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Pastel & Colour: Cleaning, maintaining and preserving your material



Art Material ^[5]

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You don't need to be a cleaning fanatic to keep your pastels in shape? But watch out, they're fragile and messy, so you need to take some precautions! [Overview](#).

1. Color sticks

Keeping pastels is a real headache! Here are three techniques so they keep their brilliance:

- Clean them with a clean rag after each session until you've restored them to their original color.
- You can store them loose in a box closed with a lid by adding a few tablespoons of rice: this way, you can prevent the colors from mixing with each other.

Are your sticks very dirty? Shake your box gently: the rice will rub the dirt off of them.



Trick of the trade: Recycle your pastel fragments!

Don't throw out those little pieces of pastel! Sort them by type of color and grind them to get a homogenous mix.

You can reuse this material to create colored backgrounds by applying them roughly with your finger; to work on details by applying them with a stump or cotton.

2. Rags

This is a pastellist's faithful companion: shake them outdoors after your work session to remove pigment dust. You're better off changing them when they get too dirty.

3. The stump

With use, the stump's point will get dull and wind up dirtying the shades of the colors you want to rework. Rather than changing it, rub the end on a piece of fine grain sandpaper (covered with an abrasive layer). In just one step, you clean and sharpen your tool!



4. Art work

Pastel drawings are very fragile: just brushing against them can blur your lines and colors.

- Store your work in a portfolio, inserting a sheet of cellophane or parchment paper between them.
- The best way to preserve them over the long term: frame them!

Trick of the trade: To frame your pastels?

Make sure the pastels do not come in contact with glass (the pastel will wind up sticking to it). Here's the solution: place a double mat between your work and the pane of glass. See framing heading.

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Oil pastels



These little round sticks with a soft consistency when held and a creamy texture on paper are sure to make any novice artist happy. Let's travel back into time, to the ends of the Earth, to find the origins of oil pastels!

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