

# Miniature Painting and Collecting Guide



By Stefan Pietraszak, with help from Alexander Schoenbohm and Rene Ganser

While neither of the authors of this advice is the best miniature painter in the world (or even close), they know how to paint a miniature - and how to do it fast and effective. And they all sport a huge collection of fantasy and science fiction miniatures, so they're sure to have something to say on that topic too.

Note that absolutely no editing went into the production of this text - so please excuse any errors. Note further that this document might be updated, expanded and clarified from time to time.

For any comments, suggestions or questions feel free to send us an email.

## Miniature Selection

Before the painting comes the miniature. Or else you'd be without anything to paint, wouldn't you? So how best to start a collection? Let's talk about the WWW... the WWW of RPG miniature collecting: who, what and when.

### Who

If you are the Game Master (GM; aka as Dungeon Master (DM)), it's best to distribute the "painting responsibility" between you and your players - meaning that each player should acquire or paint her or his own miniature. Same goes for her or his favorite summoned creatures or animal companions or familiars or cohorts and followers, if any.

In a perfect world you won't be alone in your GM-responsibilities, in which case all GMs of a gaming group could work together to build a miniature collection. One could specialize on orcs and gnolls, for instance, while another mainly purchases any aberrations and such.

If any of your player is also a fantasy (or scien-

ce fiction, if playing a non-fantasy RPG) tabletop, feel free to ask her or him if you can "borrow" those miniatures you could use. There's nothing like a appropriate miniature to represent a creature in your role-playing sessions, be it your own or someone else's.

### What

Face it: you can't own every miniature of every monster or character you're likely to use (part of this is taken care of under "who"), so you've got to make choices. Make a list of all the different miniatures you would like to have: What is really needed? What kind of miniatures will be used most often? What are your favorite monsters?

While it would be nice to own 10 goblins and 15 kobolds, you've really got to consider this. It wouldn't hurt your games too much if, say, the kobolds were represented by goblin miniatures, or if any bigger group of one of these creatures is composed of both goblin and kobold miniatures. Keep in mind that a time will come when you won't hardly need any goblins or kobolds in your campaign.

Reoccurring villains and other NPCs are the way to go. Get those first, if possible, because of two reasons: first, they are likely to pop up pretty soon (or else they won't be that reoccurring after all); second, if you can find a really appropriate miniature, it would help out the imagination of your players, if they can actually take a look at the NPC or villain.

Note: Consider pre-painted miniatures. These come in two "flavors": collectible and non-collectible - meaning: in one case (the latter) you know exactly what you're buying, and in the other case not. If you'll only use

your miniatures for role-playing, get the non-collectible ones.

### When

Most likely you will start a new campaign - and with that your collection - at a low level. So the low-CR monsters and basic NPCs on your list (see "What") should be bought first. After that, the sky's the limit.

It's a good thing if you can acquire your miniatures at least one session ahead, so that they are fully painted as soon as you'll use them.

One last advice on that topic: don't go overboard with new miniatures. A whole bunch of 20+ miniatures lying unpainted on your desk sometimes can be daunting. Keep the number of in-the-work-miniatures low (well under ten), and finish those before you acquire any more.



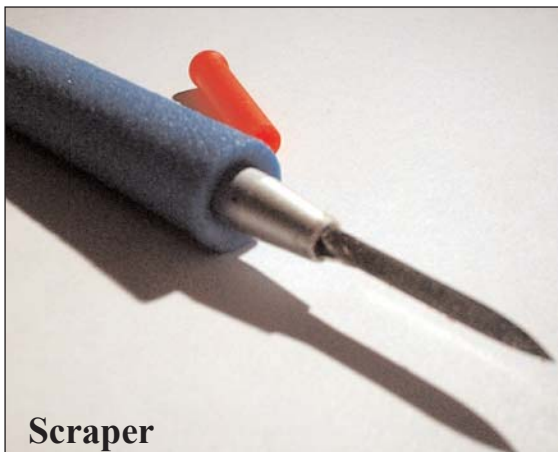
# Painting a Miniature

## Items of the Trade

Colors you will definitely need are Black, White, Red, Blue, Green, Yellow, Flesh Color, Silver. "Secondary" colors you may want to get as soon as possible are Brown and Grey. Under "General Tips and Advice" we talk about some other, rather specific colors. The color examples (in the grey box) tell you roughly about what color tones we're talking about.

To apply the paints to the miniature you'll need brushes. Go for at least two different sizes (any two from 2 to 3/0; recommendation: 1 and 3/0). A third brush is needed for highlighting (see Step 3, below).

For those miniatures who need assembly you'll need some sort of glue. If we're talking about metal miniatures, there are only two possibilities: super glue and two part epoxy.



**Scraper**

There is a multitude of other tools that could assist you in painting, like a gamut, magnifying lenses (although I don't know anybody who actually does use those, it can be done) and a scraper for cleaning the miniature before assembly (see the picture).



**Step 1**

## Step 1: Preparations

You can't just start painting your miniature, because if you don't use an undercoat, the color you'll paint on won't stay on the miniature for very long. The quickest way to apply an undercoat is to use spray paints (please don't use these indoors, and keep a spraying distance to your miniatures of at least 10 inches).

You could use black or white spray paint. Metallic colors can greatly benefit from a black undercoat, so if you're painting full-plates you might go with black paint. For most other miniatures you should use white paint.

Some miniatures come with a separate base. You could glue your miniature onto the base right away, or you could wait until the painting job is done. Note that if you really want to go to town with the base of the miniature (flocking and whatnot), then you shouldn't glue the miniature to the base at this stage. Rather pin the miniature to a cork or something similar, so that you can hold it in your hand nonetheless. If you don't want to distract from the miniature, or if the miniature might show up both in underground and outdoor settings, you could go for a plain black base (you can't get more "neutral").

A few miniatures come in more than one part. Sometimes arms, heads, weapons or anything else isn't attached to the torso. Once again you've got two possibilities: first, you glue them on right away - in which case you might not easily reach every space on the miniature with a brush. Second, you paint every part of the miniature separately - in which case the smallest parts may really be a pain to paint, because your fingers won't leave that much room (but you could attach those parts to a cork). A small advice: if you think you can paint the miniature quite alright even with those parts glued on, then do it at the start. Otherwise don't.

## Step 2: First Colors

Once the undercoat is dry you can start painting. For the first one or two colors you're painting on you don't need to be THAT accurate, because you will cover up the other parts of the miniature later.

Start with the deepest parts of the miniature. For instance, if you're painting a hooded rogue, you should start with the flesh color (beneath the hood and therefore the deepest). That's because you'll correct your errors with later colors (see above).

Don't paint the smallest parts on the miniature - we'll deal with those in step 4.



**Step 2**

### Step 3: Shading and Highlighting

These two techniques are somewhat related. They only "enhance" the look of the miniature at "close quarter", and are by no means necessary (although you can really tell a difference if both techniques were used).

With shading we mean painting over darker tones of the base colors to give them more depth. Just thin down that darker color and apply it carefully on the appropriate parts.



Step 3

While shading is pretty straight-forward, highlighting is a little bit more difficult, but we'll talk about the easiest way of highlighting: drybrushing. For that, you'll first need a "drybrush" - if you've got any old brush (of at least size 1) you can't use for anything anymore, just cut the tip of the brush straight. Now take a lighter tone of the base color onto your drybrush and wipe that brush nearly clean (until you can't see any more color coming off of the brush) on a handkerchief. Now brush gently over the appropriate parts of the miniature, in a way that you'll only touch the highest bits. That way, a little bit of color (a few particles) will stay on the miniature.



Step 4

### Step 4: Details

In this step you'll paint the smaller parts of the miniature (like gems, belts and the like). Apply the techniques you've learned in step 2 and 3, until you can really say: that miniature is completely painted.

### Finishing Touches

To protect the painting you should use varnish once your miniature is finished. These come in two "flavors", matte and gloss, and each comes in two "kinds": normal (to be painted on with a brush) and spray varnish. Get the spray variant whenever possible.

The difference between matte and gloss is the grade of protection (gloss is better than matte) and the look of the miniature afterwards (matte is way better than gloss). If you don't put your miniatures under heavy duty take matte varnish. But if you do want the best possible protection, don't just use gloss varnish - spray on a matte varnish once the gloss varnish has dried. That way you can get the good protection of gloss varnish with the (slightly decreased) looks of matte varnish.

## General Tips and Advice

### Don't leave blank spots

While accurate painting looks always better than inaccurate painting, there's one thing even worse than that: any space on the miniature where the undercoat shows through.

### Metal

As mentioned earlier, it's better to give metallic spaces a black undercoat. But even that won't give you very convenient metallic colors. So what can you do?

The trick: once the metallic color is dry, paint it over with a mix of black-silver (also known as "gun metal") and water - much water! You've got to thin it down so far that it more or less has got the consistency of ink.

### On flesh

Flesh Color as a mix of antique pink (or, if you can't find that, manufactured flesh color), red, yellow and brown. By mixing you will achieve much more realistic skin tones than if you use only manufactured flesh color. (Note that most of the time I'm too lazy to mix *any* color.)

## A few last notes

More tips (speed painting, flesh color, eyes and more) are coming in later editions of this document. Feel free to send your remarks, advice and questions on this document to [stefan@theothergamecompany.com](mailto:stefan@theothergamecompany.com).

For more examples of painted miniatures visit [www.theothergamecompany.com/camp-mini.htm](http://www.theothergamecompany.com/camp-mini.htm). Links to miniature producers can be found at [www.theothergamecompany.com/links.htm](http://www.theothergamecompany.com/links.htm).

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