

Faux Marble Technique for Miniatures

An easy technique to create a realistic marble finish using craft paints.

Supplies:

- Sample piece of marble or a picture of marble clearly showing veining and colors (This will help you better visualize what marble veins really look like. Veins in marble usually run on a diagonal and they look like they are under water – slightly blurry.)
- 3 to 4 colors of craft paint – white/light, medium, and dark. These should closely correspond to the colors in the marble you want to reproduce (check your sample or photo!)
- White primer, gesso or acrylic wood sealer
- Cat whisker, small feather piece or a very small brush with a very fine point
- Soft flat paint brush
- Soft rounded paintbrush
- Toothbrush
- Sea sponge (or piece of a clean cellulose sponge torn to remove any straight edges)
- Water in a fine spray/misting bottle
- Piece of clean, dry sanding sponge, ultra-high grit / 150 grit or finer
- Small piece of brown paper bag (if you are using sandpaper rather than a sanding sponge)
- Paint mixing palette
- Satin and/or gloss acrylic varnish
- Your project, or a piece of wood or craft board, cut to finished size (NOTE: It is easier to marbleize the top first, then attach it to the rest of the furniture piece).



1. **Prepare the surface for painting.** To make the marbling technique look real, make sure the surface to be marbled is as smooth as possible. Fill in any dents or holes with spackle or paper clay and let dry. Sand smooth.
2. **Apply gesso or primer.** Apply a thin coat of gesso or primer, minimizing visible brush strokes (I do this by dabbing the paint with the brush tip, instead of stroking). Let dry. Sand smooth with your sanding sponge, wipe with a damp cloth or paper towel to remove any grit, and apply a second coat. Sand smooth and wipe clean again. Use the spongy side of your sander or a small piece of a brown paper bag to buff the piece. Let dry.
3. **Paint the main marble color.** Apply a thin coat of the color corresponding to most of your marble sample/picture (Several thin coats will work better than a thick coat). Try to avoid blobs or visible brush strokes. Let dry. Sand smooth with your sanding



sponge, wipe with a damp cloth or paper towel, and apply a second thin coat. Let dry. Sand smooth again with your sanding sponge and wipe with a damp cloth or paper towel. Use the sponge side of your sander or piece of brown paper bag to buff the surface. You may want to apply a third coat depending on coverage and corrections that may be needed. If desired, add a similar second base color using a damp sponge. Spray lightly and let dry. Buff with the sponge side of your sander or paper bag piece.

4. **Veining.** Here comes the fun part! Veining will be created using the tip of a very small brush, a piece of small feather, or a cat whisker. Mix each color with 3 parts paint to 1 part water. Dip the tip into the color that best matches the heaviest veins in your sample/picture, and draw a diagonal line, moving it around and twirling the brush a bit as you make a long, single stroke. You don't want it to be a solid or straight line; the more variation you can give each vein in color and width, the more realistic it will look. Pay close attention to how the veins are arranged in your sample/picture. There are probably some areas with few or no veins, too. Use your brush tip to make a vein thinner by blending the vein edge out a bit.

After you make a few veins, hold a spray or misting bottle of water about 6 -8" away from the surface and lightly spray water on top of the veining to blur the lines. A very light misting is all that is needed. If desired, spray a bit more on a few areas to achieve additional blur. Use the sponge or brush to blot excess water, fix mistakes or spread out an area of veining. Gently dab it up and down over any area that needs softening. Let dry completely.

IMPORTANT: Be sure to continue the veining down and around the side edges of the piece so the top looks like a slab of marble. When you have all the veins and accent veins completed, let dry. If desired, use darker paint to accent the veins, add shading or create additional contrast. For a realistic look, vary the shades and width of each vein that you are accenting. Mist lightly with water and let dry.

6. **Spatter and splotch.** (WAIT — Test this technique on a scrap piece before applying it to your project!). If you look at marble carefully, you will see it has some splotchy spots. Lightly spray the surface and wait until the sheen from the water is gone. Now, dip a toothbrush into paint mixed with a little water. Pull your thumb back over the loaded brush (bristles facing up) to create a small amount of spatter over some of the veins and open areas. Make any final changes and let dry completely.



7. **Finishing.** Use your sanding sponge to carefully sand the top to ensure that the veins and splotches are not raised and that everything is "fingertip smooth". However, take care not to over-sand the edges or mar your veining. Remove any grit or paint dust with a moist cloth. Apply 2 or 3 coats of satin or gloss (or a mix of both). Let dry and sand carefully between each coat until "fingertip smooth". Buff with a soft rag.

Based on technique by Diane Henkler.

<https://inmyownstyle.com/faux-carrara-marble-painting-technique.html>