

Introduction to Weathering Powders

Simple Ways to Add Realism to Your Models

Plus - Create Realistic Metal Effects, Galvanized Metal & Rust Techniques

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This clinic will introduce you to weathering powders from the different brands available, the different tools used, wet/dry applications, and clean-up.

Powder Basics

There are multiple brands of weathering powders on the market today. Most all offer small sample starter kits for under \$30.00. Try a few brands to see which ones you prefer. With powders you do not need any special tools or talents.

Weathering powders are simply finely ground pigments. These materials give the appearance of dirt, grime, rust, soot, etc. a more natural look. Since some of these products are made from real rust and other natural pigments there is no better way to add life into your models. You can put on as much or as little of the powder as you like.

Powders can be applied dry or wet (like paint), mixed together to make additional colors, used as a wash, Testors Dullcote dissolves the powders leaving another effect. Again experiment. Powders seem to work best on non-glossy surfaces, and even better on a surface with some texture. So before you start hit your model with a little Dullcote or any clear matte finish.

So for less than \$50 you can have all the tools you need to add realism to your models. These supplies could last you up to a year or more. Some of the same techniques for applying color with an airbrush can be done with powders.

Work Area

When working with powders it is good practice to cover your work surface. I like basic 8 ½ X 11 cardstock, a piece of extra cardboard or old newspaper. When using powders you want to remember that a little goes a long way. You will notice that as you apply the powders some will fall on to your work surface. This can be collected and reused later. Put the used powder in new container as the mix of colors will make a brown that can be used as a dirt color.

Basic Tools

In addition to the powders you need the following items

- Brushes (Cheap)
 - o Stiff & soft for different applications
- 99% Isopropyl Alcohol (or 91% Rubbing Alcohol)
 - o You can use water or thinners
 - o I use Monster Mix Thinner (99%)
- Small Plastic Bowls
- Testors Dullcote / Any Matte Spray
- Workable Fix-a-tif or Final Fix-a-tif
- Assorted Paints / Stencil Crème



Pulley was done with the rust technique shown later

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Wet or Dry

You will need to apply powders either as a dry pigment or mixed with Alcohol to make a wash or paint like mixture. When powders are mixed with alcohol (I prefer Denatured Alcohol) it goes on like paint but dries looking like a powder. You can use both techniques at the same time.

No Waste like Paint

There is also no waste when using powders. You can save any excess powder that falls to your work surface and powders wet with alcohol turn back to their powder form when the alcohol evaporates. Just add more alcohol or brush the powder out to another container.

Sprays & Sealers

Sprays can hide much of the work you just did; it blends the lighter colors down so they are not as noticeable. Sometimes this is the desired effect, experiment. You do not have to seal the powders, they do rub off a bit. If your piece is going to be well handled then it should be sealed, but mostly put it on your layout and leave it alone. Dullcote dissolves the powders as it seals diminishing some of the effects of the powder. An artist's fixative maintains the original appearance of the powders.

Powders vs. Chalks

Weathering powders and chalk are completely different products. Powders are made from real rust and other natural pigments that have been ball milled to a particle size over 100 times finer than chalk and blended with a pressure sensitive, dry adhesive.

Chalk definition: Chalk is specially designed to be dustless, non-toxic, and used on smooth surfaces. It does not contain binding agents and is meant to be easily wiped away. Drawing chalk, on the other hand, contains an oil binder. Meant to adhere to paper and sidewalks, drawing chalk is not meant for chalkboards and may be difficult or impossible to completely erase. Pastel chalk is another name for pastel crayons and shouldn't be confused with drawing chalk.

Some Available Brands on the Market Today

Aim Products Weathering Powders

Bar Mills Weathering Powders

Bragdon Enterprises Weathering Powders

Doctor Ben's Scale Consortium Weathering Pigments

Doc O'Brien's Weathering Powders

Yes there are more....



Roofing done with powders...

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Instructions from Doc O'Brien's Weathering Powders

Cover your workbench with newspaper to avoid soiling it with spilled powder.

Select the colors you want. Remove the lids and place them top down on your workbench in front of each color. Use a small brush to pick up powder from the jar, and then pat the brush on the lid. Apply the color to the desired area of the model. Then brush out and blend the color with a large soft brush.

The best effects are obtained by applying color in the following order: rust (on parts representing iron or steel), then white, and then the top color, usually dirt or grime. White is used to provide a highlighted base-coat for subsequent colors and really brings out details. Grimy colors work well to tone down and blend underlying colors. Apply as much or as little color as you want. If you apply too much, simply wash the powders off with a little soapy water, let dry, and reapply. Powdered colors may be sealed in place with a very light coating of a flat clear spray; however, the intensity of the weathering will be diminished by the clear coating.

Doc O'Brien's Weathering Powders can also be used as weathering washes by mixing them with water or thinners. Be sure that the thinner you select is compatible with the surfaces you are weathering and experiment on a scrap piece before applying to your model. We have found that models made of wood stand up very well to handling without too much of the powder rubbing off. If you weather a structure that won't get handled much, a clear coat may not be necessary.

Instructions from Bragdon Industries Weathering Powders

This product will instantly rust or weather nearly any object. It uses nontoxic, non-magnetic powdered rust, pigments and a dry adhesive. Ball milled to a superfine particle size, it won't obscure the finest details. These colors are ground many times finer than chalk and will adhere to surfaces much better than chalk. It works best on flat finishes. Semi gloss or glossy surfaces will need to be first coated with a matte finish, artist's workable fixative, acrylic matte medium or any flat paint will work. An in-expensive flat gray auto primer in a spray can works great for a easy and fast surface prep.

The base color of the object greatly influences the final weathered result. A flat gray, brown or black will change to a heavily weathered or rusted look. For more subtle results apply over other colors. For example a new looking model of a yellow tractor can be instantly aged with a light coat of RUST. Our SOOT black will darken our other weathering colors or can be used for smoke or soot on chimneys, stacks, tunnel portals, etc.

Apply the dry powdered color with an old tooth brush or any small stiff brush to dry surfaces. Dip the brush into the powder and rub it into the surface of any area to be weathered. Friction activates the built in dry adhesive; the more you rub the harder it sticks. A few seconds is usually enough. Use small brushes, toothpicks, etc. to apply color to small details or to simulate rain streaks on structures or car sides. Any excess powder can be caught on a sheet of paper and be reused. For an extra heavy coat of color apply the powder over a still tacky paint surface.

If you have more than one color of our weathering powders they can be mixed or layered for a variety of shades and effects. The weathered item will have a realistic dusty weathered or rusty look. Blow or tap off any excess. You may choose to leave the model alone at this point the color that has been worked into the surface will adhere quite well without any overspray. Models that will be handled considerably or that will be left outside may need a spray coat of flat artist's fixative.

Highlights can be accented or the colors darkened by applying a wash of India ink mixed with rubbing alcohol. About six drops of ink to 1/2 cup of alcohol works well; more ink = darker color. With a brush, flow a generous wash over the weathered object and allow it to dry. Repeat if you wish. Objects can also be dipped into or-- sprayed with the ink mix. A spotted or mottled effect can be easily made by spraying the weathered object with the ink mix using very short spray bursts (1/2 second) from a distance of 15 inches or so. The objective is to let tiny droplets land randomly on the surface. Other interesting effects can be created by mixing a small amount of the dry color with an ounce or two of water or rubbing alcohol and applying it as a wash.

Models can be painted over with most paint varieties if you want to cover or detail already weathered surfaces.

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Galvanized Metal Technique

Tools Required:

- Light and Dark Gray Weathering Powders
- Silver Stencil Magic
- Assorted Brushes
- Testors Dullcote

This technique works on any material that needs to have the appearance of galvanized metal. Remember galvanized metal has a rough texture to it. The effect is made by the Dullcote dissolving the excess powders stuck to the Stencil Cream.

1. Paint the entire item with Silver Stencil Magic
2. Apply a generous amount of light gray powder.
 - a. You want the powder to stick to the Stencil Magic
 - b. Do not brush off the excess powder at this time
 - i. The more loose powder the older the look, use less for newer
3. Spray the item with Testors Dullcote
 - a. Dullcote dissolves the powder leaving the desired effect.
4. Let dry

Worn Metal Technique

Tools Required:

- Brown Weathering Powders
- Black Paint
 - o Any type or brand
 - o Any dark color variation
- Silver Stencil Magic
- Assorted Brushes
- Testors Dullcote (Optional)

This technique works on any material that needs to have the appearance of old worn metal.

1. Paint the entire with black paint
 - a. Any type of paint (Solvent based or Acrylic)
 - b. Use darker colors, variations of black works best
 - c. Experiment as the color changes the effect
 - i. I like to use acrylic paint so I can leave texture on the surface with a paint brush
 - ii. It makes a nice surface to dry brush on the next step
 - d. This step must be dry to continue
2. Dry brush with Silver Stencil Magic
 - a. This gives it the worn look
 - b. The more you apply the older the metal looks
3. Dust with dark brown weathering powder
 - a. Different powder colors also changes the effect
 - b. Experiment...
4. Lightly rub in the powders with a soft brush
5. Continue steps 3 & 4 until you reach the desired look

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Rust Technique

Tools Required:

- Light and Dark Rust Colored Weathering Powders
- Burnt Umber Water Soluble Oil Paint
- Black Stencil Magic (Optional)
- Assorted Brushes
- Testors Dullcote (Optional)

This technique works on any material that needs to have the appearance of caked on heavy rust.

1. Paint the entire area you want rust with Burnt Umber Water Soluble Oil Paint
 - a. It is your base for the rust so apply it heavy or light, depends on the look you are attempting to achieve
 - b. The thicker you apply it the crustier the rust looks
2. Dust with rust colored weathering powders
 - a. There are usually 3 types of rust colored powders
 - i. Dark, medium and light
 - b. The darker the rust the older the rust, the lighter the rust the newer the rust
 - c. Apply the all three or just one to get the desired effect
 - d. Experiment...
3. Lightly rub in the powders with a soft brush
 - a. Basically blending the colors together
4. Continue steps 2 & 3 until you reach the desired look



All my wood receives its tone from ... Powders...