

ARTFUL LIVING

By Scott LaFontsee



wood and some plaster. Picture hangers are to be installed by pounding a nail through the hanger at a 45-degree angle. If installed correctly, the weight of the artwork actually increases the hangers' strength. Picture hangers come in many sizes; each size is determined by the amount of weight it can carry.

Mirror hangers: Besides being extremely strong and adjustable, the design of these hangers helps by allowing you to attach the hanger behind the mirror or artwork so you don't see the hardware.

Security hangers: These hangers secure the artwork to the wall and can only be removed with a special wrench. These hangers are fussy to install because the anchors must be drilled into the wall at exact measurements in order for the hangers to match up with the hardware on the artwork.

Z – bars: These are a great option for those bulky items need to be hung close to the wall. These bars are also used as the top part of a security system when additional strength is needed. The system consists of two Z shaped bars, with one mounted to the frame and one to the wall, allowing the bar on the artwork to set inside the bar mounted on the wall. The advantage is that the bars may be cut to accommodate any length and this hanger will create support all along the frame.

Brick clips: These clips are made to grip the exposed edges of bricks. They work especially well if the mortar between the bricks is deep enough for the clips to create a good bite. The beauty of brick clips is that no holes are needed for installation and they may be removed with no damage to the brick. Brick clips will not hold heavy objects.

Professional hanging system: This system works very well in homes and in offices where expensive wood, stone or fabric walls are problematic for hanging artwork or for situations where the artwork is moved frequently. These systems are quite simple to install and make it extremely easy to change and adjust artworks. A rail is attached at the ceiling or the top of the wall, which suspends thin cables that connect to the artworks. The rail covers may be painted to match the wall, making them almost invisible. This system is very flexible.

Cove molding hanging systems: Some older homes (Heritage Hill homes) have cove molding that is designed to hang artwork. The molding has a lip at the top that will accommodate decorative S-hooks made for holding wire

Installing Artwork | Choosing the right hardware

Installation of most artwork and other objects is not that difficult if you take the time and have the proper tools and hardware. There are many different options to consider, especially when taking into account all the variables involved. Before you begin, think about what your long-term plans for the space are and if the artworks will be moved very often. If they will, you may not want holes in the walls that may be visible when you move things around. Whether you choose a different hanging system or decide to patch the walls, ask yourself these few additional questions before going further.

How big or heavy is the item you are trying to hang? What is the surface that you are hanging it on? If you're hanging large or heavy items on lath and plaster, some type of anchoring device will need to be used. Careful consideration will also be needed for surfaces such as brick, cement block, tile, marble and stone. If you're interested in tackling these hanging challenges, there are many choices of hardware for each of these situations. Your local picture frame shop or hardware store will usually be able to help you choose the proper hardware for the surface you are mounting on.

What about safety or security? Do you need to protect the art itself or people and objects around it? Is this a poster in a young child's room or a painting hung over an

expensive piece of furniture? Do you need to protect the art from theft? Will the artwork be in congested rooms or hallways? If you answered yes to any of these questions, you probably need to secure the artwork with some type of security hanging system.

INSTALLATION BASICS:

- Artwork is usually hung so that the horizontal center is at 58" off the floor. If all art works are hung as individuals, the centers of each work should be the same height. Using this as a guideline, understand that each space has its unique problems and a good eye and common sense will go far.
- When installing picture hangers, remember that the wire or rings on the frame will hang on the bottom of the hanger where the hook is, so you must measure and install them accordingly.
- Using two hangers (a few inches apart) on any artworks larger than 16 inches across will distribute the weight evenly and also hold the artwork level.
- Always double check your measurements before making any holes.

HARDWARE OPTIONS:

Picture hangers: Seventy-five percent of framed artworks can be hung with common picture hangers and can be used on drywall,

and suspending art. The advantages of this system are that no holes are made in the old plaster walls and there is very little cost.

Once you have decided what type of hanging hardware you want to use, the necessary tools will vary depending on the complexity of the project. A tape measure, pencil, and hammer are all that is needed to hang art with simple picture hangers. A level may be needed if you are hanging groups of art.



More complex projects will also need a power drill and the correct drill bits for the surface and anchor types used. When drilling into hard surfaces such as cement block, brick or tile, remember to purchase a drill bit made for the surface you are drilling. The drill bit you choose will also need to be sized for the type of anchor you will be using. Most anchors will suggest what size holes to drill. Take the advice; it's usually right. The hole should be slightly smaller than the large end of the anchor. When hanging heavy items in hollow walls (like drywall), toggles and dollies work best. These types of hangers are very strong, and toggles will give some leeway for adjustment. The disadvantage of using these types of anchors is the large holes they make in the wall.

Installing your artwork can be fun and less expensive, but so can doing your own plumbing. Extra holes can be filled and picture frames can be repaired. And with practice, you may find hanging quite easy. If you find pounding nails or drilling holes is stressful, consider hiring a professional.

Happy hanging and good luck. ■



LAFONTSEE GALLERIES
UNDERGROUND STUDIO

820 Monroe NW Grand Rapids, MI 49503 616.451.9820 www.lafontsee.us