

The Best Trays for Ladders



As someone who has spent many hours of their working life on a ladder, I feel that I can safely say I know my way around ladders. I have cleaned gutters from a ladder, replaced a flag pole rope on a ladder, hung thousands of shelves and pictures, painted more walls and ceilings than I care to count, installed new flood lights and I have even painted a church steeple! (Mind you, I was in my 20's and had no regard for my life. I was invincible.)

Since then, I've written articles about ladder safety and there is one here on our site on how to build a platform to steady your ladder when painting the walls or ceiling in a staircase.

Because of all this experience, I thought I knew or had figured out just about every method of painting from a ladder. Not that my solutions were good ones!

For instance, up until a few weeks ago, I still had not figured out how to paint a wall from a ladder using a roller tray and a roller. Sure, you can slide the tray onto the "tray holder" on a step ladder but I've pushed more paint off the end of that than I want to admit. Or, you place the tray on the floor, charge the roller with paint and then climb back up the ladder hoping not to smash the roller into the ladder or onto your pant leg, roll out the section of the wall and then do the whole process over and over until the wall has been completed. Sometimes when Shari and I are working together, we tag team the painting process, I roll, and she fills the roller and hands it back up to me, but this technique requires the two of us and I'm sure her time could be better used else where.

Well, all that has changed, I recently discovered a product that has now become a staple in my paint kit, the P.L.U.S. system. P.L.U.S. stands for Professional Ladder Utility System. This system is a kit that makes using a paint tray on a ladder a no-mess, no-spill task as well as a safe way to use a roller and roller tray on any type of ladder.



The P.L.U.S. system attaches the paint tray securely to the ladder so that you can work directly on the ladder without going up and down to refill the roller. Best of all, the tray has a spill guard that eliminates the chance of spilling paint if the tray is tipped forward as you climb the ladder. It also has a self-locking handle that engages in the upright position, so that you are not holding the paint tray by the edge while climbing.

The P.L.U.S. system tray uses tray liners which Shari and I have used for years because they protect the tray and eliminate a lot of cleaning. We have always reused our tray liners to help the environment. When you are finished painting, pour any remaining paint back into the paint can, allow the paint tray to dry overnight and peel the remaining paint from the tray (it will look like a sheet of plastic). We joke that you can pass these tray liners down to your children!

But back to my story, the P.L.U.S. system locks into place using a universal ladder mount that attaches to the ladder. The tray then snaps in with one-handed operation, letting you keep one hand on the ladder at all times. This, of course, is one of the main safety tips when using a ladder, always have one hand firmly placed on the ladder while working and climbing.



The system I used is the 6-piece kit, the kit has the universal ladder mount, the paint tray with carrying handle, the spill guard for the paint tray, and a paint tray liner (replacements are available).



The 6 piece kit also includes a Utility Bucket and Carrying handle. This is great for working with tools up on a ladder – I wish I would have had this when hanging the bat house I installed last month! This rugged bucket works with the same ladder mount as the paint tray, and can hold up to 12 pounds of tools and or cleaning supplies. So no more trying to hang on to a tool in one hand and climbing down the ladder to retrieve another, it keeps your tools and materials at working level

and off the floor. And to complete the six items there is also a universal tool holder; I used mine to hold the paint pail on the ladder while I did all my cutting in. It can also be used to hold the roller handle, if you need to have both hands free when not rolling. If you are cleaning out gutters, a garden hose can be held in waiting, basically anything that you need on a ladder can be held in the Utility Bucket or the tool holder.



It's nice to know that the P.L.U.S system works on the right or left side of the ladder so that you can work with what ever hand is comfortable for you. And, it works on all types of ladders, stepladders, extension ladders even multi-function ladders.



Ladders are great for all types of projects around your home, but they should not be taken for granted, annually over 200,000 injuries occur because of ladder accidents. So when you are working with ladders always remember these simple tips.

- Make sure the ladder is suited for the type of job you plan to do
- Type 1 ladders are industrial heavy duty ladders. Weight limit not more than 250 pounds
- Type 2 ladders are commercial medium duty ladders. Weight limit not more than 225 pounds
- Type 3 ladders are house hold light duty ladders. Weight limit of 200 pounds.
- Always inspect a ladder before use, especially if it has been several seasons between uses, look for cracks and loose joints and fittings.
- Always place a ladder on a stable, even surface.
- Use the 1: 4 ratio when setting an extension ladder. Place the base 1 foot away from the wall or the object the ladder is leaning against for every 4 feet of height to the point where the ladder contacts the wall.
- When using an a-frame ladder, make sure that the brace is locked in place
- Always face a ladder when climbing or descending
- Keep both feet firmly placed on the ladder.
- Do not climb higher than the second rung from the top on stepladders or the third rung from the top on extension ladders.
- Never stand on the paint shelf of a step ladder or the P.L.U.S. System
- Stow a ladder safely between uses, kids love to climb
- When working with electricity, use a ladder made of wood or fiberglass
- Always, **Always** be aware of power lines overhead when moving a ladder.

You know that Shari and I have used all sorts of products over the years and we believe in using tools and products that we test ourselves. Well, I have tried the P.L.U.S. system myself and feel you will be as pleased as I am. If you have questions or are interested in this product you can visit www.proladdersystem.com.

When ordering enter this code **** so that the folks at Creative Sales know that you visited their site from mattandshari.com

Creative Sales Company is offering free delivery if you order from our site. If you have further questions about the P.L.U.S. system feel free to contact Gary Byers at gbyers@creativesalescompany.com

Have fun and be safe when using a ladder in all your do-it-yourself projects this fall.

Matt



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