



## LIMEWASH INTERIOR STEP-BY-STEP APPLICATION GUIDE



Image: Limewash color #32

### STEP 1: Calculate your quantity

Determining how much limewash to buy is easy. Measure your room's walls for length and width. Calculate area by multiplying length and width of each wall and sub total. Calculate the size of doors and windows and subtract from your total. We suggest adding 25% for waste.

**Coverage:** 1 gallon of thinned Limewash covers about 200–300 square feet per coat on smooth walls. A typical 10' x 10' room with 8-foot ceilings is about 300 square feet. In this case you would need 2 gallons to complete your project.

### STEP 2: Gather your materials

Buy your primer and all the Limewash you need at one time and be sure you have all the same color. You will need buckets for mixing the limewash, paint brush, 3/8" roller cover and frame, tray and liner if using. You will also need a Limewash brush to create the decorative/textured effect. You will also need painter's tape, plastic sheeting and drop cloths. You should also have clean rags and a source of clean water to clean-up spills immediately.

### STEP 2.5: Prep your walls

If your walls have been previously painted the paint should be clean and dust free. Any loose paint should be removed and sanded smooth. Bare masonry should be clean and free of dust. Mask all adjacent areas, trim, doors, cabinets, etc. and place drop cloths on floor and cover furniture.

### STEP 3: Do you need primer?

**Drywall:** If you are painting new or previously painted drywall you MUST apply a mineral primer to provide a porous base for the Limewash. Use Keim Interior Mineral Primer, which covers about 300 square feet per gallon. Apply primer by brush or roller and let dry 4 hours or overnight. See primer data sheet for full details.

**Masonry:** Bare brick, stone, concrete, stucco or plaster does not require a primer. If previously painted, use the primer first.



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## STEP 4: Mix Limewash with water

Limewash is a concentrate and is usually thinned with clean water before use. Generally thin the first coat with 50% water. The first coat provides a uniform finish that completely covers the primed or bare masonry surface. If the mixture is too “runny” add more Limewash until the mixture is similar to ordinary paint. Mix by hand or use a drill and paddle attachment for several minutes to ensure a smooth, uniform mixture.



Image: Limewash color #18935

## Create a “mottled” finish

Limewash is prized for the mineral matte flat appearance as well as tonal “mottling” for a slightly textured surface. The lime binder in Limewash, especially in medium and darker colors can “bloom” during and after application to create a soft “cloudy” whitish effect. This is more noticeable, in darker colors. For light Limewash colors the effect is very subtle.

The desired tonal variations are created by layering several layers of Limewash, with each successive layer being thinned more and more to create more transparent washes. Each layer adds depth and character. There is no limit to how many layers you apply, simply keep working until you develop the look you desire.

**First Coat:** The first coat of Limewash is typically applied by brush and roller to provide a uniform base layer of color. Use a paint brush to cut-in the edges of your wall, around trim, windows, doors, etc. Then apply a uniform layer of limewash with the roller completely covering the wall. Avoid runs, drips or sags. Allow the first coat of Limewash to dry 2–4 hours before applying more layers (or even overnight).



Image: Limewash color #18935

Color will lighten as it dries. Wet Limewash colors appear darker than the actual color shade. The first layer of Limewash will look more “uniform” similar to a normal paint. The subtle variations will show with later layers.

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## STEP 5: Apply random second layer

The second coat should be thinned with more water, typically a 1:1 mixture of Limewash and water is used. The Limewash is now more transparent than the base coat. Use a large Limewash brush for best effect. Apply the second layer in random “patches” starting at the top of the wall and working across the wall in a diagonal direction. Use “X” brush strokes to cover most of the surface, but leaving some areas uncovered for now. It is also OK to overlap the patterns at this point to create darker and lighter areas. Limewash naturally darkens when wet and will dry 2 or 3 shades lighter. Your original base coat will darken when you apply your second layer. Due to the random nature of the application, the surface will dry randomly too, with thinner areas drying faster and heavier coated areas taking a bit longer to dry. This variable drying will give you a “glimpse” at how the wall will look when finished, but with more subtle variations.

KEIM PRO LIMEWASH BRUSH



Fill in the wall with more random strokes, overlapping the original layer. It is OK to leave some of the base coat showing. It will be covered by subsequent layers.



Work across your wall with “puzzle-like” shapes that you will subsequently fit together. Use random brush strokes, some strokes are fully wet, and others are slightly drier. It is not necessary to cover the entire wall with the second layer—some unpainted areas are OK.



Completed second layer, notice that some areas show the base coat Limewash while other areas have overlapped layers. This will add to the random appearance of the finished Limewash.



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## STEP 6: Apply third layer

The third coat should be thinned with even more water, typically a 1:1.5 mixture of Limewash and water. The Limewash will be runnier now and even more transparent, almost like a “stain”. It’s OK if your Limewash runs when you apply it, simply use your brush to work the drips into your random pattern. Use the same Limewash brush to apply this and subsequent layers if desired. Use the same technique as before. The more random your technique, the more pronounced the mottled and tone-on-tone effect will be.



Image: Limewash color 9870 Notice the lighter shade results in a much less obvious mottled effect.

At this point your wall is becoming completely covered with several layers of Limewash and your color should be fully developed. Allow your third layer of Limewash to dry fully before evaluating the finish. This may take 4–6 hours depending on your drying conditions and how heavily you applied your Limewash.

Once your third layer is dried, you can determine if additional layers are necessary to achieve your desired look. There is no limit on how many layers you can apply.

## Two color option

Another way to achieve a beautiful “fresco” appearance is to apply layers of different colors of limewash to achieve a more dramatic tonal variation, especially in lighter hues. In this case, apply a base coat of one color of Limewash. Second and third layers are then installed using a Limewash color that is either lighter or darker than the original color and diluted with water to be transparent. This “color washing” technique can help you achieve dramatic tonal differences even in very light color tones.

The color possibilities are endless, but we recommend selecting colors that are similar in color tone or hue but a few shades darker or lighter— otherwise the visual impact will be incredibly subtle or too dramatic. Below the very subtle texture of Limewash is highlighted for a very elegant effect.



Image: Limewash color #R80 was used as a base color followed by several layers of thinned R80, which is lighter in color tone, applied randomly with a Limewash brush. The subtle effect can be striking.

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## Wet on wet application option

Limewash can also be applied in multiple colors using a wet-on-wet blending technique. In this technique, fewer layers are required making this technique faster and easier. Here two Limewash colors are brushed onto the surface while both are still wet. Blending the colors results in a more subtle tone-on-tone variation. Using a single Limewash brush, keep your two colors in separate containers, brushing on one color first, then brushing and blending the second color with the same brush. This technique allows you complete control over the look and feel of the finish. Following the previous steps of puzzle-like application this technique can be effectively used even on very large walls.



Image: Limewash Colors #21001 and 20302 were blended together, wet on wet, over Interior Mineral Primer.

## Whitewash on brick using Limewash

Limewash is a natural companion to brick, stone, stucco and other masonry surfaces. Limewash “calcifies” onto masonry surfaces and actually helps to strengthen the masonry and control “dusting”. Whitewashing is a very popular way to update old interior brick and stone walls giving the walls a beautiful “veil” of color. For this technique, the Limewash will be mixed with 1.5 parts water to create a very transparent whitewash. Using a 1/2” nap roller, apply the whitewash to brick or stone surfaces, incorporating any runs of Limewash into your next roller pass. The first coat will soak into the masonry and may appear blotchy. A second layer may be needed to create a more uniform and more opaque wash. It may also be helpful to mist the masonry with clean water before washing it with Limewash. This aids in capillary action that “pulls” the limewash into the masonry for deeper penetration and more even results.



Image: Limewash Color #9000 Cristallino Bianco (white) was applied in two coats over bare brick with a roller.

Learn more about Keim Limewash  
<https://residential.keim-usa.com/interior-limewash-colors/>

