

DIY TIP: A simple guide to Picture and Mirror Hanging



Although it may not seem it, hanging a picture or mirror from your wall does in fact require a bit of thought provided you don't want:

- (1) to hammer into a gas pipe, water pipe or electricity cable;
- (2) a crumbling and cracked plaster effect throughout the walls in your home; or
- (3) 7 years bad luck when your mirror falls down after a day.

Following our simple guide should help to avoid these undesirable outcomes.

Determining the type of wall is perhaps the most crucial part of the picture hanging process, as it is very important that you know what you're going to be drilling or banging nails into. Masonry and cavity walls are two common types in homes and can provide suitable hanging surfaces if used correctly.

TIP: NEVER DRILL ABOVE OR BELOW LIGHT SWITCHES OR PLUG SOCKETS, AS ELECTRIC CABLES ARE OFTEN CONCEALED IN THESE AREAS. YOU CAN ALSO BUY PIPE AND METAL DETECTORS FROM DIY STORES TO CHECK FOR CONCEALED PIPING OR CABLING.

Hard Walls

Masonry walls consist of solid brick or stone, and are very hard. Because of this, they will be rather unresponsive to nails being hammered in, or screwing straight into the wall without a pilot hole.

Firstly, find a coloured plastic wallplug and a screw big enough to hold the weight of the picture or mirror. You then need to use a power drill to create the hole(s) – one with a "hammer action" will be required for the hardest of walls. Always ensure that that you ask someone experienced for help using a power drill if you do not feel confident in using one on your own.

Attach a drill bit of suitable size for the hole required for the screw and wallplug. Once you have drilled the hole, insert the wallplug into the hole so that it is flush with the wall, using a hammer to tap it home if necessary. Then insert the screw and leave just enough of the screw head protruding from the wall.

Ensure that it is secure before hanging your chosen object.

Hollow Sounding Walls

Knowing what you are drilling into is perhaps the most crucial with cavity walls. It is strongly recommended that you use an electronic testing device to make certain that you won't be drilling into a pipe or cable.

Cavity walls consist of either lathe and plaster or plasterboard which are attached to horizontal and vertical timbers ('studs' and 'noggings'). The thin plasterboard/lathe and plaster is often too weak and unable to hold much weight, so it is best to try and find a timber to screw or hammer a nail into as it provides a much more solid fixing.

Locating a timber:

1. Tap on the cavity wall – the areas between the timbers will emit a much more hollow sound.
2. After using an electronic tester to make sure all is safe, drill a small hole where you want the picture to hang from. If the drill bit comes back out with wood shavings, then you've struck timber. If not, then you will probably feel the drill pass completely through the thin layer of plaster and into the cavity.

Thin Walls

Plasterboard is very thin and soft, and therefore items hung on this will often result in nails or screws being pulled out. Plasterboard can also crack very easily when nails and screws are inserted. There are some fixing devices which can be used (spring toggles, hollow wall anchors) to get around this problem, but it is generally advised that you should avoid hanging pictures or mirrors on plasterboard walls.

