



Utrecht Art Supplies

Studio Craft: Opening a Stuck Acrylic Jar



Ask the Expert:

"The lids on some of my jars of acrylic paint and mediums are stuck- really stuck . How do I get them open?"

A: There are a few ways to loosen stuck lids on acrylic paint jars. For badly stuck jars, it might be necessary to try a combination of techniques.



Resist the temptation to pry at the lid with a sharp tool. It's easy to slip and break the lid or even cause an injury.



1) Sharp Strike

Turn the jar over and smack the lid sharply on the floor or tabletop. Most of the time, this is all it takes to break up dry material in the lid threads.



2) Blunt Object on the Lid

Use the handle of a screwdriver to tap hard around the rim of the lid. Work systematically around the rim; repeat if necessary.



3) Hot Water

If nothing else has worked, it might be necessary to apply heat. Acrylic is thermoplastic- it softens when heated. Hold the jar lid under hot tap water for a minute or so, then try to open it. If that fails, immerse the jar upside down in boiling hot water (off the stove). Moderate heat won't harm the paint, but don't immerse the jar if you think the seal isn't tight enough to keep water out.



A combined approach might be needed to loosen badly gummed up jars. Try each technique in turn- it shouldn't be long before the stuck threads yield and the jar opens.

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