

how to put up shelves



If you're lacking storage space in your home, a few simple shelves can make all the difference.

Putting up shelves is a good first DIY project as you don't need any special skills and it only requires a handful of tools to do a good job.

You will need:

- Drill
- Spirit level
- Shelf and fixings pack
- Masonry drill bits
- Screwdriver
- Pencil

Time to complete job: Three shelves should take about an hour on average.

First steps

Never start drilling into a wall until you're sure there are no electrical cables or pipes buried in the plasterwork.

Always start by using a pipe and cable detector to check that the wall is free of pipework behind it.

Plasterboard walls

To make a fixing in a plasterboard wall, choose a cavity wall plug. For shelves that will only hold light objects, use a screw and toggle fixing which draws the metal toggle against the inside of the wall cavity.

For medium or heavy loads you should always use brackets fixed directly to the wooden studwork behind the plasterboard. If you don't have a stud detector, tap the wall with your knuckles and listen for a duller sound. This indicates the position of the studs.



Step 1: Measuring & marking

- Decide on the position of each shelf according to what you want them to hold.
- Mark the heights on the wall with a pencil.
- Hold a spirit level at each spot to mark the positions of the fixing brackets. To stop shelves from sagging, make sure the brackets are no more than 600mm apart.
- Paint the shelves before you attach them to the wall.



Step 2: Drilling

- Choose a masonry drill bit that matches the wall plug fixing size and drill into the wall. If you have solid brick or block walls, use the hammer action on the drill.
- Drill all the screw holes to the depth of the wall plug. Make sure you drill to the right depth by wrapping a piece of tape or thread around the bit as a guide.

Tip: Always wear safety goggles when drilling into masonry.



Step 3: Screwing to the wall

- Screw the fixing brackets to the wall with a screwdriver or fit your drill with a screwdriver bit. Make sure the screws grip firmly. If not, try using a larger wall plug or cavity fixing. Unless the shelves clip into the fixings brackets, you should attach them with screws or panel pins so that the loaded shelves cannot tip forward in use.

Tip: Choose screws at least 50 mm (2 in) long and wall plugs at least 30 mm (1.2 in) long to give a strong fixing.

Do-it-yourself