

Tips and tricks

The most important item to remember on painting techniques is to achieve even, uniform paint film build. Otherwise we will have problems with orange peel, tiger stripes, runs, and others. These techniques require a little time with your spray gun, experience is your best teacher.

Learn while you are priming. These techniques are:

- Gun distance
- Gun angle
- Gun speed
- Gun path

Every spray gun lays out a slightly different pattern and requires a different gun speed and distance. You can learn most of these things by watching the paint as it lays out. On your practice sheet, is the pattern uniform? Is the product laying down correctly? Is it too wet or too dry?

Let us start with gun distance. The recommendations from most HVLP gun manufactures and paint suppliers are 6-9". This is with a full-size paint gun. If we are using a smaller touch up gun then we move to about 4". This goes hand in hand with gun speed. If we go too fast, the pattern will come out dry (striping or orange peel). If we go too slow we will load too much film build on the panel and without proper flash time you will get runs and sags or trap too much solvent which will lead to longer drying times or solvent popping. When you first start to spray, we want to start off the panel, so that we have a full trigger pull and consistent pattern as you pull the pattern onto the panel. You need to use the bottom half of your pattern to hit your panel first. Your top half of the pattern will be overspray but that way your 2nd pass will overlap and keep the paint film build consistent. You will then drop 25-50% on your next pass for a pattern overlap of 50-75%. Most paint manufactures will tell you 50% overlap and all custom paint manufactures will tell you 75%. This is because when you spray most factory colors, once you reach full hiding, even if your pattern isn't perfect, you can just add more paint into the middle of a pattern. You cannot do this with custom paints. This is where your pattern overlap must be perfect. When shooting candies and pearls the more color that you put down, the darker the color will get. This will lead to a lot of tigerstriping if we are not consistent. If you increase to a 75% overlap you will need to increase your gun speed or you will lay down too much material. When you get to the end of the panel, you need to pull the spray gun all the way off the panel before releasing the gun trigger.

Your gun angle must remain at 90 degrees from the panel, even if the panel is curved. This will keep a more consistent pattern throughout the panel. The only place that we want to break our wrist is when we are attempting to blend colors. If you keep these techniques consistent and watch how your paint is laying down, you will come out with consistently nice paint jobs.

Gun speed will vary based on type of gun used and amount of overlap. This is where experience is the best teacher.