

# Wallpaper Stripping Tips

Most wallpaper can be stripped rather easily using a chemical stripping product and a few simple tools. You will definitely need the following, and depending on the job, maybe some additional tools.

- Wallpaper stripping product. (They vary in how much paper a bottle will strip.)
- Bucket.
- Wallpaper stripping tool. (If you don't want to purchase a new tool, just use a spackling blade.)
- Tarp.
- Sponge or sprayer.
- Rubber gloves.
- Measuring cup.
- Trash bags.
- Prepare Your Work Area
- Take down any photos, artwork or pictures.
- Remove the covers from any light switches or electrical plugs.
- Put down a tarp to protect wood-work and carpet.

Most strippers have similar instructions for mixing and application. Consult the directions of the brand you choose for specifics.

Let the stripper do the work! Apply the stripper to one section of paper using a large sponge or garden sprayer. Start at the top and work down. Wait 10 minutes and apply another coat. The paper should begin to bubble. Using a putty knife or other scraping tool, scrape from a seam or corner of the paper. Paper should come off in strips, leaving the wall relatively clean. If paper does not come off easily, apply another coat of stripper. Stripping wallpaper is messy business. For easy cleanup, put down a drop cloth in your work area before you begin and have a trash bag handy for the removed strips of paper.

For removing of multiple layers, thick vinyl paper or painted paper, try the above directions first. If the paper does not come off easily, try the following:

You will need an additional tool to score or perforate the paper so that the stripper can soak in. Wallpaper scoring tools are available at most hardware and decora-

tor stores. Use the tool by pulling it back and forth across the wallpaper. The tool will put perforations in the paper that allow the stripper to soak in. After the wall is scored with the tool, begin putting on coats of stripper. Wait 5 or 10 minutes between each coat. Use as many coats as it takes to make the paper come off easily.

For removing problem paper, try...

- Additional coats of the stripper.
- Mixing stripper at a higher concentration.
- Giving the stripper more time to soak in.
- Mixing stripper in HOT water and applying carefully with a garden-style sprayer.

For particularly tough stripping jobs, you might be tempted to use a steamer. Paper steamers can be rented from most tool rental agencies. They are cumbersome to use,

messy, hot and one can easily be burned. If you do decide to use a steamer, inspect it before you rent it. Do not rent any steamer that is worn or looks like its fittings might leak.

## Cleanup

After the paper is removed from the walls, use more stripping solution to clean off any residual paper or glue.

Wallpaper cannot be removed from drywall that was not primed or painted before the paper was hung without causing some damage to the paper backing on the drywall. If you are in this situation, expect to do some spackling.

Any stripping product is not to be taken internally and should be kept away from children. Avoid contact with eyes and prolonged contact with skin. If irritation occurs, flush with water and contact a physician.

## Easy Does It: Preparing to Paint

We all know about paint and how to apply it, but how much of what we know is really correct?

Starting at the top, latex ceiling paint is spatter resistant and has a matte finish to minimize surface imperfections. For stucco or stippled ceilings that have not been painted before, a flat oil base paint will prevent crumbling.

Our satin paint can be used for low traffic areas with a formal decor, but satin luster offers a low sheen scrubbable surface. It is ideal for high or low traffic, adult or children's bedrooms.

For a more durable finish you would require semi-gloss. This is great for doors, trim, kitchen and baths.

If you haven't had reason to think of this it is best to paint the ceiling first, walls second and lastly trim, baseboards, doors.

Walls should be washed with T.S.P. of Surface Prep to remove dirt or grease.

Some glossy surfaces require a scuff sanding before painting. Then sanding residue should be wiped away.

Any cracks or holes should be filled with a patching compound. We carry Poly filla and once dry, patched areas should be sanded smooth, cleaned free of sanding dust then spot primed.

If covering a dark, bright or contrasting colour a coat of primer should be applied before painting, to assist in ease of coverage and give the new paint a solid appearance.

Next week: "The how to's of painting continued."

## Draft proofing: your first priority

(NC)—When it comes to winter home maintenance, draft proofing should be your first priority. It maximizes your insulation's effectiveness and protects your house from moisture damage. Open cracks and holes, although minuscule, account for up to 30 per cent of heat lost from the average Canadian home. Warm air leaving the home means energy loss, and energy loss means money loss. On the flip side, cold air entering the house through these tiny openings, means drafts and drafts mean discomfort.

Be sure to draftproof anywhere there is a crack, hole, or seam in material that separates your living space from unheated or outside areas. Search obvious areas around doors and windows, as well as not-so-obvious places such as electrical outlets, baseboards, attic hatches and chimneys.

An easy way to detect a draft

is to wait for a windy day, and place a piece of plastic or burning incense near suspected air leaks. If the plastic flutters, or if the smoke wavers, you've located a draft.

Here are some typical drafty spots in your home:

- Electrical outlets: use foam gaskets between the cover plate and the receptacles, and install child safety plugs in outlets that are rarely used.

- Mail slots and milk chutes: Cover and seal them if they are no longer in use, or seal around the frame and use weatherstripping.

- Window air conditioners: Ideally, they should be removed and stored for the winter, and the window properly sealed.

For more information on how to make your home more comfortable and energy efficient, call Natural Resources Canada's publications line at 1-800-387-2000 (in Ottawa, call

995-2943), or write to Energy Publications c/o Canada Communication Group, Ottawa, ON K1A 0S9, and ask for the free booklet called Keeping the Heat In. The Booklet can also be ordered over the internet at eeb-dee.nrncan.gc.ca..

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# DAMP BASEMENT

What's that musty smell, you ask. Could it be coming from your basement? A damp, musty basement is more than unpleasant; it could cause respiratory ailments; reduce the quality of living space in your home, and lead to moisture damage in the rest of the house.

Help is available! Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) has a unique publication entitled, Investigating, Diagnosing & Treating Your Damp Basement to help homeowners detect moisture problems, consider possible solutions and take remedial action.

"People phone CMHC to ask about moisture problems in their homes," says Don Fugler of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). "Most often, they find the source of the problem is in their basement."

The 8.5" by 11" soft cover publication is not a do-it-yourself manual, although it could help you fix many problems on your own. It's a reference guide that enables you to zero in on your particular problem without wading through irrelevant information.

For example: Let's say you've been snooping around your basement — snooping is good because your nose is a fine mildew detector — and you've detected dampness where it shouldn't be. Check out the symptoms described in the book to confirm the specific moisture problem.

Greater detail can be found in the section on Sources and Causes. Use the tests described to identify the source or cause, then check the section on Solutions to con-

sider options for solving the problem. Choose the appropriate solution. In many cases, you'll be able to fix it yourself. In other cases, you'll have to hire a professional.

"A great feature of the book's format is that once you've identified your problem, you can go directly to the section that offers solutions," says Fugler.

You don't have to be technically knowledgeable to make good use of Investigating, Diagnosing & Treating Your Damp Basement. The writing is plain and simple (available in either English or French) with checklists, precise, easy-to-understand diagrams, as well as diagnostic charts to help you pinpoint your particular problem.

Although the publication contains the most recent information available regarding damp basements, CMHC recognizes that this is an extremely complex issue in housing construction and renovation. The book, therefore, does not pretend to give comprehensive advice on all basement moisture problems. Nevertheless, chances are very good that this guide will help you solve your damp basement problems.


"At CMHC, we get a lot of questions on the phone and we gladly go through the whole process covered in the book," says Fugler. "But getting a copy of this publication should make it much easier for homeowners, as well as save on their long distance phone bills."



Investigating, Diagnosing & Treating Your Damp Basement, call 1-800-668-CMHC to order your copy.

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