

Watercolor Supplies: What to Buy?

Buying watercolor supplies is your first step in learning how to watercolor. The list of supplies needed can change based on your budget. If you don't want to spend a lot of money, no problem, you can outfit yourself for a relatively low cost. If money is not a problem, there are lots of expensive options you can explore. But generally, it would seem you just need paint, paper and a brush to start. However, there are some other inexpensive supplies that will make the process easier.

Let's start with a list of these basic supplies and move on from there. If you are just starting out, the following list can get you started in creating a completed painting without spending a bundle:

- Watercolor paints
- Watercolor paper
- Watercolor brushes
- Palette
- Sturdy water container
- Piece of masonite, plywood or heavy, smooth cardboard. Make it 2 inches larger than your paper on all four sides
- 1" to 2" painters tape
- Drawing pad, HB and #2 pencil, black kneaded eraser (should erase graphite)
- Graphite paper
- Reference photos or drawings
- Sturdy pencil holder for the brushes and pencils
- Pencil sharpener
- Paper towels
- A clear storage box for your paints
- Small hair dryer

Later, Add These Watercolor Supplies

The list above is a good starting point, but as you move forward in your studies and ability, or you have more money to spend, I would also buy:

- Gatorboard
- Staple gun for stretching watercolor paper
- Set of watercolor pencils
- Set of Micron fine black markers
- Watercolor brush pens
- More watercolor brushes
- Masking fluid and/or drawing gum

- Silicone applicators for use with masking fluid
- Rubber cement pickup block
- Watercolor sketch pads
- Wax medium and wax resist crayons
- Additional primary paint colors
- Clear rulers (if you are planning on painting things with straight lines like buildings)

Your Painting Location

You also want to think about your painting location. Ideally, it would be a comfortable chair and table/desk, preferably next to a window. If you don't have a window location, pay attention to the lighting in your painting location. Regular lightbulbs will not show your paint colors accurately.

Instead, buy a daylight bulb for your current lamp, or a daylight lamp such as an Ottlight (I found mine at Hobby Lobby) or the more expensive daylight lamps from Daylight Company.

It's also helpful to have a long, smooth block of wood to support your painting surface so that it's tilted towards you. This will keep you from having to bend over your painting or minimizes you leaning on it and smudging wet paint.

For the Future

As you build your skill level in watercolor, you may want to purchase or gather other supplies for trying some more advanced watercolor techniques:

- Table salt
- Masking film
- Rubbing alcohol
- An old toothbrush
- A glass light table

Most of these supplies can be found at any hobby store, or you can order them from Amazon, JerrysArtarama, or Dick Blick. And here's a printable PDF of this page for you to download.