

## Planning how to hang the paper: Useful Tips

Taking some time to plan how to hang the wallpaper in a room is very important. Pay attention as to how the pattern will appear at the top of the walls, which is usually more visible than at the baseboard. Older houses often have ceilings that are not quite level for example, and one can disguise that by cutting the pattern at a less prominent part of the pattern, so the prominent flower will then show in a straight row.

Centering the pattern over a mantelpiece, or in the middle of a prominent wall, will usually give better results. Sometimes, you may want the pattern centered on every wall.

Pictures, mirrors and window frames all look their best when the wallpaper behind them is centered. Plan carefully, as extra paper may be required when centering patterns.

As you hang the wallpaper around the room, you will probably have to "lose" the pattern in a corner, where the patterns on two walls will not match. Choose that corner before you start hanging. Make sure it is one that is not usually prominent when using the room.

## Pattern Matching

Wallpaper patterns can match in different ways. The most common way is a standard side to side match. However, some patterns, especially large ones, are printed to match in a "half-drop" (or "offset-match"). Lay some wallpaper out before cutting, to make sure that the pattern will match when the paper is cut.

## Cutting the Wallpaper

After planning the placement of the pattern on the walls, it is good to cut a couple of sections (or "drops") of paper prior to starting to paste. Check the pattern match once again. Make sure that you leave about 4" extra in length to allow for trimming, top and bottom, after hanging.

Don't try to trim the pasted paper with a craft knife, it will invariably tear the paper instead of cutting it.

Try to avoid getting any paste onto the front of the paper - depending upon the type of paper, it may discolour or damage it - don't worry if it is a true paper which you intend to paint. If you do get paste onto the front, remove it immediately with a clean, damp sponge while the paste is still wet.

Keep all your tools clean, keep the bristles of the hanging brush free of paste and wipe off any paste that gets on the scissors. It is best to be methodical when hanging paper and to keep your tools clean all the time

## Pasting

We suggest that a table, a counter or a flat door placed on saw horses, covered with plastic, well taped at the edges, will make the job of pasting go more easily. Making small, washable weights of lead shot, or stones in a small zip-lock plastic bag, and using them to hold the corners of the paper, will effectively prevent the wallpaper from curling while you are pasting.

Lay the paper face down on the table, weight the corners, and using a bristle paste brush for best results, brush a coat of paste over the whole paper, taking special care to brush up to, or slightly over, all of the edges. Avoid spreading paste on to the face of the paper, and make sure the paper keeps its stability. Try to use as little paste as possible.

Then gently fold the paper over on itself, paste side to paste side. This is called "booking", and it allows the wallpaper to "relax". The time for booking the paper will vary depending on weather conditions, but one or two minutes are generally enough time. The paper should lose its stiffness, and drape over your arm when picked up. Be very careful not to allow the paper to over-relax, as the paper can stretch slightly, making exact pattern matching difficult.

After the paper is lifted off the table, the plastic cover can be wiped clean of excess paste with a sponge and warm water, ready for the next piece of wallpaper.

## Hanging the Wallpaper

Work with one length (or "drop") of paper at a time. The first drop should be checked to see that it is hanging vertically. It is a good idea to use a level or plumb line to check this. Gently hand-smooth the paper to the wall while positioning it, and then follow up with a proper bristle wallpaper smoothing brush, smoothing from the center out, to expel air bubbles. We do not recommend flat plastic smoothing tools (often used for vinyl wallcoverings) as they may burnish the surface of the paper.

Edges may be gently sponged with clean, warm water to clean excess paste. Too much sponging will almost certainly cause disturbance of the printed colour at the edge, especially on dark backgrounds.

The small amount of extra paper at the top and bottom edges of the paper should be marked by running a finger nail or the back of the scissors along the edge of the baseboard for example. The paper is then peeled back, and the paper trimmed along the pressed-in mark with the paper hanging shears, and then smoothed back into place, and gently sponged clean. The next drops are hung in the same way.

## As you approach a corner

Never hang a full width of wallpaper around an inside corner of a room. Always hang the wallpaper in two parts. Measure carefully, and allow about 1/2" extra for the first piece to wrap around the corner. Then hang the next piece, making sure that it is hanging straight. Outside corners should be hung in the same way, unless they are absolutely vertical.

## Light switches and plugs

Always turn off electricity at the circuit box. Remember you are using water. Take the cover plates off the switches and plugs, and paper over the openings. Carefully trim the paper back to the edges of the box, so the cover plates will hide the cut edges of the wallpaper. Wait until the paper is dry before turning the electricity back on.

## As the wallpaper dries...

You may notice air bubbles under the paper that were not all smoothed out when it was hung. This is the time to go back and gently use the smoothing brush again. Often the air will be expelled to the nearest edge, which can be smoothed down again with a sponge and warm water. Occasionally, an air bubble will be trapped, and cannot be smoothed to an edge. Then you can make a tiny cut with a razor blade, along a line of the pattern, and expel the air from the cut. Then carefully use direct pressure with a wet sponge to dampen the paper thoroughly, which will reactivate the paste underneath which should reattach the paper to the wall.

## Additional notes:

The art of hanging wallpaper really hasn't changed in over 100 years. We recommend using a traditional (and environmentally safe) wheat starch or cellulose paste.

## Wall preparation

As with any redecoration project, correct preparation of surfaces is very important for a good result. All old wallcoverings should be removed before hanging new wallpaper. Walls must be clean and dry. All cracks and holes must be filled and smoothed down with sandpaper. Before hanging wallpaper on an absorbent wall (cleaned plaster, new drywall etc.), the walls should be sized with wallpaper size, applied with brush or roller. If a gloss paint finish is to be covered, the surface must be thoroughly rubbed with sandpaper to provide a 'gripping' surface.

Almost every problem that arises with a wallpaper installation is a result of either incorrect wall preparation or use of an incorrect adhesive.

## Adhesive for Unpasted Machine Print Wallpapers:

All our wallpapers are not pre-pasted. Wheat starch, cellulose pastes or clear pre-mixed starch based pastes are recommended for these wallpapers. The wheat starch and cellulose adhesives are purchased in powder form and mixed with water to produce a smooth paste, according to the manufacturer's instructions.

We do not recommend the use of any pre-mix adhesives intended for vinyl or paper-backed vinyl wallcoverings. These can cause flaking, spotting and staining if used with unpasted wallpapers.