

how to make a faux french hatbox.

Step 1 - paint.

First paint your hatbox in a base coat color (no need to do any prep before painting). I used Fusion's *Linen*. This color will show through in spots where you distress your hatbox later on, so choose a color that will add some depth. You don't necessarily have to use two colors, but it adds a subtle element of age. Once your base coat is dry to the touch, add a second layer of paint using Fusion's *Limestone* (or substitute).

Tip: Don't panic if your hatbox bubbles a little while the paint is wet. This either goes away entirely as the paint dries, or at least becomes less noticeable. However, to minimize this problem don't over-apply your paint.

Step 2 - apply transfer.



First print out your graphic(s). Remember that the final result will be a mirror image of your printed graphic. So if there is text, you'll want to be sure to print a mirror image (which then transfers mirrored, and two mirrored images equal one proper image). Once your final coat of paint is fully dry to the touch, paint a thin coat of Fusion's Transfer Gel onto the hatbox where you are going to place your graphic. Place your printed mirror image graphic **face down** into the wet gel. Gently smooth out any air bubbles and then allow to dry for 6 – 12 hours.

Tip: Trim the paper around your image to have less paper to remove later.

Tip: Do NOT paint additional gel over the top of your paper (as if you were decouping). I made this mistake the first time I attempted this process. You'll never get that paper back off!

Tip: You are technically transferring the ink from your image onto your hatbox. Therefore, if you print a colored image, you will have a colored image on your hatbox.

Tip: Blend the edges of the transfer gel outward. If you leave a distinct line or heavy edge of gel on your hatbox you will see that texture once the gel is dry. You will be happier with the end result if you blend those edges a bit.

Step 3 - remove paper backing.

Once you have let the gel dry for 6 – 12 hours, it's time to remove the paper backing leaving the image behind. Dampen the paper using a wet rag or sponge allowing the water to penetrate the paper fully. Wait a few seconds while the paper absorbs the water and becomes kind of pulpy. Gently rub the paper off. I use an old nubby wash cloth for this part of the process. It has enough texture to grab the paper.

Tip: Go slowly and pay attention during this part of the process. If you are rubbing off your image, you are rubbing too hard.

Tip: If your paper dries out before you get it all off, dampen again.

Tip: The gel may soften up a bit and turn cloudy if it absorbs some of the water you've used to dampen the paper. Don't panic if this happens, it will clear up again when it dries.

Step 4 - distress your hatbox.

I'm a big fan of distressing. Your hatbox will look more genuine and less 'new' if you distress the edges a little by rubbing them with a fine grade sandpaper.

Tip: Start with a light touch, you can always take more off but it's a lot harder to put it back on.

Tip: Fusion paint takes about 21 days to cure. Before it cures you may find that your lid will scratch the paint on the box, or the lid may stick.

Tip: With Fusion paint there is no need for wax or a topcoat of any kind.



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