

Wallpaper FAQ

Buying Guide

What are the advantages to using wallpaper over paint?

There are many advantages to using wallpaper over paint to decorate your space. For instance, wallpaper can cover up imperfect or damaged walls as well as add texture and dimension in way paint simply cannot do. Wallpaper also offers a wide range of colors and complex patterns that would be difficult to create with a paintbrush.

How do I know what type of wallpaper is right for my project?

Choosing the right wallpaper for your space is an important consideration. Not only do you want to think about patterns and colors, but you should also consider the installation process, durability, and cleaning procedures. For instance, grasscloth and string cloth are made of natural and synthetic fibers and provide great texture to a room. However, steam and moisture can easily damage them so they are recommended for low-traffic, dry rooms. Other more durable papers are good for high-traffic areas. Solid vinyl wallpaper is very durable and can be easily cleaned. Vinyl coated paper is treated to repel water and soil and is appropriate for most rooms.

What type of wall paper works best for kitchens and bathrooms?

When working on a project for a kitchen or bathroom, you want to use a wallpaper that is moisture resistant and unaffected by exposure to humidity. Vinyl coated or solid vinyl wallpapers are more durable and able to be washed which is ideal for projects in bathrooms and kitchens.

Can I use wallpaper on any wall?

You can wallpaper over just about any surface such as drywall, concrete, paneling, masonry, new and old plaster, and even tile or laminate. For uneven, newly repaired, or slick surfaces, you will need to apply lining paper which provides a smooth surface for the wallpaper to adhere without blemishes. The key to a successful project is correctly preparing the walls and choosing the right kind of wallpaper.

What is the difference between Paste-the-Wall wallpaper, Paste-the-Paper, and Pre-Pasted wallpaper?

The difference between these three types of wallpaper is the method of applying or activating the paste before hanging the paper. When using Paste-the-Wall wallpaper, the paste is applied directly to the wall before hanging each strip. This wallpaper is made with a special backing that does not expand when wet; therefore, it does not need to soak as in other application methods. When using the Paste-the-Paper method, the paste is applied to the back of the wallpaper before hanging. This method requires a process called "booking" which is a way to activate the paste while letting the paper rest before hanging the strip. Pre-pasted paper already has adhesive on the backside of the paper which is activated by dipping the wallpaper into a tray of water. The paper also requires the "booking" process after the paper has been soaked in water.

What else can I wallpaper besides my walls?

Wallpaper can cover more than just your walls. It is an easy way to add design and dimension to many places in your home. Use a bold patterned wallpaper inside your bookshelves to make your books and display pieces stand out. Add texture and pattern to your room by wallpapering your ceiling. You can also paper smaller pieces such as dressers, coffee tables, and nightstands. Design blogs and DIY tutorials are great places for unique wallpaper ideas and inspiration.

How do I know how much wallpaper I need?

Generally, in order to calculate how much wallpaper you need, use the following steps: First, calculate the wall area by multiplying the height of the wall by the width. Second, calculate the area of the wall you will not be papering (i.e. windows and doors) by multiplying the height by the width of each area you will not paper. Third, subtract the unpapered area from the area of the wall. This will give you the wallpapering area. Fourth, divide the wallpapering area by the square footage of the wallpaper you would like to purchase. This will give you the total number of rolls needed to complete your project. However, you will need to consider extra paper for the pattern repeat and extra trimmings.

Do I need to order extra wallpaper for a pattern repeat?

Yes, you will need to consider the usable yield (the amount of each roll that is usable). The usable yield will depend on the length of your repeating pattern. The longer the pattern, the less usable yield. You will need to order additional roles of wallpaper to match your design's horizontal sequence.

What type of paste should I use?

Most commercially available pastes will work for the majority of wallpaper projects. However, some heavy grade wallpapers might require a stronger adhesive.

Glossary

What is "booking"?

Booking refers to how the wallpaper should "rest" while the glue activates. Booking allows the paste to penetrate the wallpaper while keeping the paste from drying out before hanging it. Once the glue has been activated on pre-pasted strips or spread on un-pasted ones, you should lay the strip pattern-side down on a flat surface. Gently fold the ends of the strip back towards the center so the pasted sides are touching. Do not allow the folds to crease or you may leave a permanent mark. Follow the manufacturers recommended time for booking before hanging the strip. You do not need to "book" the wallpaper when using the Paste-the-Wall method.

What is "pattern repeat"?

Pattern repeat measures the design on your wallpaper. It is the vertical distance between one point in the pattern and where that identical point appears again. Pattern repeats can vary in size, some being as big as 25-inches or as small as 1-inch. The pattern repeat is important to keep in mind when deciding how much wallpaper to order.

What is a "design match"?

Design match describes the way to join two sheets of wallpaper so the patterns match up. The design match for your wallpaper is generally indicated on the product page. There are multiple types of design match, the main three being free match, straight match, and offset match.

What is "offset match"?

When using an offset design match, also called drop match, the design expands beyond the width of one roll and therefore needs to match the strips around it both horizontally and vertically. Offset designs are the most difficult to align and require you to determine which strips will go where before you begin. The half-drop match repeats at the ceiling line on every other strip creating a diagonal pattern sequence. Offset matches also require more wallpaper and create more waste. You would need three strips of wallpaper to repeat the vertical design.

What is "straight match"?

When using a straight design match, the wallpaper design begins and ends within the width of the roll. This makes it easy to see where the seams should line up. The match begins at the ceiling line ensuring that the design will match up on either side of the strip. This creates a horizontal pattern sequence.

What is "free match"?

When using a free design match, also called random match, you don't have to worry about lining up the design at the seams. This makes free match wallpaper easy to install and great for beginners. Using a free match wallpaper, such as a texture or vertical stripes, will reduce the amount of wasted paper since you won't have to cut away extra paper to match a design.

Installation

What tools will I need for my project?

Most of the tools you will need are probably already in your toolbox with the exception of a few specialized tools. Gather the following items:

- Drop cloth
- Tape measure
- A pencil
- Putty knife or straight edge
- Sponge and bucket of clean water
- Smoothing tool (brush or plastic)
- Seam roller
- Utility knife
- Level

For pre-pasted paper

- Water tray or pre-paste activator

For non-pasted paper

- Paste
- Paste brush or roller

How do I prep my walls for wallpaper?

Wallpaper hangs best when walls are clean of debris and the surface is smooth. It is important to take the time to remove old wallpaper, fill in any cracks, and repair imperfections in the walls surface. This will help the wallpaper to lay flat and avoid potential problems with the paper adhering to the wall. If it is a painted wall, you will need to smooth out the walls with sandpaper. Once all repairs have been made and your walls are smooth, you will want to clean them up. Use a sponge and a little soap to remove dirt and grease. Rinse the wall with clean water and allow the wall to dry before proceeding. When walls are clean and smooth you are ready for the next step which depending on your project may include sizing, priming, or installing lining paper.

What is the difference between priming and “sizing” and which one should I do?

Primer is a protectant/sealer that prevents the paste from being absorbed into a wall and allows it to grip to slick surfaces. It is highly recommended that you prime a wall before hanging wallpaper because it creates an even surface for the wallpaper to adhere to as well as makes the wallpaper removal process much easier should you ever decide to update the wallpaper. “Sizing” a wall is thin coat of paste applied to a wall to create additional grip and make it easier to slide each strip of paper onto the wall. “Sizing” is often recommended for porous, repaired, or

plastered walls. However, many combination primer/sizers are available and can be used simultaneously for a wallpapering project.

How do I cut the wallpaper for each strip?

Your first strip should measure the height of your wall plus four inches. This will leave two inches at the top and bottom for trimming. Mark the end of the first strip with a pencil and straightedge. Then use a sharp utility knife in one continuous cut across the paper. You'll need to consider your pattern repeat before you cut the rest of your strips to ensure your design matches vertically and horizontally. For instance, in a straight design match you will want to cut each strip the same length beginning at the same point in the pattern. For an offset design match, you should roll out the paper side by side with the first strip to match up the patterns and cut paper accordingly.

Do I overlap the seams when hanging wallpaper?

Wallpaper seams should not overlap but instead should be "butted" together. The two edges of the wallpaper should be touching but not overlapping. A seam roller is a tool that can be used to seal the wallpaper seams and help smooth any edges that have lifted. Do not roll the seams too aggressively or you will push out all the adhesive.

How do I avoid wallpaper seams showing or separating?

Unightly wallpaper seams can be avoided by following the proper procedures for "booking" and smoothing wallpaper. "Booking" helps wallpaper to evenly absorb the moisture that activates the adhesive so you don't have to worry about wallpaper shrinking up while it sets. A wallpaper smoothing tool should be used after you hang each strip. This will help the seams line up and smooth out the paper. A seam roller can also help seal and set wallpaper seams. It is important to know if you choose a grasscloth or natural fiber wallpaper, that seams will show because the natural fibers do not create perfect seams. This is actually a style choice and one reason why coverings like grasscloth are popular with decorators who are looking to create a natural and textured look in their space.

How do I trim the excess wallpaper?

Once the wallpaper is hung, you will trim the excess paper from the top and bottom for an exact fit. Use a putty knife to guide a sharp blade in a long, continuous cut across the excess paper around the ceilings and baseboards.

How do I wallpaper around window and door frames?

When you reach a door/window frame, allow the paper to hang over the door or window while you smooth the paper until it meets the door/window frame. Once the area is smoothed, cut off the paper that hangs over the door/window, leaving only a few inches for trimming. You will want to make a diagonal cut in the paper at the corner of the door/window frame, allowing the paper to lay flat at the edge of the frame. Smooth the paper down around the corner. Use your putty knife and a sharp blade to trim the excess paper around the door/window frame.

How do I avoid bubbles and creases in my wallpaper?

Bubbles and creases are caused by air bubbles underneath the paper and can be the result of uneven smoothing. This can be avoided by smoothing down the center of the strip first and then smooth outward. Bubbles that form during hanging can be fixed by lifting the paper up around the bubble and smoothing it back down. If the bubble is not discovered until the wallpaper is

dry, it will be difficult to fix without causing a crease in the paper. Bubbles may also be caused by a weak bond with the wall. Avoid this by allowing adequate time for "booking" in the preparation stages. "Booking" the paper activates the adhesive so the paper sticks to the wall evenly.

How long will it take for my wallpaper to dry?

Time for drying can depend on the type of wallpaper and the condition of the room. The average time for drying is somewhere between 24-48 hours. However, some wallpapers can take up to two weeks before the adhesive is completely dry and set. If you are waiting for wallpaper to dry before painting or adding a border, it is recommended to wait at least 36-48 hours before starting either of these processes.

Paintable Wallpaper

I am using paintable wallpaper. What type of paint should I use? What type of paint can be used on our Paintable wallpaper?

When painting paintable wallpaper, we recommend a latex or oil based semi-gloss to get the most professional finish. Any color can be used and if you change your mind or redecorate with a new color scheme, you can simply repaint the wallpaper over and over again! Paintable wallpaper designs can look like fabric, stucco, and carved wood, giving your space a textured and professional look.

Does paintable wallpaper need to be primed?

It is not necessary to prime your wallpaper before painting, although you can if you want. If you choose to prime your wallpaper, be aware that some have found primer can fill in some of the paper's texture leaving you with a less dramatic final result.

How long do I have to wait before I can paint my wallpaper?

You will need to allow time for the adhesive to fully dry. After hanging the wallpaper, it is recommended to wait a minimum of 36 hours before you apply a coat of paint. Painting too soon can cause the wallpaper to bubble.

Do I have to paint the Paintable wallpaper?

No, you don't! Paintable wallpaper is a great way to add texture to your walls while still leaving them a fresh, crisp white. It can also help you hide a wall with imperfections. You could always decide to paint your wallpaper at a later time. If you do paint later on, just make sure to remove any dust or debris that may have gathered on the paper to ensure a smooth paint job.

Care and maintenance

How do I clean my wallpaper?

Wallpapers can be cleaned using dry methods. These include vacuuming your wallpaper or dusting it with a sponge or soft cloth. When vacuuming your wallpaper, use a soft brush attachment to ensure that you do not damage the texture. If your wallpaper is washable, use a sponge lightly dampened with a solution of water and a small amount of dish soap. Make sure you do not get the wallpaper too wet. It is best to have a dry cloth with you to wipe up the excess solution. Finish this washing process by rinsing the wallpaper with a lightly dampened cloth or sponge with water alone. Then immediately dry the wallpaper with a terry-cloth towel. Certain uniquely textured wallpaper cannot be washed. You can test whether your wallpaper can be washed by picking an inconspicuous spot of wallpaper and applying your solution of dish soap and water to it. If the wallpaper absorbs the water or the colors run, it is not washable. Even if your wallpaper is washable do not use abrasive cleaners.