

Skill Level: INTERMEDIATE Give these projects a try if you're a confident DIYer with a good working knowledge of a variety of tools. They can take a day or more to complete. If you can build a birdhouse or install a ceiling fan, your skill level is probably appropriate.

✓ MATERIALS

- Screwdrivers
- TSP or Alternative Cleaner
- Coarse Grit Sandpaper
- Fine Grit Sandpaper
- Bucket and Sponge
- Drop Cloths
- 5-in-1 Tool or Putty Knife
- Wood Filler—if needed

To apply primer:

- Stir Sticks
- Primer
- Paint Brushes
- Small Rollers
- Roller Frames
- Painter's Tape
- Paint Tray
- Rubber Gloves
- Dust Mask
- Safety Glasses
- Ladder—optional

To add decorative panels:

- ¼" Plywood
- Moulding
- Circular Saw
- Miter Saw
- Hand Saw
- Miter Box
- Construction Adhesive
- Paintable Caulk
- Caulk Gun
- Tape Measure
- Dust Mask
- Safety Glasses

You don't have to replace your cabinets to give your kitchen a fresh look. Worn, dark or outdated cabinets in a kitchen or bath can come alive with a fresh coat of paint.

PREPARATION

The following instructions cover preparing stained wood cabinets for a new finish. These instructions will not work for laminate surfaces. Laminate and tile tops can be replaced. Ask a Lowe's associate for assistance.

- 01 Clear off the countertops of all appliances and kitchen items.
- 02 Empty all drawers into boxes for storage until the refinishing is done.

- 03 Protect the countertops and floor with a painter's drop cloth. Use painter's masking tape as needed to ensure that surrounding appliances and furniture are not damaged.



REMOVING DOORS, DRAWERS AND HARDWARE

Although you may be tempted to paint the doors and drawers in place, removal is a simple step that will give you more professional-looking results.

- 01 Place a number on a small piece of painter's tape and attach it to the back of each door and drawer in the most logical sequence: top to bottom or left to right. This will help you relocate them on the cabinet frame when everything has been painted.



- 02 Remove all cabinet doors from the frame.

IMPORTANT

Before you begin preparing and painting cabinets, read the paint manufacturer's instructions. If you are uncomfortable completing this project, discuss the job with a Lowe's associate or call a professional for help. For information and tips on applying the paint, refer to *How to Paint Cabinets* on Lowe's.com/Videos.

REMOVING DOORS, DRAWERS AND HARDWARE (cont.)

03 Remove all drawers from the cabinet.

- For drawers with side tracks, pull the drawer all the way out, then lift the front for removal.
- It might be easiest to remove the drawer face from the actual drawer. Most faces are held in place by a few screws.

04 Remove all hardware, such as handles and hinges, from the doors and drawers.

CLEANING CABINETS

Over the years, cabinets typically accumulate a lot of grease and grime. You can clean cabinet surfaces in preparation for refinishing in the following ways:

- Trisodium Phosphate, or TSP cleaner, will wash away dirt and give your paint a nice, clean surface to adhere to. Mix it with water according to the manufacturer's instructions and clean all cabinet doors, drawers and the frame using a bucket and kitchen sponge or cloths.

- **SAFETY TIP:** Trisodium phosphate is a very strong cleaner. Wear rubber gloves, protective clothing, and eye protection when using it. If TSP comes in contact with skin, immediately wash off with soap and water. If redness occurs, discontinue use. If TSP comes in contact with eyes, flood your eyes with water and seek medical attention promptly.



- Other cleaners, available at Lowe's, can be used to clean and prepare cabinet surfaces for refinishing. Ask a Lowe's associate for assistance in selecting the appropriate surface cleaner.
- If you're painting the cabinet interior, remember to clean those surfaces too.
- After using the cleaner, rinse the cabinet with warm water.
- Allow the cabinets to dry before proceeding.

SANDING CABINETS

- 01 Sand cabinet surfaces with a coarse grit sandpaper to roughen the coating. Sandpaper coarseness is identified by its grit number. 80 is a coarse paper.

02 Then sand the surfaces with fine grit (150) sandpaper until smooth to the touch.

- **TIP:** For the smoothest finish, move the sandpaper in the same direction as the wood grain.
- **TIP:** When purchasing sandpaper, look for products specifically designed for paint removal.



03 If you're painting the cabinet interior, sand those surfaces as well.

SANDING CABINETS (cont.)

04 Once sanded, clean the cabinets again with warm water and a cloth or sponge to remove dust and debris.

- Allow the cabinets to dry before proceeding.

05 Inspect the cabinets for dents or cracks that require filling. If you're replacing the hardware, it's a good idea to fill the old hardware holes.

- Use a 5-in-1 tool or putty knife to force wood putty into cracks, dents or holes. Refer to the manufacturer's application directions on the container for best results.
- Use a 5-in-1 tool or putty knife to carefully remove excess putty until the surface is relatively smooth.
- Once the area is dry, use coarse and/or fine grit sandpaper to smooth the surface to blend in with the surrounding wood.



UPDATE CABINET DOORS

If your cabinets really are plain and outdated, before you paint them consider adding some decorative detail with raised panels. You can find detailed instructions for this cabinet project at Lowe'sCreativeIdeas.com.

01 Cut 1/4" thick plywood into smaller panels that will fit on the cabinet fronts. Make sure they are large enough to cover any existing grooves.

02 Apply adhesive to the panel and center it on the door.

03 Miter cut the moulding to fit around the panels, similar to a picture frame.

04 Glue the four moulding pieces in place.

05 Allow the adhesive to dry.

06 Apply a thin layer of caulk where needed.

- Typically, you might need caulk in the joints between the plywood and moulding, and the moulding and door front.

07 Allow the caulk to dry.

08 Lightly sand the door if needed.

- **TIP:** Other ways to decorate cabinet doors include using complementary second colors for trim or edges, installing ornate moulding appliques, or applying transfer decals once the paint is dry. Ask a Lowe's associate for assistance.



APPLYING PRIMER

Primer will help paint adhere to the cabinet surfaces and may also be necessary if you are painting a dark color with a lighter one or if you are finishing bare wood or repaired spots. Make sure that the primer is one recommended by the manufacturer of the paint you have selected. Ask a Lowe's associate for help in selecting the appropriate primer for your project.

01 If you haven't done so already, be sure that the walls, floors and countertops have been covered and taped off so excess primer doesn't damage them.

- **TIP:** Use a low-tack tape on wallpaper.

02 Before continuing, make sure you have adequate ventilation in the area where you will be finishing. Also make sure you have the appropriate temperature for the primer. Refer to the primer manufacturer's instructions for specifics.

03 Apply the primer to the doors, drawer fronts and frame using a paint brush or small paint roller.

- If you're painting the inside of the cabinets, apply primer to those surfaces first.
- Foam rollers are easy to use, give good results and are inexpensive.

04 Allow the finish to dry according to the manufacturer's instructions, typically 24 hours.

05 Lightly sand the surface with an extra-fine (320) or super-fine (600) grit sandpaper.

06 Wipe all surfaces with clean water and allow to dry before continuing.



The hardest part of refinishing cabinets is done—the prefinishing. The next step is painting. Watch *How to Paint Cabinets*, with accompanying printable instructions, at [Lowe's.com/Videos](https://www.lowes.com/Videos).

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