

Reception revamp

Using paint for a cost-effective office makeover

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Anyone who works in an office knows the benefits of a workplace that is clear of clutter and filled with natural light. Reception areas and shared break-out spaces also play a vital role in setting the mood. But not all organisations have money to spend on fancy office refits – especially those in the not-for-profit sector.



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Final touches The newly revamped space is furnished with artisan fair trade baskets, cotton cushion covers and an alpaca throw from Oxfam Shop. Check out oxfam.org.nz/oxfam-shop or oxfamshopnz for handmade goodies from around the world.

ADY 2019

Oxfam New Zealand is a development organisation working in the Pacific and elsewhere to help combat poverty, social injustice and the effects of climate breakdown. Thanks to a generous landlord, the team at Oxfam New Zealand had the chance recently to reconfigure their Auckland-based office layout, including knocking down a wall to create a light-filled reception area.

The challenge was to refurbish this new space on the tightest of budgets. The solution? A pot of Resene Lustacryl and some volunteer time to repurpose old furniture. Out with the frumpy blue on the armchairs and tawdry teal on the vinyl chairs. A simple application of Resene waterborne semi-gloss enamel in Resene Bokara Grey delivered a subtle new sophistication. Adding in a few fair trade homewares from the Oxfam Shop range completes the updated look.

Step 1 Cover the edges of any wooden or metal chair arms or legs with masking tape to be painted around.

Step 2 Paint the chair fabric.

- **For a vinyl chair**, use several light coats, allowing the paint to fully dry between each layer. Sand off any paint dribbles and touch up as necessary for a smooth finish.
- **For a low-pile, tight-weave fabric**, dilute the paint with a little water and use an old brush to really work the paint into the fabric. The aim is to get even coverage of the fabric with the minimum amount of paint. Repeat coats as necessary to get a solid colour finish. Allow the chairs to fully dry (this may take several days). If the fabric feels a little stiff to touch, soften it by buffing with medium-grade sandpaper. Take care not to damage the fabric.

Step 3 Remove the masking tape and tidy the arms and legs with a light sanding. Wipe down any dusty surfaces using a damp cloth. **g**

Resene Bokara Grey

You will need

- Various grades of sandpaper
- Furniture with vinyl or a low-pile, tight-weave fabric
- 1 litre Resene Lustacryl, waterborne semi-gloss enamel in a colour of your choice. We used Resene Bokara Grey
- Dropcloth
- Paintbrushes
- Masking tape



Sarah is a contributing editor for Good and author of two books. Her latest title is *Upcycling your Home with Style*.

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Adding a little paint colour can be a good way to refresh furniture and give it a second life. Always test the finish on an inconspicuous area of the fabric first to make sure it dries properly and achieves your desired finish before painting all the furniture. Or for a different twist, paint wooden arms and legs of furniture to freshen them up and leave the fabric unpainted.



Armchairs before:



Use an old brush to really work the diluted paint into the fabric



Vinyl chairs getting their first coat of Resene paint.