

# How to Paint Your Nerf Gun *(the Cheat Sheet)*

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## What you'll want to know before you begin

In this guide you will find detailed steps on how to paint your Nerf gun like the professional's do. Before we get too far it's important to point out that some people like to keep their gun assembled when they paint it while others prefer to take it apart. There are benefits to both but I have found that taking apart the gun cuts down on all of the time spent using tape when you want to use multiple colors and by taking it apart you're able to paint visible parts that you wouldn't be able to paint otherwise. With that said there may be some Nerf guns that you won't need to take apart because of their simple design. *For this guide* I did take apart the gun due to its multiple (moving) parts. I suggest taking a variety of pictures of your gun as you disassemble it, especially of the inside showing how the pieces and springs go together. These will act as blueprints when it's time to put your gun back together. I also suggest using a small container with a lid or resealable bag that you can keep all the small pieces in (including screws, springs and parts you don't need to paint) while you paint your gun. Choose a work area where you'll have proper ventilation and plenty of table space to spread out. I found that putting all of my Nerf gun pieces on a scrap piece of ¼" plywood made it easy to move the freshly painted pieces when needed.

## List of everything you may need

- ✓ Your Nerf gun (for this guide we used a N-Strike Recon)
- ✓ Small Screwdriver Set (Phillips head)
- ✓ Camera (to take pictures of your gun as you disassemble it)
- ✓ Sandpaper (Variety of grits – 100 to 220 grit)
- ✓ Dremel with grinding and sanding attachments
- ✓ Rags
- ✓ Rubbing Alcohol or Orderless Mineral Spirits
- ✓ Primer Spray Paint (suitable for plastic)
- ✓ Spray Paint (suitable for plastic)
- ✓ Acrylic Paints (craft or artist paints)
- ✓ Rub 'n' Buff
- ✓ Painter's Palette or Glass Plate (to use for Acrylic Paints & Rub 'n' Buff)
- ✓ Logo printed from computer
- ✓ X-ACTO or Utility knife
- ✓ Scissors
- ✓ Clear packaging tape
- ✓ Artist Brushes Variety Pack
- ✓ Water (to thin down Acrylic paints)
- ✓ Clear Sealer Spray Paint (Matte or Satin Finish)
- ✓ Blue Nitrile gloves
- ✓ Painter's Tape (low adhesive, either Blue or Green)

## The steps (general breakdown)

### **Preparing Your Gun**

1. Sanding
  - 1.A. Remove sheen from glossy surfaces.
  - 1.B. Start with 100 grit and finish with 220 grit sandpaper suitable for plastics.
  - 1.C. Use circular motion when possible and smaller pieces of sandpaper to get into tight places.
2. Aging & Dremel
  - 2.A. Removing Nerf logos and markings using Dremel or file.
  - 2.B. Creating blast marks and scrapes using Dremel or file.
3. Cleaning
  - 3.A. Remove dust from sanding to ensure better paint adhesion.  
Wipe down with a wet rag and then with rubbing alcohol **OR** wipe down with odorless mineral spirits and then clean with soap and water.
  - 3.B. Make sure all of the pieces are thoroughly dry before moving on to the next step.

### **Painting**

4. Priming
  - 4.A. Use primer spray paint formulated for plastics.
  - 4.B. Use either white or black primer spray paint.
  - 4.C. Spray on 2 light coats at the most.
  - 4.D. Make sure the prime coat has covered every crevice.
5. Base Coat
  - 5.A. Use flat black spray paint for a more realistic finish.
  - 5.B. Use flat white spray paint for a more futuristic finish.
  - 5.C. Spray on 2 light coats at the most.
  - 5.D. Make sure all pieces are completely covered.
  - 5.E. Make sure base coat is thoroughly dry before taping.
6. Taping
  - 6.A. Use 1" – 2" painter's tape, either blue or green is preferred.
  - 6.B. Use scissors and/or utility knife to cut precise shapes of what you want to mask.
  - 6.C. Don't leave the tape on for too long after you've sprayed on your accent colors.
  - 6.D. Pull tape away from what you've just painted when you take it off.
7. Accent Painting
  - 7.A. Wear blue nitrile gloves to keep your hands clean while spraying on the accent colors.
  - 7.B. Holding pieces while painting gives you better view and control of what you're painting.
  - 7.C. Use short sweeping strokes when spraying on the paint.
  - 7.D. Spray paint can be any sheen (we used Satin and Gloss)
8. Misting
  - 14.A. Hold the spray paint can at least 16 - 20 inches away to get a light spray mist.
  - 14.B. Use two contrasting colors to create a textured effect (we used Black & Brushed Nickel).

## The Details

9. Stenciling
  - 14.A. Cover image you want to use as stencil (front and back) with packaging tape and then cut out using scissors and X-ACTO or utility knife.
  - 14.B. Make sure you've measured the area you want the stenciled image to go before printing.
  - 14.C. Use a stiff bristle brush, stenciling brush or small sponge to apply paint.
  - 14.D. Have a paper towel or rag laid out to dab excess paint from your brush on before stenciling.
  - 14.E. Hold stencil firmly in place while lightly pouncing on the color.
10. Aging
  - 14.A. Use a contrasting color Acrylic paint. (Black and Burnt Umber work nicely)
  - 14.B. An angled artist brush works best to apply aging washes.
  - 14.C. A small detail artist brush works best to apply Rub 'n' Buff.
  - 14.D. Dry brush along edges and blend away brush strokes with your finger, paper towel or rag.
  - 14.E. Use a contrasting metallic Rub 'n' Buff on parts you want to stand out.
11. Accenting
  - 14.A. Use a small detail artist's brush to paint on your details, including screw heads and levers.
  - 14.B. Use a metallic Acrylic paint and metallic Rub 'n' Buff to apply to any detail on the gun you want to stand out.
  - 14.C. Apply 2 light coats of paint to the details you want to accent.
12. Blast Marks
  - 14.A. Use Black Acrylic paint.
  - 14.B. A narrow tipped detail artist's brush works best.
  - 14.C. Dry brush the paint in the grooved out blast mark created earlier.
13. Rub 'n' Buff
  - 14.A. A small detail brush or wider stiff bristle brush works well to apply Rub 'n' Buff if you want more control.
  - 14.B. Use your finger or a rag to "buff" after applying.
  - 14.C. Must use Odorless Mineral Spirits to thoroughly clean the brushes and your finger **OR** you can wash with warm water and soap to get most of the Rub 'n' Buff off your finger and/or brushes.
  - 14.D. Variety of colors and metallic finishes are available. (We used Ebony, Spanish Copper, Pewter, and Gold Leaf)

## **Finishing**

### 14. Clear Coat

- 14.A. Choose a Clear Coat that is the same brand as the spray paint you used for you accent colors.
- 14.B. Apply 2 - 3 light coats.
- 14.C. Make sure to clear coat both sides of the gun.
- 14.D. Wait for each coat to dry before applying the next. (Drying time will vary)

There you have it, the basic steps to painting a nerf gun like a pro! More details on each and every step at [PaintYNG.com](http://PaintYNG.com).