



A WEATHERING PLAYBOOK: QUICK GUIDE

While there are loads of references to demonstrate how to apply products and achieve various weathering effects, one of the questions I am asked most often is "*when should I apply them?*"

In the [companion video](#) to this quick reference, I go over a suggested order that can help you know when to apply all of the skills you learn - and some caveats to be aware.

The goal isn't to set up a rigid standard to be followed, but rather to give an initial road map to go by. Once you've done this a few times, you'll begin to adjust it, accounting for your own skills, tastes, and goals.

In the end, you'll have your own "weathering playbook", which will continually evolve.

- Have a plan
 - Document driven - For a more realistic approach, use photo and video references of the actual subject.
 - Story driven - This gives a bit more freedom, yet can often still have strong roots in plausibility. Essentially, make up your own scenario of what has happened - and then weather the model according to that story.
- Consider your materials

- Additive versus subtractive - Different products have their own strengths and weaknesses. Knowing these will help make the task easier - and more fun.
 - Oils, enamels, acrylics, pencils - Plan out how you'll use each one, and know how they interact with each other, and the underlying material.
- Scale considerations
 - Realism vs. Plausible vs. Freestyle
- Big picture considerations
 - Layers of weathering give depth
 - Weathering draws attention to features
 - It can also bring out detail
 - Not every part has to be weathered equally
- Initial Prep
 - Filling gaps and seams
 - Sanding mold lines
 - Adding any surface damage effects
- Prime
 - Take into consideration later colors - you don't want to "fight" your priming color in later steps. A good starting point is to decide if you want the colors over the primer to be saturated, desaturated, or shadowed. Thus - white, gray, or black. Of course, other colors can be used.
- Pre-shade and hairspray considerations - Though not covered in this video, if you plan to use either of these techniques, now is the time to decide where to interject them in the process.
- Base Paint Options
 - Solid color
 - Distressed effect - Add tonal variety with paint
- Gloss coat - In most cases, adding a gloss coat before decals is a good idea.
- Decals
 - Seal them in with a clear coat!
- Clear coat or not? At this stage, you can start weathering over your gloss coat, or add a satin or matt coat. It all depends on what you want to achieve in the following steps.
- Distressing
 - Oils
 - Airbrush
 - Splattering
- Panel lining

- Contrast considerations- The panel lining helps detail stand out. Take into consideration the colors you'll be applying over, and the goal. If it's a clean look, use grays, blacks, or even a darker/lighter shade of the base. For a grimmer look, use tans, browns, etc.
- Clear coat or not?
 - If you'd left the model gloss coated for the panel lining, here is another point to consider adding a matt/satin varnish. Or you can simply move on as is.
- Chipping effects
 - Color considerations - When chipping, consider both contrast with the undercoat, and a sense of what the underlying material is.
 - Scale considerations - How big should the chips be? Having an idea of the scale of the object in relation to a person will help drive your chipping size.
 - Damaged areas - What is plausible? Use real world references for inspiration.
 - Hairspray/Chipping Fluid
 - Sponge
 - Brush
 - Pencils
- Rust effects
 - Multiple colors
 - Look at reference photos
- Fluid stains and leaks
 - Color considerations
 - Plausible location
 - Real world reference
 - Scale considerations
 - Damaged areas
- Environmental effects
 - Dirt, dust, and mud
 - Water, slime
- Exhaust and soot effects
 - Exhausts
 - Guns
 - Damaged areas
- Final check - Look around the model and check if it seems "all of one piece". It doesn't have to be symmetrical, but does it tell a consistent story?

- Topcoat or not? At this stage, you have applied a lot of effects. Some will be matte, others satin or gloss. A variety of finishes is realistic. BUT... weathering can be fragile. If you plan to handle the model a lot, or sell it/give it away, consider a top coat to protect the finish. If need be, spot applications of matt/satin/gloss afterwards, can restore finish variation.

Weathering your models is a great way to add to their realism, adding great interest and visual impact. As with anything else in the hobby, it simply requires practice, and constantly seeking out new ideas, techniques, and products.

Have fun on the journey!
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