

Terms and pointers for good painting habits

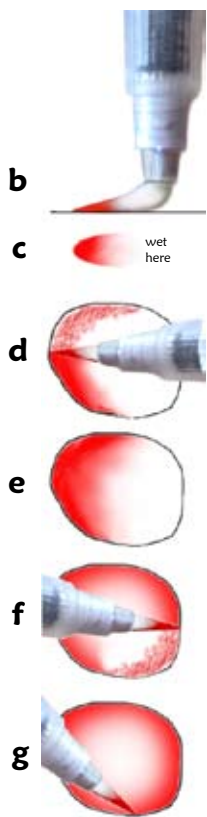
Brush terms

First, some brush terms: The part you hold is the **handle** or, if you are using a waterbrush, the **barrel**. The brush's **heel** is at the base of the bristles as shown in **a**. This applies to the traditional paintbrush as well as to a waterbrush. Whether you dip your brush, or the water flows into it from the supply in the barrel, the intensity of the color is always greater at the **tip** than at the heel because you charge the brush with water, then add paint at the tip end.



Good brush technique is the foundation for any kind of painting. If you hold the brush correctly and use it in the right way, you'll be much happier with your results. *To do the detailed work described in my workbooks, hold it as you would hold a pencil.* A few minutes spent looking over and practicing the techniques on this page will pay you back handsomely in results.

Brush techniques



Notice that the brush has been pressed down firmly in **b** (this won't hurt the brush). The footprint it makes when used that way is shown in **c**, with intense paint and little water at the tip, blending off to no paint but plenty of water at the heel.

When you heel the brush down like this, you can paint a crisp edge at the tip end (**d** and **e**) while wetting the paper at the heel end to produce a soft edge. The paint will bleed gently into the wet paper and fade off to nothing, which is perfect if you want the color to fade away, as in **e**. You'll be using that technique in the orchid tutorial on pages 22-23, so practice it.

This is a good way to make spherical shapes, as shown in **f** and **g**.

But there are times when you don't want a gradation of color as shown in **g**. When painting something that needs a sharp, clean edge, and a solid, ungraded color, such as the solid circle shown in **m**, apply only the paint-filled tip to the paper (**h**). It will make the solid paint mark shown, with a crisp front edge, but it does have a sloppy rear edge (**i**). You can't control the rear edge of the circle (**j**) very well ~ notice how rough it is.

To maintain control, use the same technique used above of turning the paper until you can use the tip where you need a sharp edge (**k**), then fill the middle solid (**m**).

After awhile you will know without thinking what kind of brush stroke is needed.

As you try these techniques, and practice getting the results, you will quickly gain speed and confidence.

One important thing to learn about painting with water is that it can dry and leave a line where you don't want one.

When painting, you need to keep working at the colored edge. If you are working across too large an area, part of it will dry before you get back to it. So learn to work smaller areas and move quickly (which comes with practice). That way, you can keep your brush moving and re-wetting the line of color so that it won't dry and make a harsh edge where you don't want one.

When an edge dries, it can be difficult or impossible to re-wet and blend back in.

Waterbrush characteristics

Waterbrushes are convenient ~ you never have to dip them in water since water soaks down into the brush as needed. If you want the brush to be dryer in order to paint details, it's easy enough to touch the brush to a tissue, and bleed away the excess water. Then, after testing on a scrap of paper (or your hand), you can continue painting.

Occasionally, you'll want MORE water. In that case, squeeze the barrel and more water will ooze into the brush. Always test it at this point by dabbing a tissue, because it can get excessively wet.

Every brush has its own personality, and you will soon learn your brush's characteristics, and become aware of what to watch for and how to deal with its tendencies.

