



Subby's Guides Presents

The How To Painting Guide For: The Ultimate Metals Technique!

Forward:

First and foremost this is a guide to painting miniatures, I have used pictures of my own miniatures in this guide and these are for example purposes only. I am in no way affiliated with Games Workshop, I simply use their miniatures in my examples because that is what I happen to collect. I use Citadel Colour paints and washes in this guide as they are what I happen to have handy, if you can find similar colours in other brands of paints then by all means experiment with them. If you want to use these techniques with other miniatures from other companies such as Reaper, and Foundry then go for it. If you have any suggestions for other guides or new techniques then feel free to email me at [da_sub\(at\)subsunderground.com](mailto:da_sub(at)subsunderground.com).

This guide is presented free and as-is; it assumes you already have some knowledge of painting miniatures. If you need tips on undercoating, using spray pack, basic painting and assembly then have a look around online (or if you can withstand the hordes then you might also visit your local hobby store or club), other than some quick tips these areas won't be covered here.

This guide is separated into several sections; Beginner, Medium and Advanced. This allows the user to select what sort of a challenge or look they wish to achieve with their painting.

First things First:

Prepare and assemble your miniature as usual, I like to take my time and ensure that there are no mould lines left from the casting process. This makes for a cleaner painting process and much nicer finish to your figures. Using a combination of needle files and x-acto knives (small Stanley knives – Safety First!!!), you can get most, if not all, the flash and mould lines off. If you are working with resin kits don't forget a dust mask, as resin particles from sanding and filing are very bad for your health (read they can cause cancer if you breath them in!)

👉 Tip: Use an old toothbrush and a clean Chinese takeaway dish, half filled with warm water and a couple of drops of dish washing liquid in it, to give the model a clean before assembly and again before painting. Mould release agent and grease from your hands can stop glue and paint from sticking properly. To prevent arms falling off and paint bubbling/webbing keep things nice and clean. On delicate models be careful not to break bits off when giving them the second clean.

For metal and resin figures give them a coat of spray primer before undercoating them, I use Tamiya Fine Metal and Plastic Primer in Light Grey (available from many Toys-R-Us/Toyworld Stores and good Hobby Shops that sell model kits). The only issues I have had with this primer is that it takes a couple of hours to set completely for painting (I tend to batch spray a couple of tanks or two squads at once and leave them overnight), although you can undercoat over the primer after about an hour.

Some people recommend car body primer in spray-pack for resin figures, especially tanks and titans. Make sure you do one very thin coat and let it dry completely before undercoating or painting, this stuff is very fume heavy and will obscure detail very easily if you don't take care. Also it is resistant to the "Power Dissolver" paint stripping method so you cannot get it off once it goes on.

As with all painting a couple of thin coats is always better than one heavy one!



This Ironclad Dreadnaught Conversion has two thin coats of primer and is ready to undercoat or paint

For undercoating I generally use either Citadel Spray Pack or Tamiya Matt Spray Pack, depending on the major colours that my finished model will have (Tamiya has more choice in colours than just black and white). Matt finish Sprays are generally better to paint over than enamel coats for two reasons; firstly they often provide a better surface for the other paints to grip to as they are slightly rough, secondly it is harder to touch-up enamels when you are painting with water-based matt colours such as Citadel Colour, Reaper Master Series or Vallejo Paints.

👍 Top Tip: *If you paint your model predominantly another colour before doing the Metals, like camouflage stripes on tanks, then you can use Friskit or 'Low Tack' Masking tape on larger figures to stop stray metal strokes getting on the rest of the model. Also this allows you to quickly re-black large areas with spray pack or an airbrush before doing the metals. You can use blu-tac but sometimes, depending on the brand it can leave residue behind, especially on long edges touching the re-blackened parts of the figure.*

Ok so at this point you should have a selection of metallic paints, some washes, a prepared model that has the areas that will be metal blacked in. So next choose what level you want to paint to; Beginner, Medium or Advanced. Another way I like to think of these three levels of detail are; "General Gaming", "Tournaments" and "Invitation Meets/Display".

Once you choose what standard of painting you want it's time to get cracking!

Beginner/Gaming Style:

Ok usually if your figures are going to see a lot of “Table Time” it might not make a lot of sense to paint every model as if it were going to be entered in a National Painting competition. So I am going to begin with a simple four stage process for “silver” weapons/figures.

- 1) To begin with layer the whole area that is to be metallic coloured with Dwarf Bronze, and when dry wash it heavily with Devlan Mud wash (previously I would use straight Brazen Brass but this has been discontinued).
- 2) Layer the whole area with Boltgun Metal, ensuring you leave a little of the bronze showing in the recesses. On large figures such as Iron Warriors Tanks, Steam Tanks, and anything predominantly metal you can apply the Boltgun Metal in patches with heavy drybrushing or stippling to give a weathered effect. Make sure that track assemblies, sprockets and steps, along with any sharp edges are picked out in Boltgun Metal to represent areas polished by wear/use.
- 3) Highlight the edges with Mithral Silver. At this point you can add score marks and tool marks on weapons. Also on large models pay extra attention to edges, steps and weapons impacts marks as this extra attention will make them centrepieces of you army.
- 4) Now comes the choice; For bright heroic or magically oriented characters such as sorcerers and Grey Knights, use a 1:1:1 mix of Badab Black wash, Asurman Blue wash and Water to wash the metal areas. For evil Mages you can substitute Leviathan Purple for Asurman Blue. For dirty looking weapons and vehicles/gun barrels, Use a 1:1:1 mix of Badab Black wash, Devlan Mud wash and water. This wash is excellent on Adeptus Mechanicus Machinery, and other Imperial/Chaos vehicles and Chaos Marines in general.
On tanks add more water and a tiny bit of dishwashing liquid, this will stop the wash pooling on large flat parts of the tank. Remember not to lick your brush if you do this, as washing up liquid is poisonous (and tastes like cack!).

 *Top Tip: Pigment based washes are great to create a worn or aged look to something. To make fresh oil/blood/fluids use ink based washes or overcoat the area with gloss finish after matt finishing the rest of the figure. In a pinch you can use a little Water Effects mixed with coloured inks to make a whole host of slimes, drool, acid pools etc. Different coloured washes can define different feels. Try it out on a test miniature.*



This Dreadnaught arm has been painted using the Basic technique, and finished with a standard wash.

Medium/Tournament Style:

If you are going to enter a tournament you really should paint your figures, it is worth points you know! I am somewhat old school so I don't go to a tourney with unpainted figures (even if I stay up to 3am the night before finishing them, or paint them on the train on the way there... true story). The better your paint job the more kudos (read points) you can rack up. With that in mind I will take you through a variant that adds to the previous again for "silver" weapons/figures.

- 1) To begin with layer the whole area that is to be metallic coloured with Dwarf Bronze, and when wash it heavily with Devlan Mud wash (previously I would use straight Brazen Brass but this has been discontinued).
- 2) Layer the whole area with Boltgun Metal, ensuring you leave a little of the bronze showing in the recesses. On large figures such as Iron Warriors Tanks, Steam Tanks, and anything predominantly metal you can apply the Boltgun Metal in patches with heavy drybrushing to give a weathered effect. Make sure that track assemblies, sprockets and steps, along with any sharp edges are picked out in Boltgun Metal to represent areas polished by wear/use.
- 3) Highlight with 1:1 Boltgun Metal to Mithral Silver. Pick out any raised parts with edge brushing. Then, when dry, wash with 1:1 Badab Black to water.
- 4) Apply another highlight of 1:1 Boltgun Metal to Mithral Silver. Use thin neat edge highlighting and focus on edges and raised areas in particular. At this point add scratches and "worn/used" parts; particularly steps, sprockets and door-handles on vehicles.
- 5) Apply a highlight of Mithral to the edges and raised bits. Also add secondary highlights to the scratches and "worn/used" parts.
- 6) Now comes the wash as before: For bright heroic or magically oriented characters such as sorcerers and Grey Knights, use a 1:1:1 mix of Badab Black wash, Asurman Blue wash and Water to wash the metal areas. For evil Mages you can substitute Leviathan Purple for Asurman Blue. For dirty looking weapons and vehicles/gun barrels, Use a 1:1:1 mix of Badab Black wash, Devlan Mud wash and water. This wash is excellent on Adeptus Mechanicus Machinery, and other Imperial/Chaos vehicles and Chaos Marines in general. For any rusty bits wash with a 5:1 mix of water to Blazing Orange when dry give this a rough wash with Devlan Mud. Older rust in the hollows will be darker than the fresher rust on the edges where it will be occasionally burnished off due to wear/use. Also make sure parts that are hot or used often aren't too rusty e.g. exhausts will mostly be blackened by hot fumes.

 *Top Tip: Rust effects look good on such things as evil character armour in fantasy, e.g. hordes such as goblins, on weathered terrain such as industrial equipment pieces and machinery. Rust effects can also look good on Adeptus Mechanicus Servitors, Tank treads and exhausts. Also barbed-wire and old metal bits on bases and terrain really benefit from rust effects. However there are several places rust effects really stand out; on the armour of Plague Marines, plague daemon weapons, and especially skeletons. The undead that have lain in the ground for a while can reasonably be expected to have not cleaned and polished their armour and weapons.*



Some Witch Elves Painted to Tournament Standards

Advanced/Display Style:

So now we come to the final extreme level of doing metals. You don't want to do this on every model on your gaming army, and at most your epic leader or centre-piece miniature for tournaments. It is gruelling and tedious but nets nice results. I will add other colours than just silver to this so take note. This is an extension of the Tournament Standard so it will reference the previous technique's steps.

- 1) **Brass/Bronze:** Start by layering on Tin Bitz, a nice dark metal colour to start off with.
Silver: To begin with layer the whole area that is to be metallic coloured with Dwarf Bronze, and when dry wash it heavily with Devlan Mud wash (previously I would use straight Brazen Brass but this has been discontinued).
Gold: As per Silver
- 2) **Brass/Bronze:** Layer the whole area with Dwarf Bronze and wash it with 1:1 Devlan Mud to Badab Black.
Silver: Layer on Boltgun Metal and wash it with 1:1 Devlan Mud to Badab Black, make sure you leave little bits of the Dwarf Bronze showing.
Gold: Layer on Shining Gold, leaving a little of the base colour showing. Wash this with 1:1 Devlan Mud to Badab Black.
- 3) **Brass/Bronze:** Layer the whole area with Dwarf Bronze leaving a little of the base colour showing though in the recesses.
Silver: Layer on Boltgun Metal leaving a little of the base colour showing.
Gold: Layer on Shining Gold, leaving a little of the base colour showing.
- 5) **Brass:** Layer the whole area with 1:2 Dwarf Bronze to Shining Gold leaving a little of the base colour showing though in the recesses.
Bronze: Highlight the bronze with Shining Gold.
Silver: Highlight with 1:1 Boltgun Metal to Mithral Silver.
Gold: Highlight with 1:1 Shining Gold to Mithral Silver.
- 6) **Brass:** Highlight with shining Gold and then edge Highlight with 1:1 Shining Gold to Mithral Silver.
Bronze: Highlight just the very edges and anywhere light would catch with 1:1 Shining Gold to Mithral Silver.

Silver: Highlight just the very edges and anywhere light would catch with pure Mithral Silver.

Gold: Highlight just the very edges and anywhere light would catch with pure Mithral Silver.

7) Brass: Wash the whole area with Gryphonne Sepia.

Bronze: Wash the whole area with Gryphonne Sepia.

Silver: Wash the whole area with Gryphonne Sepia.

Gold: Wash the whole area with Gryphonne Sepia.

8) Brass: Wash the recesses with Devlan Mud. Or for an aged brass look wash around joins, cracks and folds with 5:1 water to Hawk Turquoise.

Bronze: Wash around joins, cracks and folds with Devlan Mud.

Silver: Wash around joins, cracks and folds with Devlan Mud.

Gold: Wash around joins, cracks and folds with Devlan Mud.

9) Brass: For New Brass you are done. For an Aged Brass look wash just the recesses and deeper detail with 1:1 Thraka Green to Asurman Blue.

Bronze: For Newer Bronze you are done. For Aged Bronze wash the whole area with Badab Black.

Silver: Wash the recesses with Badab Black.

Gold: Wash the recesses with Badab Black.

Note: For newer Silver skip step 9. For magical, holy or enchanted metals apply washes as per step 6 of Medium quality, but successively add two parts Badab Black for each of steps 8-9.



Abaddon here has been painted to Display Standards, with multi-layer Highlights on everything.



In these two blown up pictures you can see how the layered highlight come together.

Tricks & Tips:

Thinning your washes with a little liquid dishwashing detergent, at about one drop per paint pot, will break the surface tension and cause the ink to spread evenly over surfaces.

You can, in a pinch, use pigments used for weathering to create washes in colours other than those you can buy off the shelf. This is great to get that particular “look” that makes your miniatures stand out.

If you are making custom washes, label the pot they are kept in with the mix ratios and different parts, or note them in a ‘recipe’ book. This will make mixing up new batches easy.

Don’t throw away your old acrylic paint pots! Soak them in simple green overnight and wash them out to keep. This will mean you always have something to mix washes in and store them.

Always let each stage of washes dry completely before doing the next bit. It will only end in tears if you rush.

Finishing:

Lastly to protect your figure allow it to dry overnight and give it a coat of Dull Coate or Purity Seal. I honestly prefer Dull Coate and with Hobby One shipping it to my office for a good price I will stick with it for now. Remember not to use clear finishes of any type in a high humidity environment as you will ruin your model as they trap moisture from the air under the surface of the coating. This is often referred to as frosting and can sometimes happen when priming as well. The only way to remove the frosted finish is to paint-strip the whole model. Obviously something you don’t want to happen to the figure you just spent hours painting. Also make sure it is neither too hot nor too cold when using clear finishes. The optimum temperature for using any spray –can based products is around 22°C. Strange things tend to happen when using spray-cans at different temperatures, as different propellants react differently as temperatures change.