

Getting Started with Abstract Watercolour Painting

Abstract watercolour painting is an expressive and liberating technique that encourages you to move beyond realism and explore colour, form, and texture in a more intuitive way. Unlike traditional watercolour landscapes or botanical studies, abstract painting invites you to play—with mood, rhythm, and spontaneity—without needing to replicate what you see.

This style suits artists of all levels and is especially welcoming to beginners who want to develop confidence with watercolour without worrying about precise detail or technical drawing. Whether you're inspired by the fluidity of nature, emotions, music, or simply want to explore the beauty of pigment and water, abstract watercolour offers an open, creative path.



What You'll Need

Most of the following can be sourced from art supplies stores, trusted retailers like **Cass Art**, **Jackson's Art Supplies**, or **London Graphic Centre**—provide an excellent range of choices either online or in-store.

Basic Materials:

- **Watercolour paints** – Choose a set of artist-quality or high-end student paints for better pigmentation and flow. *Winsor & Newton*, *Schmincke*, and *Daniel Smith* are popular and widely available in the UK.
- **Watercolour paper** – Opt for 100% cotton paper if budget allows; it handles wet techniques best. Look for 300gsm (140lb) cold-pressed (NOT) paper from UK brands like *Bockingford* or *Saunders Waterford*.
- **Brushes** – A few round and flat brushes in varying sizes. Synthetic or natural-hair blends work well. Try *Pro Arte* or *Da Vinci*.
- **Palette** – A ceramic or plastic mixing palette with multiple wells.
- **Water jars** – Two are ideal: one for rinsing, one for clean water.
- **Masking tape** – For clean edges and securing your paper.
- **Pencil & rubber** – Light sketching only if needed.



Top Tips for Abstract Success

1. **Loosen up** – Let go of fixed outcomes. Abstract painting is as much about the *process* as the result. Put music on, let yourself go, PLAY!
2. **Use water with intention** – Water is your main tool for flow and texture. Experiment with dry vs. wet paper, or layering washes.
3. **Limit your palette** – Too many colours can muddy the painting. Start with 2–3 harmonious hues and explore their range.
4. **Work in layers** – Build depth by letting each layer dry before adding more. This prevents overworking and creates luminous effects.
5. **Experiment with tools** – Use non-brush items like credit cards, feathers, or cling film to create interesting shapes and patterns.
6. **Observe what emerges** – Let your painting evolve. Often, abstract pieces start with play and finish with intentional adjustments.

