



# Gravity-Feed Airbrushing Kit

## Online Practice Exercises And Getting Started



### Be sure you have the following materials:

- NEO for Iwata Gravity-Feed Airbrushing Kit
  - NEO for Iwata CN Airbrush
  - NEO AIR Compressor with airhose, airbrush holder and AC adapter with international plugs
  - Medea Com-Art Colours
  - Medea Airbrush Cleaner

### *Extra items to complete the exercises (not included)*

- Paper
- Artool templates, stencils or masks (cardstock material)
- Artool Frisket Film
- Art knife
- Paper towels

# Getting Started

1. Attach the airhose to the airbrush and then to the compressor.
2. Choose the correct international plug and attach it to the AC adapter. Plug the AC adapter into an outlet and then plug into compressor unit.
3. Turn the compressor on by pushing the on/off button. The NEO AIR has 3 speeds that range between 4 and 15 psi. Change the speed by pushing the on/off button.  
Click one: On and medium speed - purple light  
Click two: High speed - blue light  
Click three: Low speed - red light  
Click four: Off

Choosing the speed for airflow (psi) depends on the consistency of paint you are using. Thicker paints may need a higher PSI and may need to be thinned. The NEO AIR is a low pressure compressor. Using thick paint may clog your airbrush. Test the NEO AIR speeds to find what works best for you.

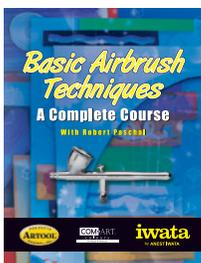
4. With the compressor running, test the airbrush to make sure air is coming out. Do this by pressing down on the trigger with your index finger. You should feel air coming out of the airbrush. If no air is coming out, check that the airhose is properly attached.

The NEO for Iwata CN airbrush is a double-action airbrush which means pressing down on the trigger releases air while pulling back on the trigger releases the paint (when added to airbrush). The more you push down on the trigger, the more air will be released. The further you pull back, the more paint will be released.

5. Shake your airbrush-ready Com-Art Colours thoroughly and add a small amount to the airbrush (less than 1/4 full). In general, use airbrush-ready paint or be sure your medium is thinned to the consistency of skim milk. Again, thick paint may clog your airbrush.
6. Test the spray to be sure your airbrush is functioning properly by spraying onto a piece of paper (down for air and back for paint).

Notice that control of the airbrush is determined by a combination of psi (compressor speed), amount of air and paint released and how close the airbrush is held to the work surface. If you are very close to the surface and push the trigger down and pull back slightly for a small amount of paint, you can create a fine line with practice.

7. Cleaning your airbrush is important between color changes and at the end of a paint session. See pages 9-10 for cleaning information.

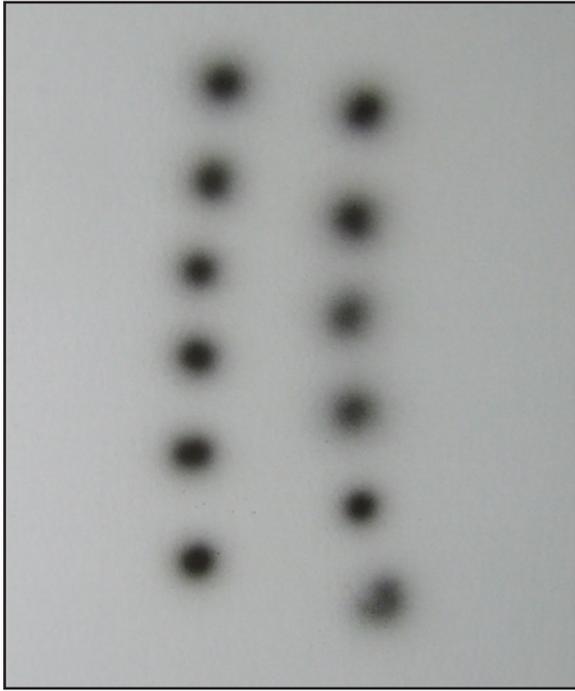


## Online Practice Exercises

The following pages are excerpts from the book *“Basic Airbrush Techniques A Complete Course”* by Robert Paschal

# Freehand Exercise

DONE ON A **BLANK EXERCISE SHEET**



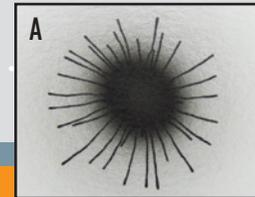
1

EXERCISE ONE

## SMALL DOTS

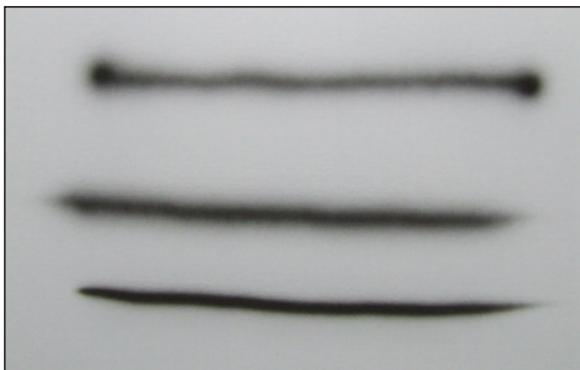
We will now begin to spray small dots. Hold the airbrush very close to the work surface and while keeping the trigger depressed, pull the trigger back ever so slightly and make a dot with a quick “blast” of paint, turning the airbrush quickly on and off. Keep doing this by keeping your air “on”. Practice making small, consistent dots.

If you see little “spiders” appearing in the dots as in image A you are spraying too much paint and are dispersing the wet paint from the center of the dot with air.



**ROBERT SAYS**

*"Down for air.  
Down and back for paint."*



2

EXERCISE TWO

## Lines

Next, let's practice spraying a line. This is done by starting the same as the dot, then continuing to move your hand across the page while the trigger is depressed and pulled back. One of the problems that can happen here is the “barbell effect.” The barbell, referring to more paint at both the beginning and end of the line, is caused by hesitation with your hand while spraying.

To spray a line without a barbell, begin to move your hand before you start spraying and continue to move it when you are done. This will eliminate the buildup of paint at the beginning and end of a pass.

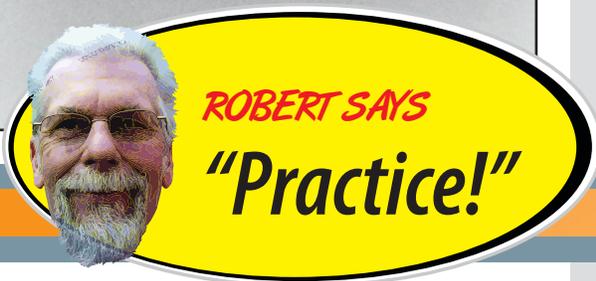
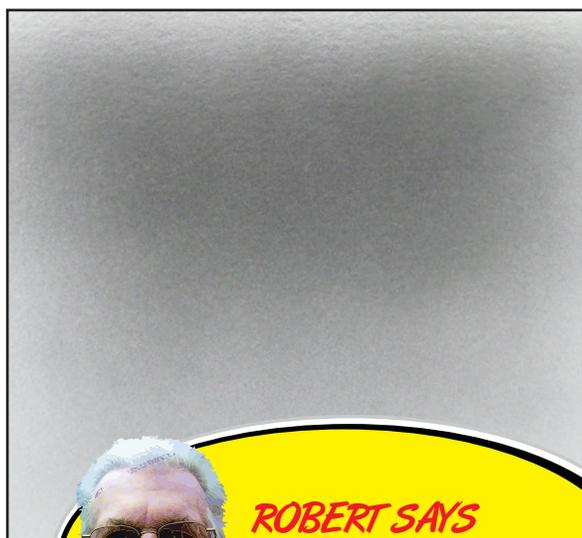
Practice spraying thin lines. Anyone can spray a wide line! Remember, the closer you are to the surface of the work in conjunction with a small amount of paint being sprayed, the finer the line.

3

EXERCISE THREE

Gradation

Now that you are comfortable spraying dots and lines, let's move on to a soft gradation. This soft spray is used to give airbrush work a three-dimensional effect. It's achieved by spraying back and forth across the page in overlapping passes, holding the airbrush about 6" from the surface, so the spray mists onto the surface. This mist of spray, when done properly, has no dots or lines in it and can be described as resembling fog.



4

EXERCISE FOUR

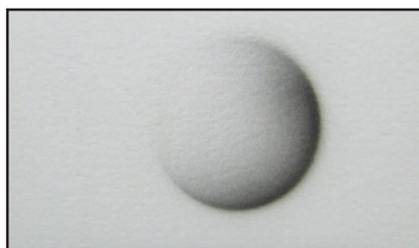
Hard Edge Lines

The dot, line and gradation are three basic types of spray that can be achieved with an airbrush. You will notice that in each instance the appearance is soft and somewhat out of focus. To achieve a hard edge when developing a shape, you must spray through a template, stencil, mask or frisket (image 1). By spraying mist through a template, you can develop an instant three-dimensional shape. When spraying through the circular opening, the template captures the overspray (the spray that drifts away from the area that you are painting). When you remove the template, you see a hard edge (image 2). It is this mist of spray that gives you the three-dimensional look, but you must always use caution: Make sure that surrounding areas are covered so that overspray does not appear where you don't want it (image 4).

As you can see in image 3, airbrush paint is being sprayed along the edge of a template that has other openings. In image 4, when the template is removed there is a ghost image of other shapes because paint drifted and the shapes not being used were not covered.



1



2



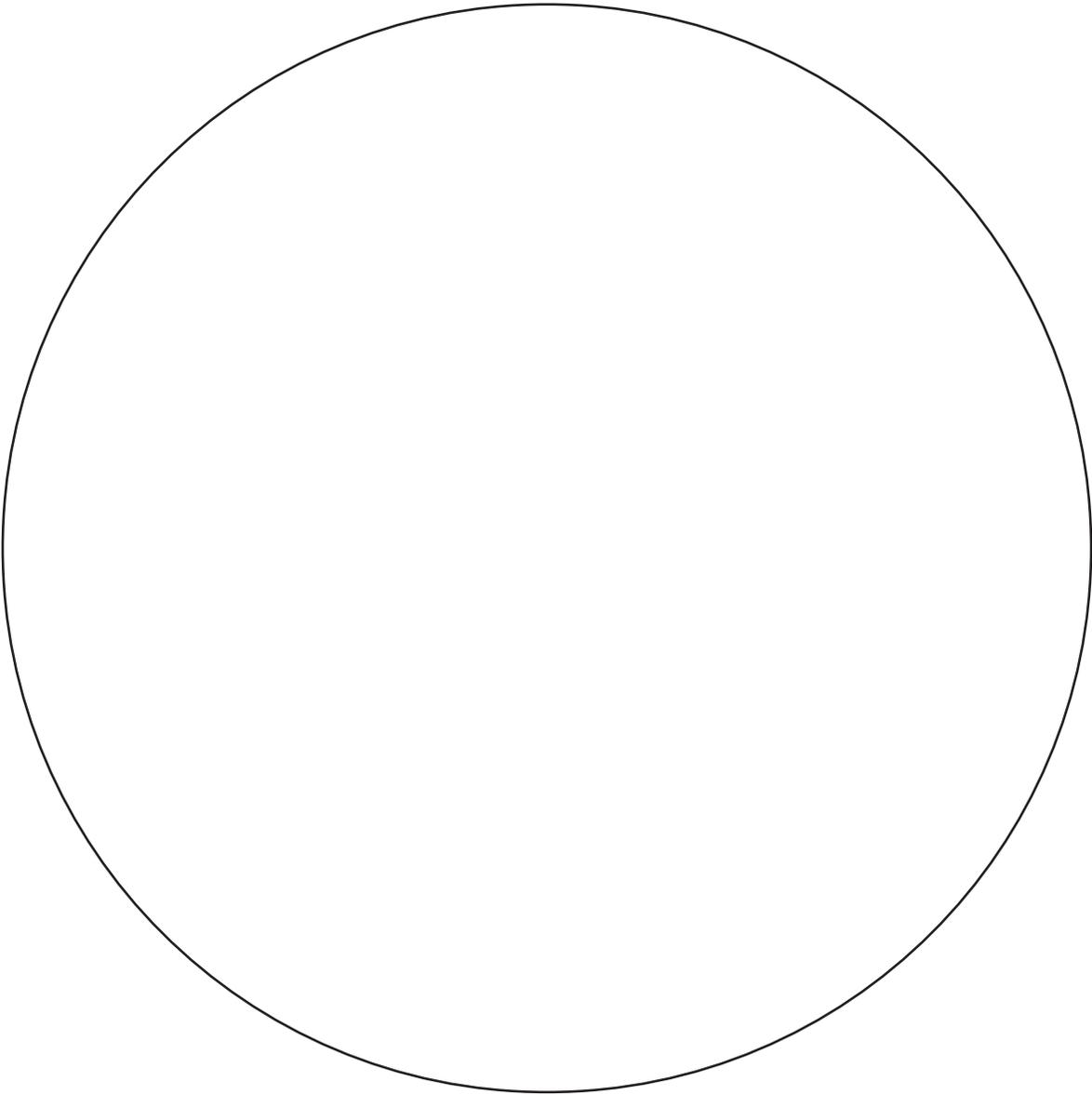
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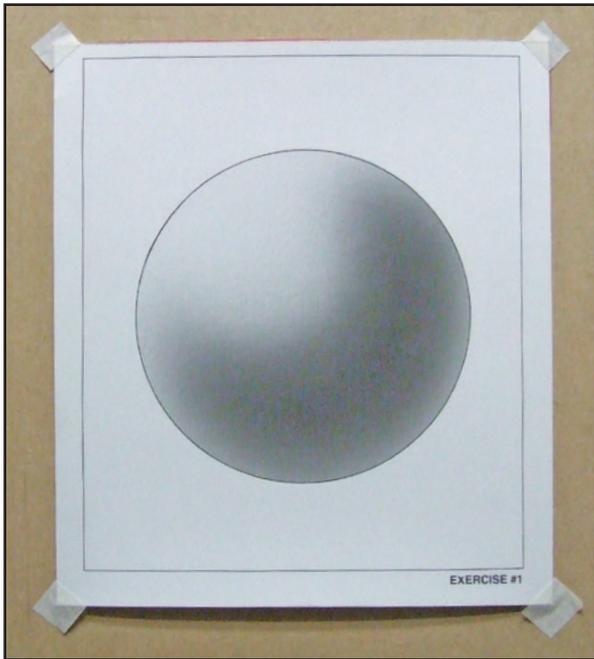
DON'T FORGET TO CLEAN YOUR AIRBRUSH! see pages 9 and 10 for details

Copy this page onto heavy paper or use a compass and draw a circle on a sheet of paper



**Exercise #1 - Circle**

# Circle Exercise

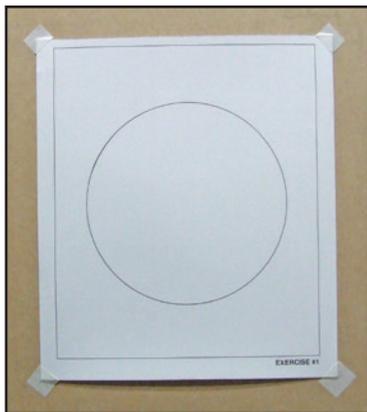


Now that you feel comfortable with the airbrush—learned how to trigger, spray dots and lines, used hand-held templates and know how to develop hard edged lines—it's time to move on to your first geometric shape exercise using frisket film.

Geometric shapes have always been used to teach the basics of art. It is said that all objects brought down to their simplest visual levels are made up of basic geometric shapes—circle, cube, cylinder, etc. The airbrush, because of its ability to spray soft dots, can make flat geometric shapes look three-dimensional.

When a circle is rendered with an airbrush using black ink and frisket film, it ends up looking like a black/white photograph of a ball or sphere with a 3-D appearance. In this exercise the light source is coming from the upper left-hand side. Remember that highlights will be on the upper left-hand side and the darks on the lower right-hand side.

## DONE ON EXERCISE #1 - Circle SHEET



1

Tape exercise #1 to your drawing board using drafting tape on all four corners.



2

Apply a sheet of frisket film over top of the exercise sheet. Remove the backing paper down only 1-2" from the top of the film and attach the adhesive side of this strip of film to the top of the exercise sheet.



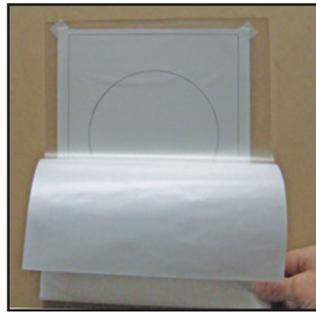
3

Smooth out the strip of frisket film with your hand.



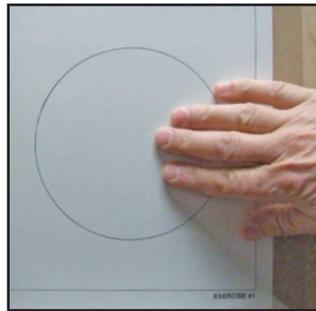
4

Reach underneath the frisket film and grab the loose sheet of backing paper.



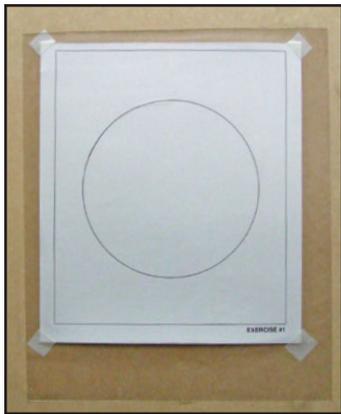
5

Pull down on the end of the loose sheet of backing paper to apply the frisket film over the entire exercise sheet. Save the backing paper to put pieces of cut frisket onto for future use.



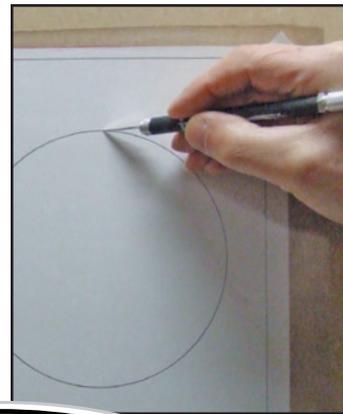
6

Use your hand to work out to the edges any air bubbles that may appear underneath the frisket film. Be sure to rub gently.



7

Now you are ready to begin cutting out the circle with your frisket knife.



8

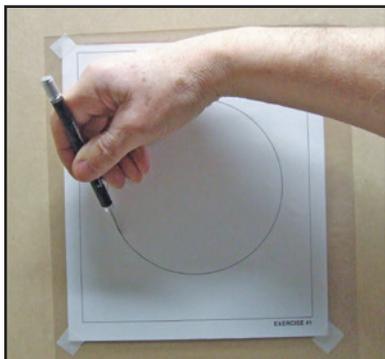
Using the frisket knife with a #11 blade, begin to cut around the circular shape.



**ROBERT SAYS**

*"Cut carefully! Cut only the frisket film, not the paper."*

9

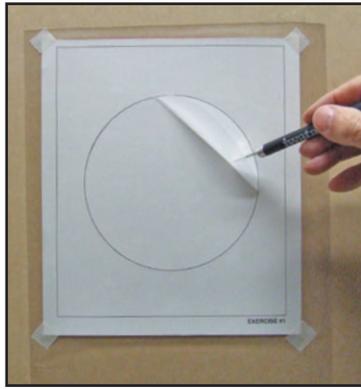


Learn to cut friskets in one continuous motion without removing the frisket knife blade from the cut. This ensures a smooth, continuous line around the perimeter of the circle with no "sawtooths." Don't press too hard with the knife; it's sharp and you don't want to cut into or through the exercise sheet.



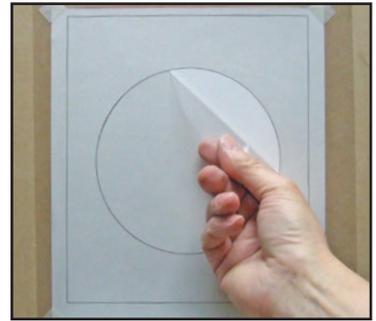
10

Gently slide the tip of the frisket knife underneath the cut of the frisket film.



11

Use the tip of the knife to lift the piece of film covering the circle.



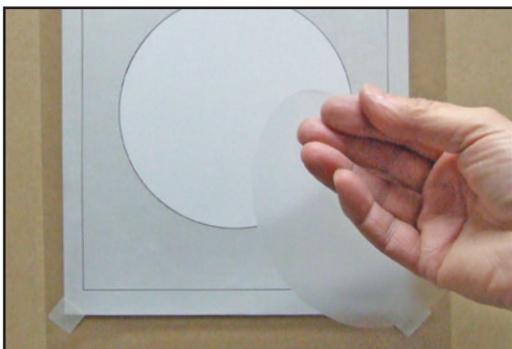
12

Once the edge of the frisket film covering the circle is lifted, grab the edge with your fingers and begin to peel it off.



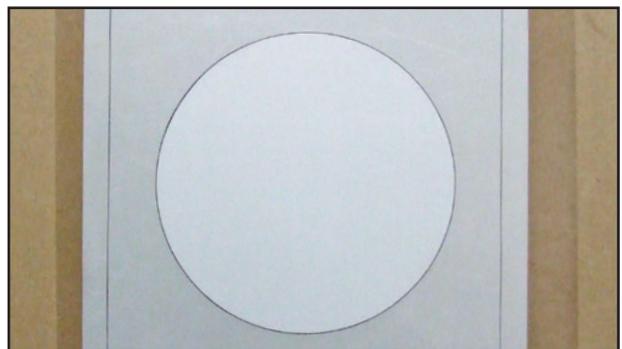
13

Slowly peel the frisket film completely off the area to be airbrushed so that you don't tear the paper surface.



14

Place the piece of frisket film just removed onto the backing paper for future use.

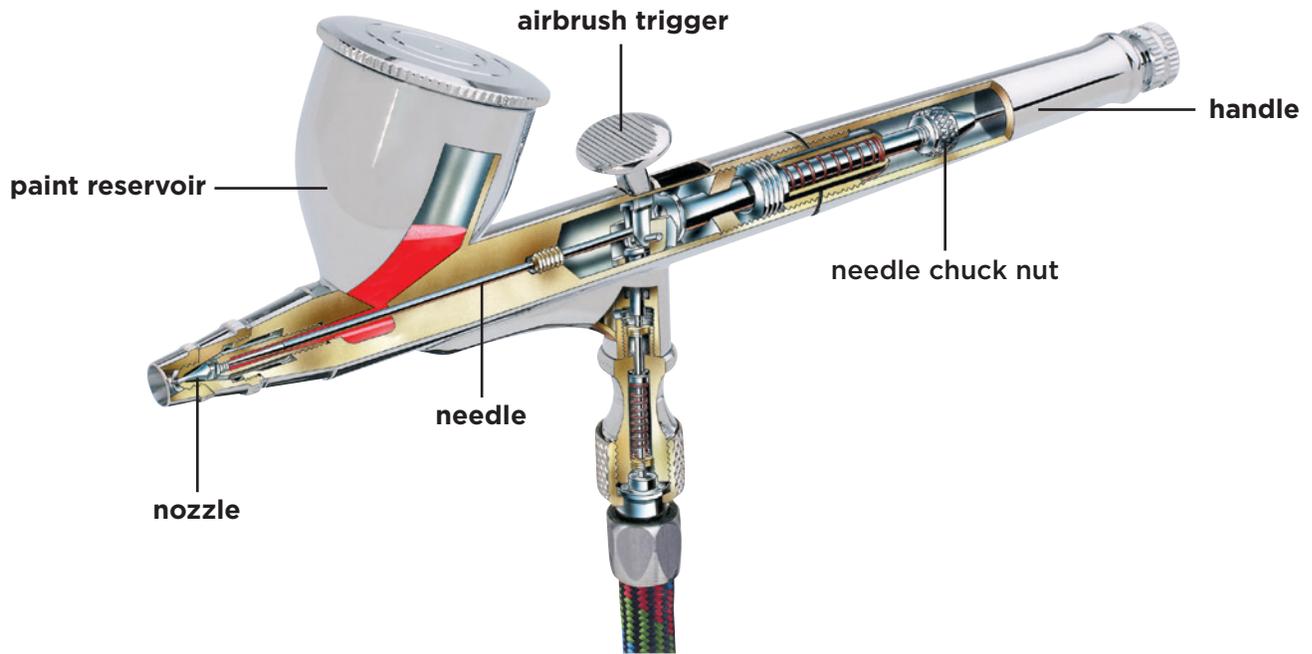


15

Now the entire surface of the circle is open and ready to receive paint.

# CLEANING THE AIRBRUSH

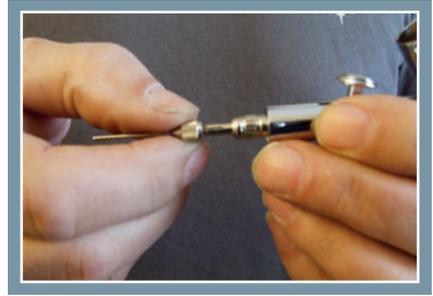
For optimum performance, an airbrush must be kept clean; and there are two times when cleaning is required: (1) between color changes and (2) at the end of a work period.



The airbrush requires cleaning only in those areas that come in contact with paint: the paint reservoir or color cup or jar, the tip of the airbrush and the needle. The first thing to do is remove the paint from the paint reservoir. Pour excess paint back into the container and then wipe the reservoir with a piece of paper towel.

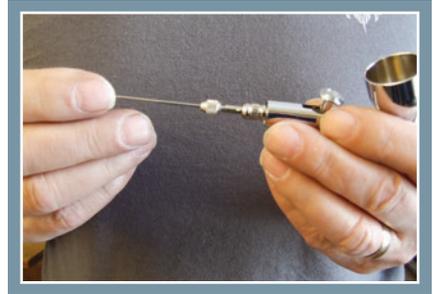


After wiping as clean as possible, squirt airbrush cleaner into the paint reservoir. Spray the cleaner through the airbrush into a rag, paper towel or airbrush spray out pot. Again, wipe the color cup with a paper towel. Use a dental brush to reach into the nooks and crannies of the color cup with the cleaner.



Once the color cup is cleaned, remove the airbrush handle to expose the needle. Notice that there is a nut holding the needle in place. This is called the needle chuck nut and it must be loosened to remove the needle.

Unscrew the nut counterclockwise one-half turn. (It is not necessary to remove the nut completely.) Take hold of the back end of the needle and pull it out while keeping airbrush upright. If you turn the airbrush while the needle is out, keep thumb over the trigger so the trigger doesn't come out.

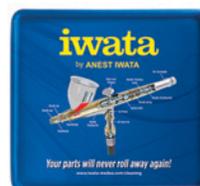


Once the needle is removed, wipe off paint residue with a paper towel. Always wipe the needle from the end to the tip and be careful not to stick yourself, since it is sharp. Once the needle is clean, replace it in the airbrush. Slide it back through the needle chuck screw gently pushing it forward until it stops. Do not push it once it stops. Once the needle is back in place, re-tighten the needle chuck nut.

To insure that everything is properly set, pull back on the airbrush trigger. Notice how this action makes the needle move backwards. If it does not move backwards, this means the needle chuck screw is not tight enough. Once you are sure that the needle is properly reinstalled, replace the airbrush handle. Now spray more cleaner through the airbrush and then move on to your next color or store the airbrush for future use.

NOTE: When just changing colors, it is possible to just spray cleaner or water through the airbrush without taking it apart. This can be done when changing between similar colors like blue to purple, etc. However, when switching from colors such as black to yellow, a thorough cleaning is necessary as described above.

**See the complete line of Iwata cleaning and maintenance products.**





### *About Robert Paschal*

Robert Paschal holds a Master of Fine Arts Degree in painting and has taught airbrush technique, acrylic painting techniques, watercolor and pastel workshops throughout the U.S. He is the author of *Airbrushing for Fine and Commercial Artists* and co-author of *Advanced Airbrush Techniques-The Art of the Dot*. Robert has taught thousands of people the fundamentals of airbrush technique in his classes that are geared to artists at all levels. Robert's artwork has been exhibited throughout the United States, and he has received several awards — among them *American Artist* magazine's Art Masters Award and *Airbrush Action* magazine's Vargas Award.

*Check out Robert's fine art newsletter at:*

**www.ARTtalk.com**

*and for more information on airbrushing go to:*

**www.AirbrushTalk.com**

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