like.

Trekell's line of hoghair brushes (I recommend the "flat" shape in a range of sizes): <https://www.trekell.com/collections/brushes/products/hog-bristle>

Blick's Masterstroke Interlocking Bristle brushes in flat (set of 6): <https://www.dickblick.com/items/05225-9006/>

GESSO

Gesso is what we use to prime a surface for oil painting. It's a modern material that has made oil painting much more accessible and safer for painters. (More traditional methods include sizing with rabbit-skin glue and then using an oil primer, but we have it a bit easier today!)

Gesso is an acrylic material, but is different from white acrylic paint. Its matte, slightly toothy and absorbent texture creates an ideal ground for paint to cling to. It also protects the surface (whether canvas or wood) from absorbing the oil of the paint and eventually rotting.

Gesso is available in white, black, gray, and clear, and can be tinted to additional colors by adding colored acrylic paint.

It's important to note though that most acrylic paints have a glossier finish, which is more difficult to paint over. Make sure that if you add color to your gesso, you keep the ratio of gesso to other acrylic colors high. (More gesso than color, preferably 2:1.)

Most canvases you buy from art supply stores are pre-gessoed, but you can add more layers if you want to change the texture of the canvas. (For instance, I prefer a smooth surface, so I usually sand my canvas, then add 3 layers of gesso, sanding in between layers. Let each layer dry completely before sanding and adding the next layer.)

ODORLESS TURPENOID

Odorless Turpenoid is the modern replacement for traditional turpentine, whose strong odor and dangerous fumes make it less popular today (and unwise to use).

Odorless Turpenoid, on the other hand, has a milder smell and its fumes are less dangerous. It is still important to use caution with solvents though, so cover them when they are not in use and avoid getting it on your food/in your mouth (wash your hands before you eat!).

Turpenoid is a very effective cleaner for oil paints. It breaks down the oil in the paint easily, so is often used to clean brushes and materials during a painting session as well as after.

Turpenoid and other solvents can also be used in mixing your own mediums. I like painting with a mix of refined linseed oil with a little turpenoid to create my own quick-drying oil medium.

GAMSOL (AND OTHER GENTLER THINNERS)

One alternative to turpenoid, for those who are particularly sensitive to smells or would rather avoid harsher solvents, is Gamsol. This is another thinning medium which is less harsh.

In my opinion, Gamsol isn't quite as effective for cleaning, but is a viable alternative nonetheless.

You can also use Gamsol to minimize the use of stronger solvents like Turpenoid without completely replacing them. For instance, use Gamsol to clean your brushes between colors as you paint, and use turpenoid to thoroughly clean your brushes at the end of your painting session.

OIL MEDIUMS

There are many types of oils you can use as mediums for your paints. Oil mediums are typically slow-drying additives. They increase flow and transparency of paint, and can be very useful especially in later stages of a painting when you may be glazing or refining your image.

NOTE: *There is a limit to the amount of oil you should add to your paints. If you add more than one part oil to every two parts of paint, the oil will begin to break down the bonds of pigment and some paints will begin to separate.*

One popular oil medium is Refined, or Purified Linseed Oil. Refined linseed oil reduces the thickness and drag of paint, and slows the drying time, allowing you more time to work a specific area. It also has a mild, inoffensive odor and keeps fairly well in the bottle.

Many oils dry with a yellowish tint, and you should consider this especially when mixing with lighter colors. The more refined oils have less of a yellow tint to them, but others tend to yellow more dramatically over time. Mixing a lot of oil with a white paint, for instance, will lead to a more yellow white as the painting ages.

Safflower oil and Poppy oil are two lighter oils which can be mixed with white or lighter colors with less worry about yellowing.

Walnut oil is a quicker drying oil, but is harder to work with since it can tend to start drying or go off in the bottle once it's been exposed to air. Keeping it in the fridge can help it last longer.

FAST DRYING MEDIUMS

Part of what makes oil paints so amazing is the ability to work into them for hours and hours without the paint drying too much to be workable.

However, in some cases, this is as much a problem as it is a perk. Sometimes you just need a painting to dry a little faster, or want to be able to move on to your next layer a little sooner.

If that's the case, there are mediums you can use to help your paints dry a little quicker and speed up your workflow.

The benefits of using a quick drying medium with oils versus painting with acrylics is that your paint will still be workable throughout your session. Even with quick drying mediums, you'll have plenty of time to work out each layer before they dry out.

Liquin and Alkyd mediums are designed with this in mind and are excellent choices for artists wishing to speed up the time it takes their oil paints to dry.

Liquin Impasto is one great medium that can improve flow without making the paint feel thinner or wetter. Mixing up to about one third Liquin Impasto with two thirds paint can extend your paint while still maintaining the thick, stiff texture that oil paints are known for. It also speeds up drying times.

Liquin Original behaves a little more like an oil medium in that it makes the paint a little wetter and glossier, but will also speed drying time.

Galkyd and other Alkyd mediums are also good for speeding dry time.

Experiment with which ones you like working with before settling on one. You may find that certain mediums work well with your painting style, while others seem like more of a bother than a help.

MEDIUMS: TO USE OR NOT TO USE?

Ultimately, all mediums are optional and up to you completely. Some artists don't use mediums at all, while others (like me) keep a few on hand and use them as we find necessary.

These days it's easy to find premixed mediums, but as I mentioned before, I've often mixed my own by combining linseed oil and turpenoid to thin the oil and speed drying time a bit.

As you learn, you can experiment with many options. When you're getting started however, my recommendation is that you start simple: refined linseed oil, odorless turpenoid, and liquin impasto or a similar quick drying medium. These three are simple to use and give you lots of options.