

Mineral Spirits vs Paint Thinner

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By the DIY experts of The Family Handyman Magazine



The best solvent for cleaning oil-based paint



Mineral spirits

Mineral spirits is more highly refined and has fewer odors than paint thinner.



Paint thinner

Paint thinner is mineral spirits in a less refined form.

Mineral spirits or paint thinner... which is better? For cleaning brushes, paint thinner is best

since it's half the cost of mineral spirits and basically works the same. Other than the price, the differences between the two solvents are subtle:

- Both are petroleum products.
- Both can be used to thin oil-based paints and varnishes and to clean paintbrushes.
- Paint thinner is mineral spirits, but in a less refined form. It contains other types of solvents, which makes it a lot smellier and more volatile.
- Mineral spirits is not as stinky. Because it's more refined, it's slightly more effective in smaller quantities than paint thinner.

No matter which solvent you choose, use it in a well-ventilated space and observe proper safety precautions.