How to use watercolours and how to make lighter colours without using white

In watercolour painting, you rarely use white. Lighter colours can be made using less paint and more water. You don't need white because the white of the paper shines through the paint and gives the colours their lightness. You are going to try to make a full range of tones for each colour from a deep tone, all the way to the palest tone of that colour. It is an extremely useful skill and one you will be able to use when you are painting.

Practical Activity

1. Wet the brush and blot it on a paper towel to remove excess water.
2. Move the brush to and fro over the colour until the bristles are covered in paint.
3. Dab the paint onto the lid of the tin or a palette and repeat until there is enough paint for purposes.
4. Then paint with colour.

Do not scrub with the brushes as this will ruin them.
Do not leave the brushes standing bristle end down in the water but always rinse them and lay them down flat on the table.

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How to make a colour go lighter and lighter until you have a pale tone.
1. Wet the brush and blot it on a paper towel to remove excess water.
2. Move the brush to and fro over the colour until the bristles are covered in paint.
3. Paint a patch of colour.
4. Immediately wash the brush, put the wet brush into the patch of colour and pull the colour away from the patch a few centimetres.
5. Wash the brush again, put it back on to the place where you left off and pull the colour a few centimetres further away still. Keep repeating this until there is no colour left.
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