

Freestyle

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The Studio's open content creation platform (Freestyle) includes several different features and tools to assist you in creating the best possible content. Please be sure you refer to our [Best Practices guidelines](#) on how to best implement and utilize the tools at your disposal.

General Guidelines

When it comes to Freestyle, the primary focus is to address the article's title, and making sure you answer it in the best, most helpful/accurate way. **Remember:** There is no restrictive word count. Instead, we ask that you keep it tight, and get it right. No two articles will ever look identical.

Freestyle Examples:

- [How to Remove Hair Spray from a Laminate Floor](#)
- [Where to Transplant Creeping Phlox](#)
- [How to Transplant Amaryllis](#)
- [How to Clean Vomit from Leather](#)
- [How to Clean a Painted Chalkboard](#)
- [Eye Discoloration in Dogs](#)

Freestyle Do's & Don'ts'

In order to maximize your article's overall exposure, while minimizing potential edits from a copy-editor, we've addressed the more common mistakes. Don't fret, we've also outlined the best way to approach these specific formatting styles within Freestyle. Follow these tips and you'll be ahead of the curve!

How To Steps

- Steps **must** use How to Steps.
- Steps **must not** be formatted in a numbered list, although numbered lists may be used within a How To Step.
- Steps **must not** be formatted in a bullet point list, although bullets may be used within a How To Step.
- Steps **must not** be formatted as an H1 header.
- Steps may use Step Titles, and in certain situations they should, but not always. More on this below.

Things You'll Need

- Item lists (TYN) **must** use the TYN module.
- Outside of the TYN module, they **must not** be listed as bulleted lists.
- They **must not** be listed as numbered lists.

- They **should** precede the first step.
- They **must** accompany each method.

Tips/Warnings

- Tips and warnings **must** accompany the relevant section (i.e. don't just put them at the bottom unless that's where they make the most sense).
- Each section **must not** have more than one tips module. If a section warrants more than one tip, use bullets.
- Each section **must not** have more than one warnings module. If a section warrants more than one warning, use bullets within the module.
- Sections may have a tip and a warning.

References

- Each article **must** have at least one reference. This reference may appear as a link within the article, or it may be provided in the metadata reference area.
- The standards for references have not changed. You can find them detailed in the Editorial Resources.

Bullets

- Bullets **must not** be used in place of How To Steps, though they may be used within a step in some cases.
- Bullets **must not** be used in place of the Things You'll Need need module (bullets are automatically formatted within the module and that is a-okay).
- Bullets may be used to help organize key pieces of information.
- In most cases, sections **should not** contain only bullets.

Linking

Please **do not** overdo it on the links. Remember, on eHow, hyperlinks appear in orange font, so if you have 50 links in an article, it's distracting. Use links when it makes sense, but not just for the sake of it. Not sure when it makes sense? I'm reluctant to give a hard number because there are exceptions to every rule and, honestly, assigning an arbitrary limit or quota isn't helpful. I have included examples below, so take a look there. If you still aren't clear, I'd suggest doing a little independent research on proper link placement and best practices.

Bold

Please do not overdo it on the bold. Now that we are using tips, warnings, H1 headers, H2 headers, and How To Steps, the addition of bold can look like... a lot. Less is more.

Italics

Basically these should be reserved for book titles (not newspapers, though), scientific terms, or other truly unusual terms. I'm struggling to think of any other appropriate application.

Subheads

This has less to do with Freestyle and more to do with general best practices - it's a thousand times more helpful to have subheads that indicate what information follows than it is to have witty or punny subheads.

Step Titles

If a step is completely straightforward, it probably doesn't need a step title. If a step is a little more complicated, a step title is probably helpful. Don't be redundant. For example:

-- Yes! --

Step 1: Clean With Alcohol

Dampen a cloth with **isopropyl rubbing alcohol** and rub an inconspicuous part of the floor -- perhaps under a cabinet toe kick -- to test for dulling. You shouldn't see any, because alcohol won't damage most laminate floor finishes, but if you do, put the alcohol away. If alcohol is safe, use the cloth to rub off the hair spray. You may have to dampen the cloth more than once to get all the tackiness off the floor.

-- Yes! --

Step 1

Spread a 1- to 2-inch layer of freely draining, sterilized potting soil with a pH of 6.0 to 6.5 over the base of a new container.

-- No! --

Step 1: Choose the starting point.

Step 2: Draw a smily face.

Step 3: Paint the first dot.

-- No! --

Step 1: Cut Your Yarn

Start by cutting the yarn.