

7 WATERCOLOUR TIPS FOR BEGINNERS

1. PROPER ART MATERIALS

Having the right tools in your toolkit makes a world of difference. Quality materials are essential to give you results you'll be happy with. Poor quality materials often just plain don't work and cause frustration, wasted time, and wasted money. It may also deter you from wanting to continue painting as the results won't be the same as if you use quality materials. Let's break it down by paper, paints, and brushes.

- **Paper:**
Not all paper is created equally! If you're going to watercolour, you must use actual watercolour paper. Below is a comparison of a watercolour wash on regular copy paper and another on watercolour paper with the same paint mix. The copy paper isn't made the same as watercolour paper, resulting in a buckled, wavy wash. The copy paper also pills, meaning the fibres start to tear and ball up on the sheet. The watercolour paper is heavier and is made with additives called "sizing" that allow it to absorb moisture properly. It remains flat, has an even colour tone, and doesn't pill or tear.
- **Paint:**
Watercolour paint comes in both tubes and pans. Either work depending on your preferences, but using quality brands makes a difference. Low-quality paint can become crackly and chalky versus having smooth, even colour.
- **Brushes:**
You don't need to start with a vast assortment of brushes, but a few key types will help as you try to achieve different results. A small, medium and large round brush, a flat brush, and a mop brush are great ways to start.

2. WORK FROM LIGHT TO DARK

With watercolour, lay down your light colours first and work towards the darker shades. Have patience - there's no rush. We start with the soft colours because it's hard to undo them once you lay down the dark colours. Due to the transparency of watercolour, your light colours won't show if dark colours cover them up. Also, the white and weak areas of your painting come from the paper, so plan and keep in mind which areas you want to stay white. Masking fluid is a great way to reserve rooms of white on your painting.

3. WATER TO PAINT RATIO

The water to-paint ratio will change depending on what you're trying to achieve.

- **Too much water** can result in colours that are too light. It can also make paint spread more than you'd like and cause colours to mix and become muddy.
- **Too little water** can result in thick colours that don't flow, lay down properly, or cause visibly streaky brush strokes.

4. WET ON DRY TECHNIQUE VS WET ON WET TECHNIQUE

There are many techniques you can use while watercolour painting, but here are two basic techniques that will give you different results depending on what you're going for:

- **Wet or dry:** applying wet paint onto dry paper or damp paint onto an area of dry paint. This technique allows for more control and crisp, defined edges. The colour will only go where your brush takes it.
- **Wet on wet:** damp paint is applied to wet paper or added to a wash of fresh colour. This creates a fluid, fun and unpredictable effect. There is less control with a wet-on-wet technique. To try it, lay clean water on the paper, then add watercolour paint to the wet areas. You'll see the colour flows to the wet areas.

5. DRY-TIME

Dry time varies depending on what you try to achieve in your painting. If you want colours to blend and bleed into each other, you can apply layers on top of wet paint. Be careful not to overlay wet colours because the colours could quickly become muddy.

If you want to add new colour layers and details over the top of a base you've laid down, be patient and ensure the layer underneath is dry first, or the colours will run into one another, and you won't have defined edges and shapes. It takes time, patience, and practice.

6. MIXING PAINTS

There is a lot of planning and preparation in watercolour painting. A good rule of thumb is always to mix more paint than you think you'll need on your palette. If you run out of a colour, it can be not easy to remix that exact shade, so you want to be prepared.

7. OTHER ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES AND SETTING UP YOUR WORKSPACE

If you do the work to prepare for painting before getting started, the process will be a lot easier.

- **Paper towels** will be one of your best friends on your watercolour painting journey, so keep plenty on hand. You'll use it to clean your brush, dab it, and wipe the paper as you work.
- **A painting palette** is essential for watercolour painting, so you can mix colours, add water, and get the right mix before applying paint to your paper.
- **Scratch paper** helps test your shades and water-to-paint ratio before moving to your final piece.
- **Masking or painter tape** is a great tool to tape off your borders and make clean edges to frame your painting. Ensure your edges are sealed tightly, so the paint doesn't seep through.
- **Prepare your workspace** before you get started. Gather all your supplies and lay them out to make the process smoother

Please refer to the attached video for the tutorial for producing watercolour art drawings of Fig and Olive.

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/vgKF8KeGupY>

