



REFRAMING A DIY ARTICLE THROUGH DEVELOPMENTAL EDITING

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PROJECT GOAL

Transform an existing DIY article into a more accurate, reader-focused resource while maintaining the publication's approachable voice.

Challenge:

The original article instructed readers to paint a brick chimney using conventional paint. During editorial review and research, I identified that this recommendation conflicted with industry best practices and could contribute to serious structural damage.

Rather than making surface-level edits, I conducted additional research and revised the article from the ground up.

Skills Demonstrated:

- Developmental Editing
 - Line Editing
 - Copyediting
 - Research
 - Fact-Checking
 - Structural Editing
 - Voice Preservation
- 



BEFORE & AFTER

TITLE + INTRO

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

How to Paint a Brick Chimney For an Upgraded Exterior

If you can't bear to look at your 1970's exposed brick chimney for one more day, it's time for a refresh. A crisp white-washed finish sounds pleasing. So does a bold matte black. Whatever your style preferences, upgrading your brick chimney exterior requires a plan. Here's how to paint your brick chimney to last.

AFTER MY EDITS

How to Paint a Brick Chimney With Sealant and Protect Your Exterior

Keeping a brick chimney in working order is no small feat, especially if that chimney is older than you even know. While using regular paint isn't exactly advisable for your brick chimney, there are plenty of options you can go with that will help you freshen up the look of your brick exterior. Here's how to paint a brick chimney (without using actual paint) and keep it looking sharp for a long time.



BEFORE & AFTER

CHOOSING MATERIALS

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The type of paint you should choose depends on how often you use your chimney and its exterior. If you use your fireplace occasionally, latex-based paint will work. However, if you expose your brick to high temperatures, like in the case of a furnace or wood-burning stove, you'll need a high-temperature paint that won't peel and bubble.

Also, the type of paint you need will depend on the exterior type of your chimney. If it is just a stainless steel flue, a high quality, high heat paint—which can be brushed or sprayed on—would likely work best. If it is a brick or stucco surface, your best option would be to prime it with a masonry primer/sealer and then finish it with acrylic paint.

AFTER MY EDITS

Painting your chimney with regular paint is not a great idea, but using a vapor-permeable sealant is a safe alternative to keep the brick looking fresh and help it last as long as possible. Check out the Chimney Safety Institute of America's list of approved products to choose the vapor-permeable sealant that's best for you based on your budget and availability in your area.

For most brick chimneys, one gallon of vapor-permeable sealant is enough, since it can cover 100 to 150 square feet of brick. Measure your exposed chimney area before purchasing sealant so that you don't spend too much on products you won't use.



EDITORIAL DECISIONS

Developmental Editing

I reframed the article's central recommendation after identifying that traditional paint can damage masonry. Therefore, I replaced the original DIY recommendation with a suggestion to use vapor-permeable sealant based on industry guidance.

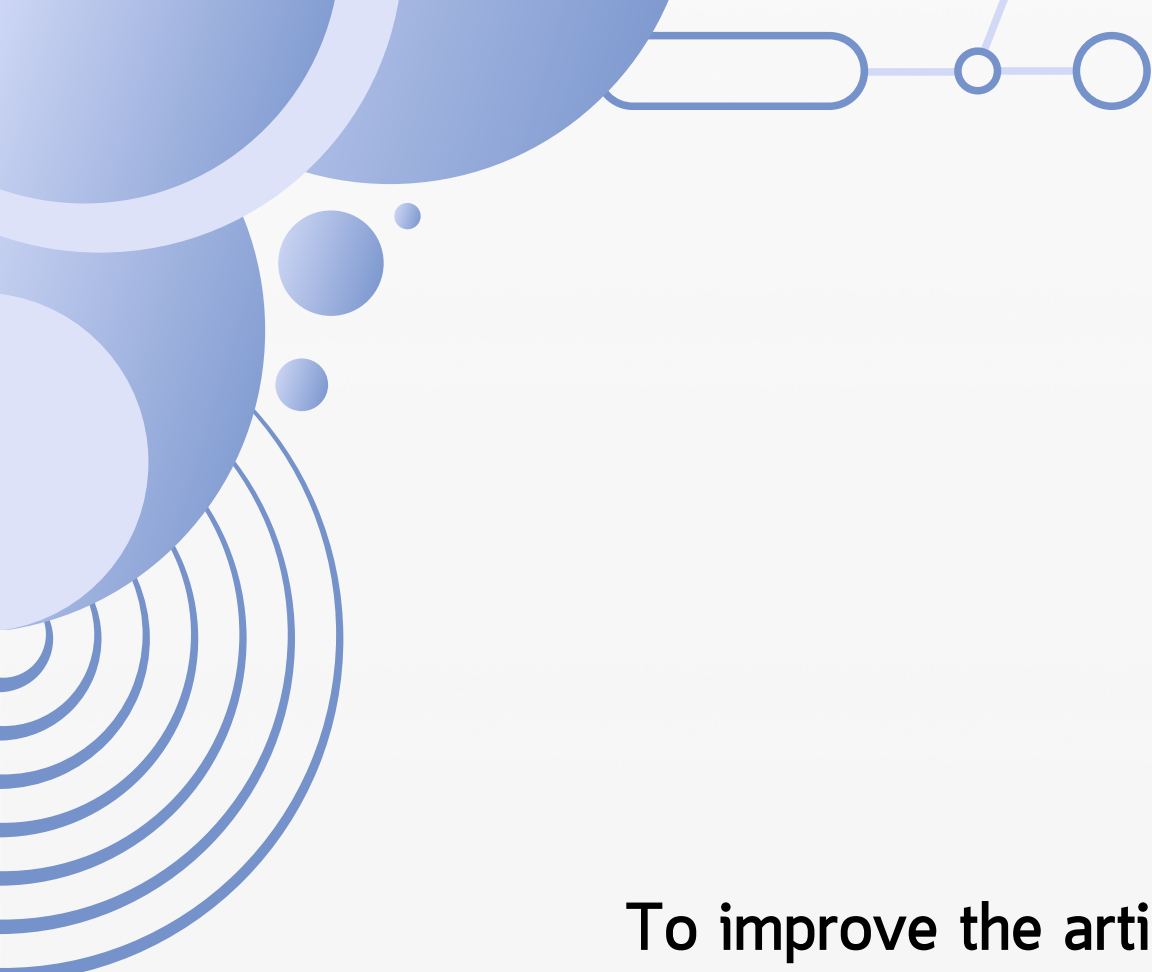
Structural Editing

I reorganized the article so readers first understand why paint is problematic before learning the safer alternative.

Reader Experience

I added sections answering common reader questions before they become obstacles:

- Why shouldn't I use paint?
 - What should I use instead?
 - How much product do I need?
 - Is this project safe to DIY?
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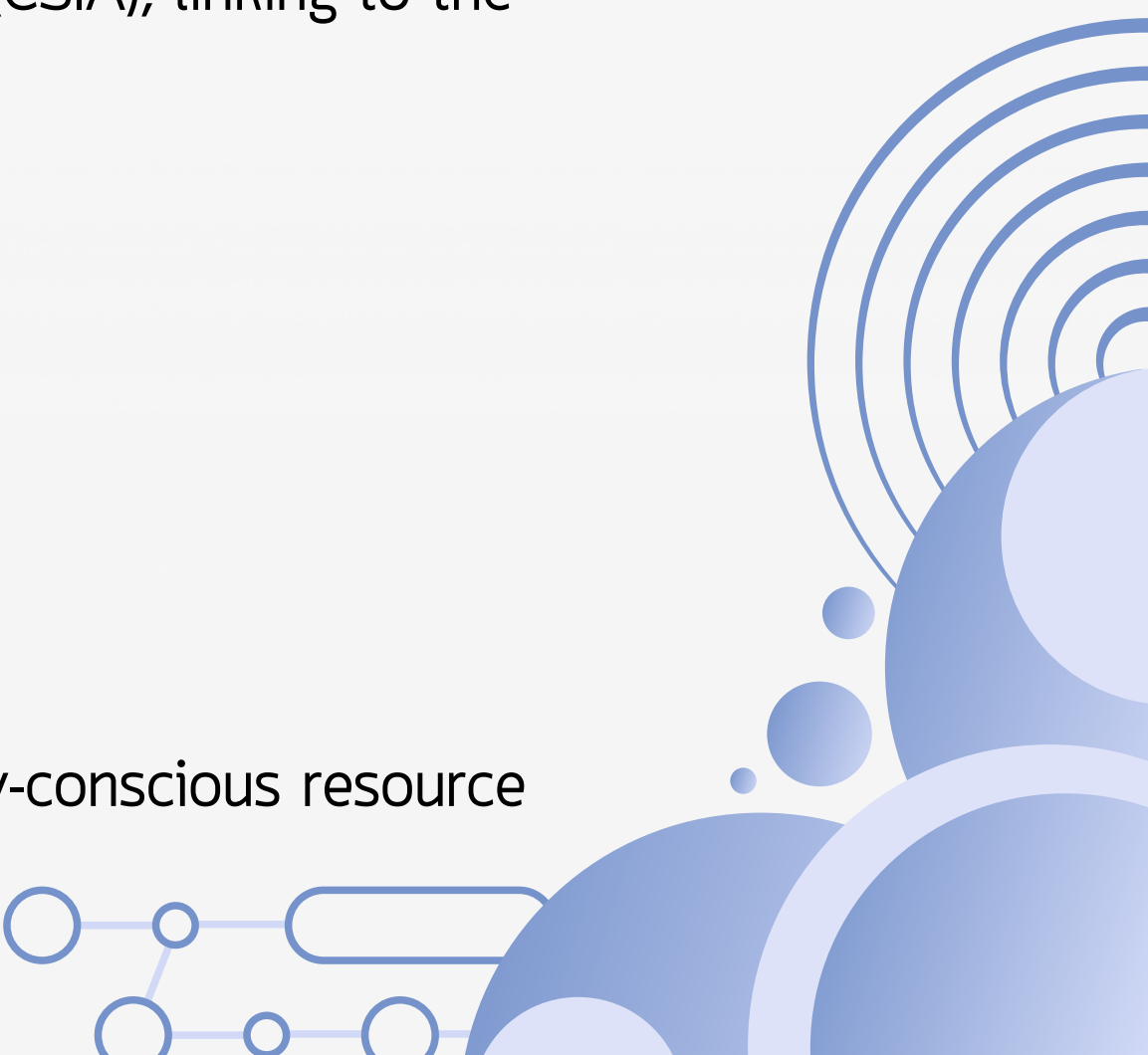
RESEARCH & FACT-CHECKING

To improve the article's accuracy, I:

- Verified recommendations using the Chimney Safety Institute of America (CSIA), linking to the most relevant information directly within the article
- Updated pricing information
- Added weather considerations
- Expanded roof safety guidance
- Recommended industry-approved products
- Clarified when professional assistance is appropriate

Why it mattered:

The revised article shifted from a basic how-to guide to a more reliable, safety-conscious resource for DIYers built on current best practices.





MY EDITORIAL PHILOSOPHY

Great editing goes far beyond correcting grammar and mechanics.

I believe every edit should strengthen a piece and communicate accurate information while preserving the author's voice and intent. Whether I'm improving sentence flow, reorganizing information, fact-checking technical details, or identifying structural issues, my goal is always the same: help readers connect with clear, engaging, and trustworthy writing.

What I focus on:

- Preserving author voice
 - Improving clarity and flow
 - Strengthening structure
 - Enhancing reader engagement
 - Fact-checking and research
 - Thoughtful, constructive feedback
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How to Paint a Brick Chimney With Sealant and Protect Your Exterior



Difficulty: 4/5

Difficulty Details: Consider skipping the DIY.

Time to Complete: 4.5 days

Time Details: Most of this will be drying time.

Cost: \$200–\$500

Cost Details: Consider letting a pro with all the equipment handle this one.

What you'll need:

TOOLS

- Bucket
- Drywall knife
- Ladder
- Paint roller (optional)
- Paint sprayer
- Paint tray (optional)
- Paintbrush
- Power washer (optional)
- Roof anchor (optional)
- Safety harness (optional)
- Safety rope (optional)
- Scrub brush
- Small touch-up paintbrush

SUPPLIES

- Brick mortar
- Caulk
- Drop cloth
- Mild soap
- Painter's tape
- Sandpaper
- Vapor-permeable sealant

Keeping a brick chimney in working order is no small feat, especially if that chimney is older than you even know. While using regular paint isn't exactly advisable for your brick chimney, there are plenty of options you can go with that'll help you freshen up the look of your [brick exterior](#). Here's how to paint a brick chimney (without using actual paint) and keep it looking sharp for a long time.

Related Article: [How Much Does It Cost to Paint a Brick House?](#)

Is Painting Your Brick Chimney a Doable DIY?

While the idea of painting a brick chimney seems pretty straightforward, there are a few things to consider before either moving forward on your own or hiring an exterior painter or [chimney repair service](#) near you to climb that ladder.

Cost of Hiring a Pro

The cost to hire a professional to paint a chimney with sealant averages between **\$230 and \$550** for the entire project. The final number will depend on where you live and how complex the work is. If your chimney is larger than average or needs a lot of scraping and patching, it will cost more.

Labor and Safety

As you probably know, your chimney isn't in the most convenient place for you to work on it. You'll have to get on top of your roof to DIY this one, so there are a lot of safety precautions that you need to take to make this project a success and avoid a trip to the hospital. If you're not confident in your ability to properly use a ladder and a safety harness, this isn't the DIY for you.

On top of your physical safety concerns, painting a chimney exterior with regular paint, especially a chimney that you're regularly using, is not a good idea. The [Chimney Safety Institute of America](#) (CSIA) recommends a vapor-permeable sealant, general [chimney maintenance](#), and upkeep over standard painting, as paint can cause structural damage to your chimney over time. Even the safer method of using a vapor-permeable sealant instead of paint creates a dangerous DIY since you'll be working on the roof regardless.

Cons to Painting Your Chimney

So, why isn't painting your chimney a good idea?

For starters, paint doesn't protect the bricks of your chimney. In fact, painting a chimney seals up the natural pores in the brick that allow moisture to escape. By adding a layer of standard paint, you're eliminating the ability for any excess moisture to work its way out of the brick, which can be one of the most dangerous [chimney problems](#). If your chimney experiences too much moisture, it could cause the brick to crumble. In extreme cases, it could completely fall in. Plus, excess moisture may lead to mold growth down the chimney, which, of course, is a huge issue.

All in all, **using regular paint on your chimney will likely cause many more problems than it's worth**. Sure, it will look amazing for a few years, but once the bricks start to chip and crumble, you may wish you hadn't painted your chimney in the first place, especially once you see the [cost of chimney repairs](#).

To avoid a chimney catastrophe, hire a pro and opt for a vapor-permeable sealant/waterproofer instead of paint. However, don't just use any random waterproofer or sealant from a local home improvement store. The [CSIA](#) offers a list of several certified safe products from HeatShield, CrownCoat, and more to protect your chimney for the long haul without painting it.

Related Article: [Thinking of Painting Your Brick House? Here's Everything You Need to Know](#)

Prepping to Paint a Brick Chimney With Sealant



If you think you have the skills to pay the bills, so to speak, there are a few things you should prep before you bust out the sealant.

Buying Your Sealant

Painting your chimney with regular paint is not a great idea, but using vapor-permeable sealant is a safe alternative to keep the brick looking bright and fresh and help it last as long as possible. Use the above list from the CSIA to choose the vapor-permeable sealant that's best for you based on your budget and availability.

For most brick chimneys, one gallon of vapor-permeable sealant is enough, since it can cover 100 to 150 square feet of brick. Measure your exposed chimney area before purchasing sealant so that you don't spend too much on products you won't use. ỹ

Choosing the Right Weather

This DIY requires several days to complete, and you'll spend most of this time waiting for the brick mortar, caulk, and sealant to dry. Since your chimney is outside, and therefore exposed to the elements, check the weather and choose a mild week with low humidity and no rain in the forecast.

We know that meteorologists may not have a perfect track record, but hear them out while you're planning for this project. The sealant alone takes at least 24 hours to dry, and it's important that it stays *completely* dry during this time; otherwise, you may have to redo your work completely.

Getting on Your Roof Safely

First, remember: You're going to have to get on top of your roof. We want to reiterate that this can be **very dangerous** for someone without experience and should never be attempted without full safety precautions. If this makes you nervous at all, put down the ladder and call a pro instead. If you're familiar with the safety protocols involved in working on a roof and are confident that you can follow them to a tee, keep on chugging.

Lean your ladder against your home, and don't place it in front of any doorways. Along with that little piece of advice, follow all other common [ladder safety tips](#) to ensure that you don't fall and end up damaging your home or, worse, injuring yourself or others.

If your roof is slanted at an extreme angle, you need to use a safety harness and rope with a high minimum breaking strain (the force that would make a rope fail). Attach a roof anchor into the rafters at the roof's peak, then attach your rope to the anchor and your harness. If you do happen to slip while working, this will stop you from taking a very dangerous and potentially fatal fall.

1. Scrub the Brick Clean

First, thoroughly clean your chimney. A sturdy scrub brush and a bucket of water with mild soap or dish detergent will do the trick. Just be sure to get all the cracks and crevices before moving on to the next step.

2. Sand and Patch

If someone sealed or painted your chimney in the past, use 80- to 100-grit sandpaper to scrub off as much peeling and flaking material as possible. Then, inspect your chimney for missing or damaged brick mortar. If you find areas that need some attention, patch them using new brick mortar and a drywall knife. Allow your patchwork to dry and set for 24 to 36 hours.

3. Caulk the Gaps

Next, fill in any large holes or gaps in the brick with caulk to ensure a smooth surface and prevent water from ruining your paint. You want to seal any gaps larger than 1/16th of an inch (you'll definitely want to pull out the ruler for that one). Let the caulk dry and harden completely before moving on—it'll take one to two days.

4. Protect Your Roof

Before you begin painting your vapor-permeable sealant onto the brick, cover the roof at the base of your chimney, the ground around your chimney, and the ladder with drop cloths. Use the painter's tape if necessary to secure the cloth to the roof. The drop cloths will catch any stray sealant that may fall or blow in the wind, giving you a much easier time when it comes to cleaning up.

5. Apply Your Sealant

Since bricks are porous, it's much more effective to use a paint sprayer to apply your vapor-permeable sealant. However, if you can't use a sprayer for any reason, you can use a paint roller and a brush to get the same effect; it may just take a slightly longer time and more detail to get full coverage.

Once you've got all the bricks covered, you can come back in with a small touch-up brush to fill in any hard-to-reach areas or odd angles that your sprayer or roller apparently had an aversion to.

DIY vs. Hiring a Pro

Now that you know how to paint a brick chimney with vapor-permeable sealant, take a second to think about if you actually want to do it alone. Since you'll need a lot of supplies and safety equipment for this DIY, the costs can add up quickly. You may be able to save a small amount on labor costs by doing it yourself, but you have to consider if the savings are worth it given the risks that come with working on top of your roof as well as the labor involved. Plus, adding a protective coating on a chimney isn't exactly child's play; it can cause long-term damage if done incorrectly.

The pros are called "pros" for a reason. They're well-versed in safety protocols and know how to complete a job quickly with no incidents. We always recommend hiring a pro for any jobs on or around your home's roof. When it comes to your safety and that of your home, you can never be too cautious.