



Utrecht Art Supplies Barrier Creams vs. Gloves



Q: "I picked up some mold-making compound that says nitrile gloves should be used. Can I use barrier cream instead of gloves? Is there a type of hand lotion that will work as well as barrier cream?"

A: Package safety instructions should always be followed, so if the box or tube says "use nitrile gloves", it's important to do so- no substitutes, no shortcuts.

Artist's barrier creams form a film on skin to help prevent direct contact with paint. Most include wax, silicone compounds, or both. Barrier cream can be effective at reducing staining and transfer of odors from art materials, and may help block absorption, but no cream or lotion can be as effective as nitrile gloves when handling potentially harmful materials.

While common hand lotions often contain silicates and waxes, it's probably unreasonable to expect them to give the same degree of protection as barrier creams, let alone gloves. Even ordinary hand lotion can keep stains and paint smells from persisting on skin, however, so if all your colors and mediums are non-toxic (carrying the AP seal of the ACMI) and you just want to make hand washing after painting less of a chore, regular lotion may be all you need. If you are using mostly non-toxic colors and are only occasionally getting a little on your skin,

barrier cream and thorough hand washing are probably the most appropriate measures.

If, on the other hand, you are really getting a lot of paint on your hands and your palette includes some risky colors, or if you are using a lot of metallic driers, gloves may be appropriate. It depends on the type, duration, amount and frequency of exposure.

Questions? [Ask the Expert](#)

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