

TO PATCH A WALL

TACKLE
MINOR
SURFACE
REPAIR
PROJECTS
WITH EASE

BY HARVEY MARKS



LEFT: Don't be intimidated by a little nail hole or small crack in your walls. With the right materials, a few tools and a bit of focused attention, you can pleasantly surprise yourself with successful results. Photo courtesy ©Valeriy Lukyanov/Fotolia

Some homeowners have one all-purpose tool for every repair job — their telephone. While calling in an expert to do it for you is never wrong, sometimes you really can do it yourself. In fact, you may be surprised at just how capable you are, not to mention the money you can save by handling minor patch-ups and other small repairs on your own.



LEFT: Fill any small hole with an all-purpose joint compound, a white patching substance similar to plaster, and allow to dry. Then you're ready to sand and paint. Photo courtesy ©Titi Matei/Fotolia

If you're repairing a large hole, mark out a rectangle around the hole with a straightedge or carpenter's ruler. Cut through the paper surface on the marked lines, using a utility knife or keyhole saw. Cut a drywall patch that is 2 inches in each direction larger than the hole. Remove the 2-inch perimeter, but leave the facing paper. Spread the joint compound around the outside edges of the hole and along its inside edges. Place the patch in position and hold it in place for several minutes while it begins to adhere. Spread more joint compound as needed with a putty knife. When the compound is dry, once again, you're again ready to sand, prime and paint.

For additional help, numerous books, magazines and Web sites are readily available. Wall Repair Systems Inc. (www.stepsavers.com) is one particularly good resource, with a whole range of do-it-yourself products designed to make wall repairs and other surface patch-up jobs simple and painless. Also check out USG (www.usg.com), inventor of wallboard and ceiling tile, for downloadable brochures on how to patch those products.

To get help with major plastering or other remodeling projects, your best bet is a general contractor. Breamy Construction offers a full range of turnkey services to meet the needs of discerning homeowners. Another excellent resource is L.M. "Jim" Norman, whose general contracting company has served the Houston area for more than 35 years.

WOOD PANELING

Wood paneling offers a different range of problems. For severe scratches or deep gouges, your best bet is to consult a furniture repair expert. However, minor scratches and gouges often can be concealed with a putty stick that matches the color of the paneling. When using a putty stick, fill the scratch and then wipe away any putty on the surface with a clean cloth.

BRICK

Most brick homes are actually brick veneer. Generally, brick veneer is rugged and reliable, but over time the mortar holding the brick together can wear away. The fix for this is to "repoint"



What we're really talking about here is drywall, a manufactured flat panel made out of gypsum plaster and encased in heavy paper. Drywall, which also is known as wallboard, plasterboard or Sheetrock, is all around us, covering the walls in most homes built in the last 40 years.

To fix minor blemishes in drywall, such as small dents, dimples or nail holes, sand the damaged area clean. Then, using a flexible, narrow-bladed putty knife, fill it with one or more layers of all-purpose joint compound, a white patching substance similar to plaster. Allow each layer to dry before applying the next. When the repairs are dry, you're ready to sand and paint.

For small holes, start by removing the loose drywall plaster and cutting away torn paper with a utility knife. Roughen the edges of the hole with coarse sandpaper, and then wipe any dust away from the hole. Next, cover the hole with an appropriately sized drywall patch screen, available at any hardware store. A fresh coat of joint compound may be necessary to keep the screen in place. Once it's secure, cover the screen with compound and let it dry. Then, sand, prime and paint.

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the brick, which means removing some of the mortar and applying new mortar to the joints.

This sort of repair is often beyond the aptitude of the casual do-it-yourselfer and is best left to skilled professionals. Highly qualified experts include Mr. Brick of Houston, a leading provider of brick and masonry restoration services since 1968, and Brick Restoration, another excellent choice for any brick, stucco, concrete or stone project.

The next time your house needs a minor cosmetic repair, take a moment and think about doing it yourself. With the right materials, a few tools and just a bit of focused attention, the results are likely to be a very pleasant surprise.

A plumbing job required removing bricks to access and fix the problem. The homeowner needed a professional service to restore the wall and called on Mr. Brick of Houston, which did almost seamless repair work.

RESOURCES

BREAMY CONSTRUCTION
11140 Timbercrest Drive
281.807.7669

BRICK RESTORATION
8830 Emnora Lane
281.558.1828
www.brick-restoration.com

KEYWORTH'S ACE HARDWARE
14614 S. Post Oak Road
713.433.7227

L.M. "JIM" NORMAN, CONTRACTOR
713.666.3633

MR. BRICK OF HOUSTON
713.856.8329
www.mrbrickofhouston.com

USG
www.usg.com

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Thanks,
Sam Roberts
Sam Roberts, President