

Rusty Chain Mail Painting Guide

by Richard Gray

This is just a short painting guide on how to paint rusty chain mail without using metallic paints. I've painted it on my Nurgle Lord as it is particularly appropriate, but feel free to use it wherever you like!



The paints you will need are as follows:

Vallejo: Black, Pale Blue Grey, White

Games Workshop: Skavenblight Dunge, Rhinox Hide, Mournfang Brown, Trollslayer Orange

Optional: Scale 75 Kalahari Orange

This is a very simple, but effective technique. You may notice a few of the colours occur throughout the guides I have been creating for the Plague Lord, this is because it keeps the model coherent and ties it all together.



The first step is super easy, paint it Vallejo Black! As there are a lot of holes in chain mail, make sure that all of them are filled with paint. You may find that once the black is dried that there are still holes that show without paint, so you may need to touch it up before the next step. The reason for this is the surface tension of the paint.

Make sure that you paint down all of the edges that touch the skin or the cloth. The black will create the impression of a shadow. It's much better to fill a crevice with black than a skin colour as the black outlines it, but the skin colour will make it look like you have gone over the edges.



Stage two is to pick out each chain link using Skavenblight Dunge. You can cheat a little here and carefully drybrush the paint on, being careful not to go over any other area but the black chain mail.

Load the brush up and then wipe it off on a piece of kitchen roll until the paint only leaves a faint mark, then rub the brush over the chain mail.

You can of course quickly paint all of the links by hand, but don't worry about making them perfect as you'll be painting over most of it.

Don't get any paint inside the black holes of the chain links.



Here the links start to look more like metal. In fact, if you did not want to make rusty chain mail, at this stage it would be perfectly acceptable to use this as a tabletop standard effect.

Using Pale Blue Grey highlight the underside of each link. Don't cover the entire underside as you want some of the Skavenblight Dingie to still be visible.

You may notice a few of the links have the upper edges painted. This is due to the model having some of the links broken to make it more interesting. If it looks like an upper edge should have a highlight then paint it with one. The idea is to make the highlights look interesting.



The final stage of the highlights! Using white (it doesn't really matter which white you use) place a small dot on any link that looks like it should stand out. This is something you will have to judge by eye.

Don't highlight every link with white! If there are overlapping sections then try to show edges with a dot of white to show it catching the light.

As you can see in the photo, you now have chain mail that isn't dirty. It looks a bit boring so even if I didn't want to make it rusty I'd still put a gentle glaze of some colour on.

Now onto the rust.



Water down Rhinox Hide until it is almost a glaze, but not quite. Load up the brush and then wipe most of it off, again as if you were going to paint a glaze, then drag the brush downwards to simulate the rust and grime running down the chain links.

Make sure you leave some of the highlight you painted on without any Rhinox Hide! This is important as it shows metal coming through which either hasn't become rusty yet or has had the rust knocked off.

If you notice to the right hand side of the chain mail you will see an overlapping section where I have left a line of highlights going straight down. This helps to show the layers and create some depth.

Where you can, try and leave the odd section of metal highlight showing through in random places.



I've used Mournfang Brown and Trollslayer Orange at this stage. Carefully place the colours in random places to show rust. Don't go too close to the cloth as the black underside will act as a shadow

Try to still keep the shape you created with the highlights, so don't cover them if possible. As the Trollslayer Orange is a lighter colour you can still use that to pick links out as if you were highlighting them.

Again, do not get any paint in the link holes as it will mess up the contrast and destroy the effect.

If you go too bright with the Trollslayer Orange then use Mournfang Brown to tone it down as the colours work very well together.

Try to keep the shape of the links! Don't paint rust around the whole of the link shape, but try to leave little gaps between each link to show they are individual pieces.



The final stage is just touching up and finishing off. Water down the black and glaze some very fine streaks coming down from the cloth. Don't go all of the way down and destroy all of your work, this is just to add contrast and make the chain mail stand out from the cloth.

Optional: If you want to obtain a very dry, matte finish like rust then you can use some Scale 75 Kalahari Orange to touch a few of the orange rust spots. It's a very subtle effect, but under close inspection it will look more authentic.

Note* If you're going to use varnish then don't bother with the Kalahari Orange!

I hope this is of some use.

Thanks!