How to Paint Bare Wood (for Beginners)

In this document, you will learn the basic process to properly prepare and paint bare wood. This high-level overview will help beginners prevent issues like excessive coats of paint or unsightly wood grain. You will find a flowchart outlining these steps on page 2.

⚠ Be sure to complete the below steps in a well-ventilated area and wear protective gear such as safety googles, a mask, and work gloves.

1. Sand the surface of the wood
    a. Sanding the surface of the wood will remove any glaze and open the wood grain. Opening the wood grain will help ensure the paint adheres to the surface.
2. Seal the knots with an oil-based primer
    a. Sealing the wood with an oil-based spray primer will ensure that knots do not show through the paint and ruin the appearance of the finish.
3. Smooth the surface of the wood (with primer)
    a. Smoothing the wood's surface with a dedicated paint primer will make for better paint adherence. The primer helps fill in the gaps in the wood grain.
    b. This process may take a couple of coats as bare wood will usually soak up the primer. Be sure to lightly sand the primer once dry after each coat is applied.
4. Consider using a tinted primer
    a. Using a custom tinted primer will result in fewer coats of paint later.
5. Select the right base for the paint color
    a. Be sure to choose the appropriate base for the paint color as it will help achieve the correct hue.
    b. A paint expert can help you select the appropriate base to ensure the paint dries to the preferred color.

©Aysha Amin, 2026

How to Paint Bare Wood Flowchart

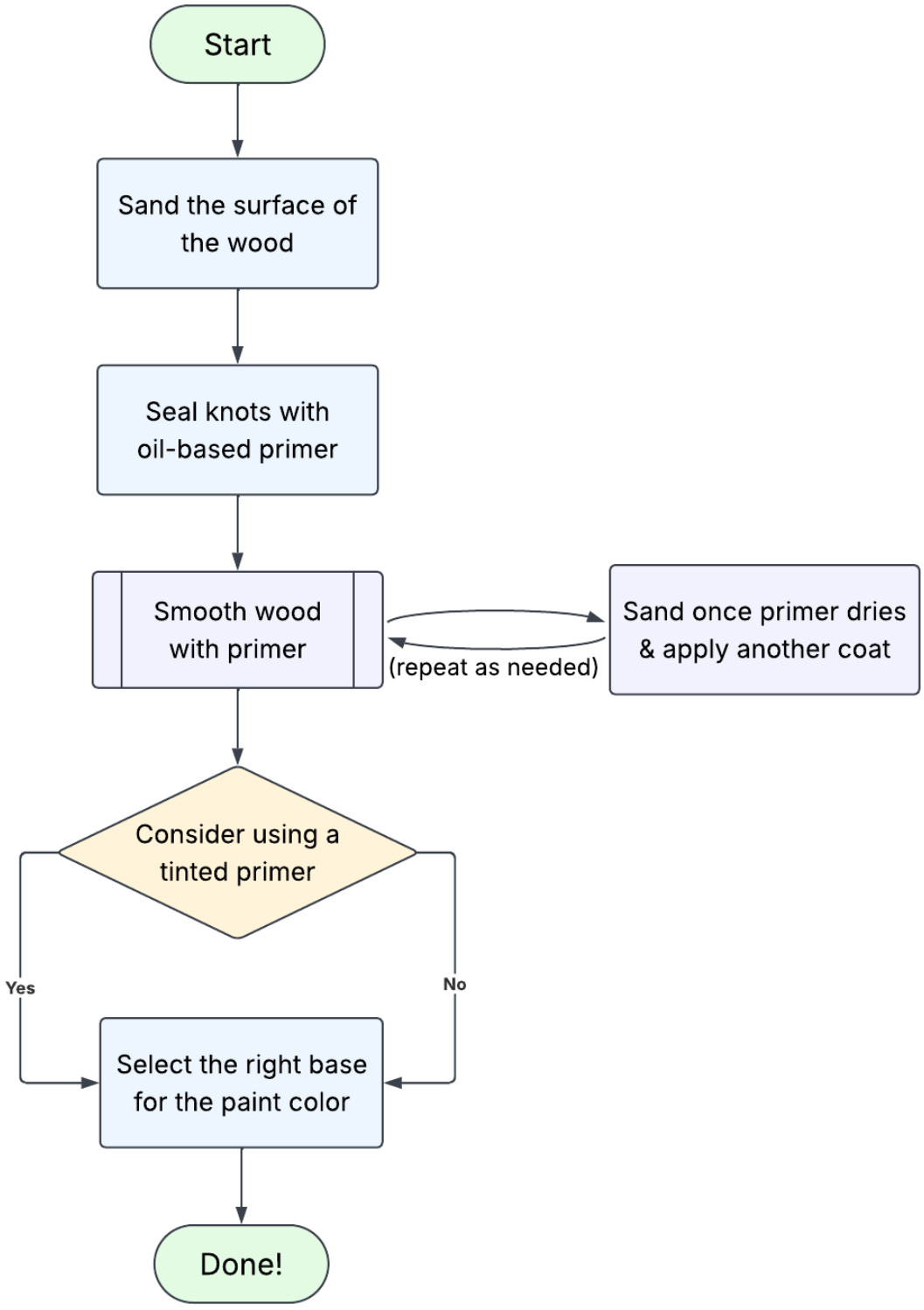


Figure 1 – How to Paint Bare Wood Flowchart

©Aysha Amin, 2026

Citation(s)

Largesse, Jenn. “How to Paint Bare Wood | House One - Youtube.” YouTube, 2021, www.youtube.com/watch?v=0W4jyn8YRdQ.

©Aysha Amin, 2026