

Soft Pastel For Beginners



**FREE
QUICK START GUIDE**

(Full 25 page Guide available in the Beginners Course)

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By Sue Kerrigan-Harris

Quick Start Guide

Supplies for Complete Beginners

This is what I recommend to all students who are just starting with Soft Pastel.

- Pastel Paper: Pastelmat or Wet & Dry Paper 1000-1200GRIT from the Hardware Store. Mind your fingers though – see the videos.
- Soft Pastel Sticks: Jaxell 72 set or Inscribe 64 set. Get the biggest set you can afford.
- Pastel Pencils: Carbothello or Faber Castell set. Get the biggest set for your budget. Sometimes it's cheaper to buy individual pencils rather than a full set!
- Tools: Tortillon blenders and rubber blenders
- Rubber: Kneadable Medium Putty Rubber.
- Damp Cloth for your hands.
- A board and/or an easel.
- Graphite paper to transfer your drawings to pastel paper or to trace.



The following Guide is a condensed version of my Complete Guide to Soft Pastel Available in my Beginners Course

Want to get ahead fast? Join the amazing Soft Pastel Mastery Course Now

MORE INFO

Quick Start Guide

Pastel Paper

For a beginner, the paper you use is more important than the soft pastels. It can be the difference between loving or hating soft pastel!

To start, spend your money on paper and buy student grade soft pastels. Pastelmat is a big favourite with Pastel Artists but an expensive choice for beginners. **So try some Wet & Dry paper** from your local hardware store. 1000 to 1200 GRIT will be good to start. It's cheap and the soft pastel loves it. **BUT mind your fingers**, do not rub the sanded surface of the paper without soft pastel on it, or your fingers will become sore. My **FREE Seascape tutorial** will show you this,



Pastel paper has tooth (texture). This is what makes the pastel stay on the paper.

You paper is the most important thing!

Soft Pastel Sticks



Soft Pastels are like chalk, not oily like kids crayons.

Cheap student range pastel sticks are great for beginners especially if you use them with wet and dry paper. Try Jaxell Soft Pastels half sticks (good for larger hands) or Inscribe/Mungyo half sticks.

Why would you want to buy Professional Soft Pastels?

Student soft pastels are superb to start off with but they do lack pigment and can be dull so if you need more vibrant pastels you'll need a quality brand. Like Unison or Rembrandt Soft Pastels. Student sets also lack choice in light tones and very dark tones, so you can supplement your sets with these to start with.

Soft Pastels are DRY like chalk (they are not chalk) They are not oily like kids crayons

Quick Start Guide

Soft Pastel Pencils

Which Pastel Pencils should I buy?

The cheapest? Koh-i-noor

Animals? Carbothello More browns and greens (I recommend this brand for beginners)

Skin? Flowers? Faber Castell (more pinks)

The softest? Caran D'ache & Brunzyl

Colour choice? ALL of them - buy individual pencils it's often more economical.

Other brands are Derwent, Conte and Cretacolor. These brands have some beautiful colours. Don't worry about not having the right brand, you can use them all.



Pastel Pencils are not like coloured pencils. Be careful you don't buy pastel coloured, coloured pencils!

Pan Pastels



Small round pans of compressed pastel pigment with a very fine, silky texture. They look a lot like eye makeup and blusher!

They are useful for all sorts of different effects and can be used for underpaintings.

You can create bokeh (out of focus) backgrounds and loose painting styles. These effects can equally be achieved with pastel sticks. They are best to buy in sets as you can save as much as 50%. You apply the pan pastel with sponges and soft tools. There's lots more info and a tutorial on Pan Pastel in the Beginners Course.



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Equipment

It's best to work upright or at an angle so you'll need an easel and/or a board. Masking tape for securing your work to the board, pencil sharpener such as a Swordfish or Dahle crank handle but I use a knife and sand paper, it's much more effective. Kneadable Putty rubber for corrections and Glassine paper (like tracing paper). You can use this to lean on so you don't smudge your work. You can also use parchment paper or tracing paper or any smooth paper as a substitute.



Blending Tools



You can blend pastel on paper with your fingers or use tools like cotton buds and tortillon and rubber blenders. Packing noodles from any parcels you receive are great blending tools and a piece of pipe insulation or the end of a pool noodle. Try old makeup brushes too. If you are using wet and dry paper or sanded paper you mustn't use your fingers without the pastel down first or you will have very sore fingers! Please be careful.

Fixative

Fixative can be used to fix your work so it doesn't smudge. BUT It's personal choice to use fixative or not as it can significantly dull your work and not always provide the protection you are after. Never spray soft pastel art without testing on a scrap of pastel paper first Test the nozzle works properly and practise your technique. A pastel paper like Pastelmat doesn't need fixing because the paper holds the pastel so well.



About Sue



Welcome!

My name is Sue Kerrigan-Harris I'm a Soft Pastel Artist and Art Teacher from England, United Kingdom and I teach people the art of soft pastel all over the world!

I'm passionate about Soft Pastel It's a beautiful medium to work with – no drying time, no paint to mix, no palettes to wash and you can put down and pick up where you left off without fear of anything drying out!

A little bit of useful knowledge will set you off in the right direction and this guide will start you off nicely...

But if you're anything like me, soon you'll want to know more and that's what I'm here for, to help you on your journey.

Best wishes,
Sue xx
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Sue
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ARTIST



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