

PRO PICKS



Four pros share abrasive picks for successful prep

BY BRIAN SODOMA

Courtesy of Painters USA

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Pros know sanding is essential for just about all prep work. While some like to stick with a single type of abrasive, we found our share of pros who are willing to experiment and try different options. That flexibility may be more important than ever as the industry continues to face a wide array of supply shortages. Here, four pros talk about some of their favorite abrasives to help them achieve successful prep.

1 CHAD WOODWARD

Residential repaints and wood furniture are primary focuses for this TN-based pro, but his crews also tackle some light industrial and commercial interiors and exteriors as well.

For large wood and drywall surfaces, Woodward's preferred sanding tool is the Full Circle International Radius 360.° He likes a couple different disc options for the sander—**3M Pro Grade Precision Ultra Durable Universal Hole Sanding Discs** and **Norton ProSand Multi-Air discs**.

“Both of them are clog-resistant and will take a beating, but Norton is better at not getting marred up from heat and friction. A lot of discs will get gummed up on wood, especially, but the Norton discs seem to last a little longer,” Woodward noted.

He also uses **RhynoGrip White Line Discs**, which he says are great general-purpose abrasive discs for sanders that are widely available, so he keeps them in all of his crews' trucks.

For more detailed wood work on cabinets, doors, door frames and railings, Woodward likes **3M General Purpose Sanding Sponges** as well as **3M Softback Sanding Sponges**, especially for getting into corners and crevices. He also likes the Dremel Contour Sander to help him in cabinet corners and other tight spots on wood. The tool requires the unique **Dremel Sanding Tubes/Sleeves** built specifically for it and he says they do a great job and come in a range of grits.

(Editor's Note: The Dremel Contour Sander has been replaced with the Multi-Max. The noted tubes for this tool are available as an accessory (MM730).)

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◀ The Painters USA team readies this expanse of previously coated steel using a Graco EcoQuip 2 Vapor Abrasive blaster with 20/40 garnet.



Prepping heavy steel with 20/40 garnet blasting media, this Painters USA crew member minimizes dust and achieves the ideal surface profile.

2 RYAN THOMAS

Thomas is the field operations supervisor for IL-based Painters USA and a NACE (National Association of Corrosion Engineers) Certified Level 1 Coatings Inspector. His teams take on complex commercial work in his region and elsewhere around the country—chemical plants, agriculture and food-industry facilities, airports, auto dealerships, office buildings and more. These jobs often involve stripping back old coatings from steel, wood or brick for renovations, additions and other site modifications. Painters USA must turn to pneumatic sandblasting to get the results they want on these jobs.

“Our jobs usually require a significant number of miles removed in a short turnaround time,” Thomas said. “Our crews have to move fast to create the proper surface profile for the spec of that project.”

For sandblasting, crews use trailer-mounted Graco EcoQuip 2 EQ200T Elite and EQ400T Elite machines. When it comes to the actual abrasive material, it’s more about availability and choosing the right type of sandblasting media. Thomas works with several suppliers in the area, including Grainger, Barton and others.

Thomas’ crews use varying levels of fine to course glass **garnet blasting media** to achieve a high-etch on metal surfaces. He also turns to garnet for vapor-blasting applications where it’s important to keep the dust down while still getting the speed and performance garnet offers. **Harsco’s Black Beauty**, a coal slag abrasive, is a more aggressive option his teams use to prepare steel with heavy paint and for rust removal.

Sometimes, a softer media is required. Thomas’ crews recently completed an office renovation, for example, where the customer wanted previously painted brick to now be exposed for an industrial look. For this type of job, Thomas turns to **walnut shells blast media** or **corn cob blast media** for a low- to no-etch finish. For this work, speed is often sacrificed, too. Crews need to move slowly so as not to harm the brick, grout or mortar, Thomas said.

3 BRIAN DENLINGER

This IA-based pro focuses on residential repaints and new construction, but also does his share of restoration work on historical properties. This work involves its share of intricate details on wood surfaces, so **Gator Premium Sanding Sponges** are one of his go-to abrasives.

“They’re super soft, so you can pretty much get them into any little groove or tight space,” he said.

He also likes to attach **Nyalox Cup** and **Wheel Brushes** to an impact drill. The nylon bristles come in a wide range of grit options and Denlinger likes how clean the abrasives leave the wood surface when he’s done.

“Sometimes when using sanding paper, there’s a tendency to push the dirt into it when sanding. The Nyalox product seems like it cleans as it goes,” he added. On interior and exterior wood in need of heavy coating removal, he likes the **Diamabrush Wood, Decks, and Siding Tool**.

For drywall and larger wood surfaces with less detail, Denlinger uses several different power sanders. He’s not afraid to experiment with different disc abrasives in these situations. He counts **Norton Paper Discs** as a great option for his circular sanders and he was recently impressed with **Diablo Hook & Lock discs** on his orbital hand sanders. He also likes the Full Circle International Radius 360° sander and its **Level 360 Sanding Discs** between paint coats on drywall.



Brian Denlinger used a Diamabrush Wood, Decks, and Siding Tool to remove decades’ worth of paint from this historic home, restoring it to its original beauty.

4 JUSTIN MUMMA

This MD-based pro has a strong background in multifamily interiors and exteriors, but today focuses primarily on residential repaints, kitchen cabinet refinishes, and he also sees some commercial work.

For wood cabinets and trim, Mumma loves his SurfPrep sander. He likes the **SurfPrep Foam Disc pads** because their squishy feel makes it easier to get into grooves and tight areas. For drywall, he uses a DEWALT drywall sander with **Norton Sanding Discs** to scuff the surface for a coating. He recently refinished a staircase where he had to change the color from a dark finish to a light one, which required heavy sanding. For that, a palm sander with **Gator Stick-On Sanding Discs** did the trick.

“Sometimes you have those jobs where it’s a really heavy removal and you spend a lot of time sanding because you need to completely clear the old coating off. The palm sander and the Gator discs do a great job,” he said. ■