

Basic Starter Kit

These are your basic starter items:

Canvas

I started with a simple canvas sheet. They are the cheapest. When you start out, "cheap" is good, cause if you start with an expensive canvas it puts way too much pressure on you. Unfortunately a canvas sheet needs to be framed before it can be hung, so you might want to invest in a small stretched canvas instead.



Paint

Oil paint comes in small (and sometimes large) tubes. Any kind is good. I prefer Dala Paints.

There are probably hundreds of colours available but you only need a few to start with. A good idea is to get the 5 primary colours:

Red, Blue, Yellow, White, Black (optional)

You will use these colours to create other colours (i.e. Blue mixed with Yellow makes Green)

Black is optional, since it is a very harsh colour and is best avoided. The illusion of black should rather be created by using other colours in darker shades.

Brushes

You need a selection of varying sized brushes. There are often sets available. I'd say you need about 10 brushes, but you can get away with less of course. Make sure you have at least one big brush for background application, and smaller ones for detail. Painting knives are handy for mixing paint.

Remember that plastic will disintegrate when introduced to Turpentine, so no plastic handles and/or bristles!

Turpentine

You can buy Turps at most supermarkets at about R20 a bottle. One bottle is fine to begin with - a little goes a long way.

Linseed Oil

Some artists use other oils, but raw Linseed Oil is the most popular. You can buy Linseed Oil cheaply from hardware shops, but I prefer the artist quality version, obtainable from art shops. It is lighter in colour and more "clean" so it doesn't affect your colours.

You don't actually need to dilute your paint, but sometimes a tube of paint is a bit dry and needs to be softened. It is also handy to dilute the paint slightly when you want to paint detail.

You can dilute the paint with Turps as well, but the paint will lose the shiny effect, and might become very thin (and lose colour). Turps should only be used to create certain effects, or when you want a layered look.

Palette

Almost any flat piece of wood or plastic could be used for a palette, but a proper artist palette is easily obtainable at most art shops and is quite affordable. If you insist on making your own, remember that wood would have to be treated so that your paint does not get absorbed into your palette. If you ever use Turps with paint, never use polystyrene to mix it on - the polystyrene will simply disintegrate and you will have a proper mess on your hands!

Easel

Depending on the size of your painting, you can usually get by with a smallish easel. Most easels are adjustable but very small ones cannot handle very big canvases. I started with a small one that could fold up and be used on a table.

Other

Other stuff you might need are the following:

- A small bucket or something to keep your brushes in (I use a tin container the size of a medium flower pot)
- A roll of toilet paper or hand towels to quickly mop up mishaps or wipe hands.
- A medium sized cloth to wipe brushes with. You will also use this cloth to dry a brush that is too wet. Any old t-shirt will do.
- At least two small bottles that you will use to soak dirty brushes in. I like to use two bottles and alternate them, or use one for light colours and one for dark, so that my light colours don't get messed by accident. (you might be busy painting with a light yellow, and need to dip the brush in Turps to wet it a little... then you don't want to get your brush soaked with the same Turps that you used to soak the brushes you used for black or blue!) Once again, remember that you cannot use polystyrene cups!