

How to Hang Wallpaper

Hanging wallpaper can give any room a new look or a completely different style. But hanging it properly is the key to success. The array of different paper patterns, colors and textures can drastically change a room from old and outdated to modern and spectacular.

New wallpaper can actually alter the appearance and perception of the whole room. Hanging vertical stripes can make a room look like it has higher ceilings. Large patterns can make a large room look smaller and cozy. Choosing your pattern can be the most difficult part of the wallpapering procedure, since there are so many different patterns and textures to consider.

Prepare the Walls: Tools and Materials you need:

- Drop cloths
- Paint tray
- Paint roller handle and sleeve
- Paintbrush
- Putty knife (6-inch blade or wider)
- Plaster (drywall compound and joint compound or spackle)
- Primer
- Wallpaper sizing
- Mixing bucket
- Sandpaper
- Stepladder

Step 1. Clean the Room

If you have old wallpaper that needs removing, see [How to Remove Wallpaper](#). Before you begin, remove everything possible from the room. All furniture kept in the room should be moved into piles near the center and covered with drop cloths. Cover the floor or carpet with drop cloths to protect from spills.

Step 2. Paint if Necessary

Paint the trim and ceiling if necessary. Do this before the wallpaper is hung so that you don't get paint on the wallpaper. It doesn't matter if you paint onto the wall when painting trim or the ceiling because the wallpaper will

cover any painting imperfections. Give the paint about a week to dry before you begin hanging the wallpaper. (Water and glue can damage the paint if not totally dry).

Step 3. Spackle Cracks and Holes

Fill all cracks and holes using a joint compound and drywall compound or spackle. Sand the areas until they are smooth and coat them with interior primer and let it dry completely. If the walls are painted with a semi-gloss or gloss paint, give them a light sanding to dull the surface so the glue adheres better. Be sure to sand away any tiny bumps on the wall before hanging wallpaper because the bumps will show through. Run your hand over the sanded surface to make sure it is smoothed out.

Step 4. Apply Sizing to the Walls

Apply a coat of wallpaper sizing to the wall if necessary. The sizing helps you slide the paper into place when hanging it. If there is flat finish paint on the walls you are papering, sizing makes the wallpaper hanging easier. The sizing gives your walls a light gloss, which allows paper to slide into place. Apply the sizing to your walls using a paint roller just like paint. It is inexpensive and makes a better surface to hang wallpaper on. If your walls have just been primed, you can skip applying sizing to the walls. If you are not sure whether your walls need sizing or not, it is best to do it because it is quick and makes hanging wallpaper easier.

Hang Wallpaper: Tools and Materials you need:

- Wallpaper
- Wallpaper paste (for non-prepasted paper only)
- Adhesive brush or paint roller (for non-prepasted paper only)
- Putty knife (at least 6 inches wide)
- Smoothing brush (or smoothing knife)
- Two large sponges
- Seam roller
- Border and seam adhesive (only if using vinyl paper)
- Level
- Tape measure
- Pencil
- Single-edge razor blades
- Drop cloths
- Stepladder

- Water tray
- Trash bag

Step 1. Measure and Cut Paper

To make the process go quicker, cut the paper ahead of time. Number each piece at the top of the paper so that you have the right size paper for each area. If the pattern is random, you don't have to worry about matching it up so you can cut many pieces at a time. If you have a pattern that needs to be matched, it is better if you cut the pieces as you hang them. Make sure to cut an extra six inches for trimming at the ceiling and the floor.

Step 2. Find a Starting Place

Find a spot where you want to begin. If you have a pattern that needs to be matched up, there will be one place where the patterns don't match. The best place to start is a corner that is not noticeable, because that is the seam where the pattern will not match up perfectly like the others. Good places to start are behind a door, near drapes or in the far end of a room. Using a level, draw a vertical line about 1/2-inch wider than the width of your wall paper. This line will guide you in hanging your paper straight. Do this for each piece of paper to ensure they are straight.

Step 3. Apply Glue

A. **Prepasted Paper** Activate the glue on one strip of wallpaper at a time. To activate the glue, you simply run the piece of paper through the water tray. Submerge the end of the strip in the water tray, and slowly unroll the strip into the water and run it through the tray. Once the entire piece is in the water, pull it out and let it drip over the tray for about 2 seconds. Lay the piece on a table and fold the ends in so that glue is touching glue. This gives the glue time to activate. Once the ends are folded in, fold the new ends into the center again. Be careful not to crease the paper. This is called booking the wallpaper.

B. **Non-prepasted Paper** If you are hanging non-prepasted paper, you will need to apply glue to the wallpaper. You can buy the wallpaper paste at your hardware store. Lay the strip of wallpaper back side up over a big table or any flat surface. You can even use the floor, just cover it with a drop cloth first. Use a paint roller or adhesive brush to apply a thin layer of glue to the paper. Make sure to cover every inch of the paper to prevent air bubbles. Once glue is distributed over the entire piece, book the paper by folding the

ends in to the center. Try to keep your flat surface as clean as possible so glue does not get on the front side of the paper.

Step 4. Hang the First Piece

Place a stepladder in front of the area where your first piece of paper will hang. Take the paper by the edge that will be placed at the ceiling, keeping the rest of the paper folded. Hold the wallpaper between the vertical line and the wall by its upper corners. When it is centered, press the paper in the corner, leaving 3 inches at the ceiling and 1 inch on the adjacent wall. Let the paper unfold and drop to the floor. If the paper is hanging straight, smooth the rest of the paper onto the wall from the ceiling to the floor using a smoothing brush or smoothing knife.

Step 5. Smooth Out any Air Bubbles

Use a smoothing brush or smoothing knife to force out any air bubbles moving from the center outward. Wipe the wallpaper with a clean damp sponge to remove any glue residue and continue to smooth out any air bubbles. Make sure you rinse the sponge after each wiping to keep it clean. If you don't rinse the sponge well enough, you will just wipe glue all over the wallpaper and it will be noticeable when it dries.

Step 6. Roll and Wipe the Seams

Use a seam roller to press the edge of the wallpaper down. This will ensure that the edge is securely adhered to the wall. Wipe the paper again with a damp, clean sponge. It is very important to wipe each piece thoroughly because when the glue dries, it is very hard to clean off.

Step 7. Repeat For Each Piece of Paper

Move the ladder over to hang the second piece of wallpaper. Follow step 3 for gluing instructions. Hold the piece up by the top end and line up the pattern if there is one. Press the wallpaper along the top where the pattern matches and let the folded piece of wallpaper unfold. Smooth the entire strip from ceiling to floor the same as you did for the first strip, this time making sure the seam lines up correctly. Flatten out any bubbles with a smoothing knife or smoothing brush. Follow the same steps for smoothing out the paper and trimming the edges as you did for the first piece of wallpaper. Make sure to run the seam roller over the seams. Repeat this process for the rest of the wall.

Step 8. Cut around the Windows and Doors

Line the piece of paper up as you normally would and let the excess paper hang over the opening. Smooth the wallpaper with a smoothing brush or smoothing knife all the way up to the opening. Make a diagonal cut in the paper where it hits the window or door trim. Press the paper into the crease where the wall meets the trim. Flatten the paper to the wall so that it is hugging the window or door trim. Use a putty knife and a razor blade to cut away excess paper at the door or window trim. Wipe the window or door trim with a wet sponge to remove any glue. Do the same for the bottom corner of the window.

Step 9. Smooth Corners

To make clean looking corners, smooth the paper into the corners with a smoothing knife while you are hanging it. If the house is old, the corners may not be perfect and the paper may wrinkle. To get rid of these wrinkles, make a cut in the corner where the wrinkle begins and carefully cut down in the corner until the end of the paper, pressing the wrinkle out of the paper.

Step 10. Double Check Corners and Seams

Once the entire room is wallpapered, check all the corners and seams to make sure they are not curling up. If they are, try to use the seam roller and press the seams back into place. If that does not work, apply a little glue to the seam and press it down with the seam roller. If you are using vinyl, remember that you cannot overlap, so be extra careful when checking these seams. If they are slightly overlapped, use border and seam adhesive to make sure they adhere to each other.

Step 11. Clean Up

Double check that there is no adhesive on the paper or the baseboards. Clean the tools with soap and water and throw away all the scrap wallpaper. Once the room is finished you can put the furniture back.