

Quick Tip: Hanging A Large Picture

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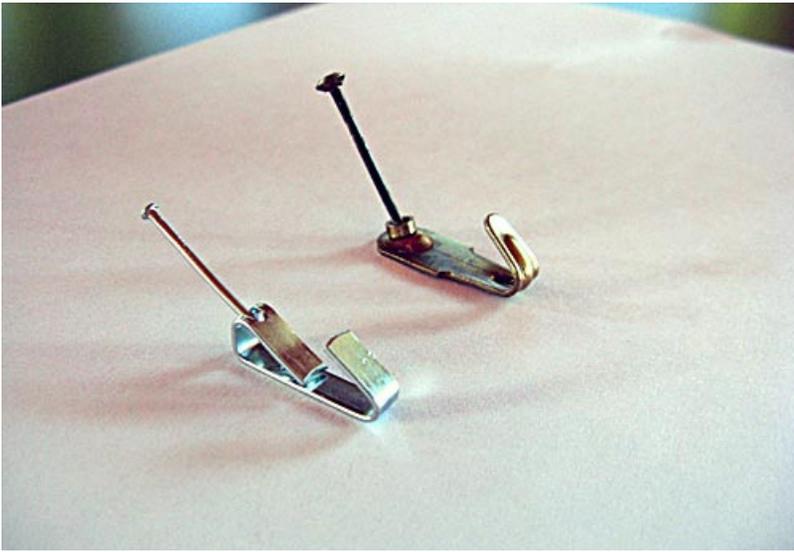


Help
for
your
biggest
hang
ups.

Remember back in the day, when hanging a picture meant sticking a thumb tack in each corner of your favorite poster and calling it good? Although still a valid method if you prefer walls like swiss cheese, most of us have graduated to *framing* our favorite works of art, and so need a better way to hang a large picture. We're not worrying here about the random collages of small framed photos. We're talking about the big stuff that needs to be placed with care. How high should it hang? How do I place the hook at the right height? Do I need to hang in a stud? All valid questions for which we have easy answers.

How to choose a picture hanger

The weight of what you're hanging is important when it comes to sizing the hanger you should use. Most objects we want to hang are fairly light... less than 10 pounds. However, if you're hanging a large, heavy painting or a framed mirror, you'll need to consider some heavier hardware. A good rule of thumb is to use a hanger that is rated 4 times the weight of the object. When it comes to picture hanging, overkill is *not* a problem. Better safe than sorry are the bywords here. In spite of wall condition and installation technique, there's a lot riding on that little hanger; go for strength.



Hangers come with nails, and are rated anywhere from 20 to 100 pounds. There are a couple different types. The most common is the nickel plated variety suitable for drywall and wood paneling. The other type is a brass plated hanger with a special nail for going into plaster walls. The brass units are usually only rated from 10 to 75 pounds.

NOTE: If you are really working with a lot of weight, consider putting in two hangers for a frame. Space the two hooks apart by $\frac{1}{3}$ the width of the frame. If you use two hangers, not only do you have extra security, the frame will hang straighter over time.

For pictures under 50 pounds, you don't need to hang in a stud.

The standard horizontal hang

The most common hanging configuration is a frame with a standard hanging wire running side to side.

Let's say you have the perfect Dogs Playing Poker print or an Elvis painting on velvet you want your dinner guests to see and admire.

First, take the picture and walk it to the place you're interested in hanging it.

Hold it up to the wall to get a feel for position. If you have a second set of eyes to voice an opinion on position, that's the best bet. (This would be someone to stand back and give you the nay or yea... not a literal second set of eyes, that would just be freaky.)



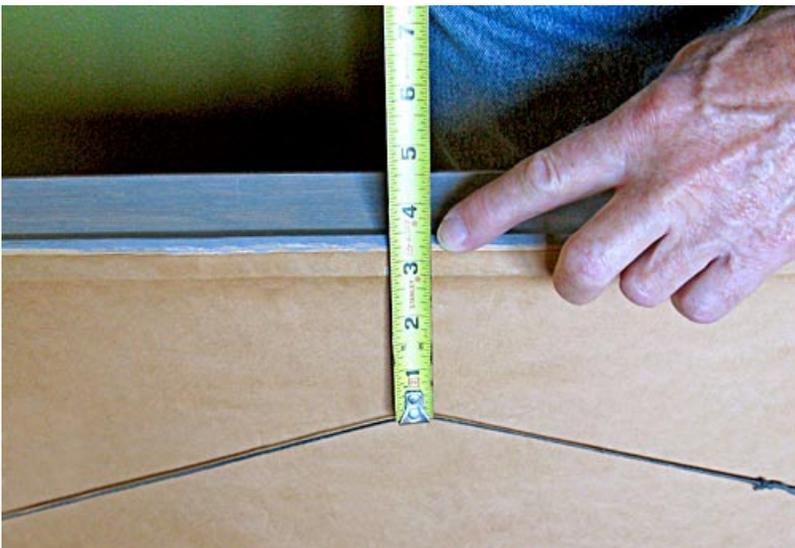
There's not a hard-and-fast rule about how high to hang pictures. However, one of my guidelines is to never let the bottom of the frame hang below the centerline of the wall. I always start above the wall's centerline with the frame's bottom edge. How high you go beyond that depends on the size of the frame and your personal preference.

Once you decide on where to put the picture, make a light pencil mark on the wall at the top and about the middle of the frame.

NOTE: Mark the back of frame; the edge that actually rests flat against the wall - not the fancy part of the frame that sits away from the wall. It's hard to get a true mark on this 'fancy part' because it's often curved or fluted and you can't get a good straight line.



Next, with the picture on the ground and upright, hook the end of a tape measure under the hanging wire on the back of the frame and pull it up taut. The tape will naturally find the center of the frame. Measure from the wire to the top of the frame.



Note the measurement and write it down. In our example, our measurement to the top edge of the frame's back was $3\frac{3}{4}$ ". This is the distance between where the hanger will go in the wall and the top of the frame.

Now go to the wall where you made your light pencil mark. Remember this first mark is at the top of the frame.



Measure down from that mark the distance you wrote down in the previous step ($3\frac{1}{4}$ " in our sample). Make another mark on the wall at this point. This is where the bottom of your hanger will go.



We used one common brass hanger with a simple nail to hang our frame.

IMPORTANT: *Note that the nail is on top of the hook; don't get ahead of yourself and put the nail in your mark or you will wind up hanging the picture too low!*

Place the hanger against the wall so the bottom of the hook is at the second mark you made (the $3\frac{1}{4}$ " mark in our sample). When you have it in position, drive the nail in.



The nail is meant to go through the hanger hole and into the wall at an angle. The most strength is gained by going in at an angle, and the nail will not pull out. As we mentioned above, for pictures under 50 pounds, you don't need to hang into a stud.

Now you are ready to put up that beautiful picture and be proud.



Next time, we'll do a hanging in a fixed place, such as above a fireplace. By then... I'll have finished my paint-by-numbers sailing ship.

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