

Autumn HOME IMPROVEMENT

Become a drywall doctor in your space time

By Andrew McGlothlen

Your son is playing catch with his friend in the living room for the third time this week. You start to tell him to take it outside when he misses a catch. It flies past the vase, but you now have a baseball-sized hole in your drywall. What are you going to do?

For starters, don't panic. Yes, your son is probably in trouble. No, it's probably not worth yelling about. Your son can probably even help with the repairs. It may not be fun, but it may serve as a more appropriate punishment than three weeks without television. Drywall repair can be quite easy if you know what you're doing. Here's

how to patch up that drywall without having to hang new drywall.

To begin, measure the width and height of the damaged area. With these measurements, you can do several things. One option is to get a drywall patch. This is a piece of drywall with adhesive that you can cut out and stick to the rest of the surrounding drywall. It can serve as a quick fix or as a long-term fix depending on the extent of the damage. Another way to deal with drywall damage is to make your own patch. Using a utility knife, cut out a square or rectangle around the hole, keeping the cutout as intact as possible. Place the fragment over a new

piece of drywall and trace the outside edge. Cut your replacement slightly larger than the square in your wall to give you room to negotiate. It's better to have a patch that's too large than one that's too small. Now, get a small piece of wood the same width as the patched area but a few inches longer. This will serve as your patch support. At this point, it's a good idea to form some kind of handle on the patch support, either with a drywall screw or a small nail, to give you something to hold onto to. Slide the support into the hole and drill it in place using drywall screws. Apply some drywall putty around the edge of the patch

area and place in the patch. Using a drill, place a couple of drywall screws through the patch to screw it into the drywall support.

Once the patch is in, you need to cover it with some drywall compound. Try not to overdo it and use just enough to cover the patch and a few inches to each side. When the compound is dry, sand down the area and apply the compound a second time. When it has dried, sand down the area again and check to see if the wall feels like one continuous smooth piece. If so, you can repaint or replace wallpaper on that part of the wall. If it's not quite smooth, use the compound for a third application

under the same guidelines as the first two.

A slightly easier solution for smaller dents like those made by door handles is drywall tape. Lay the tape across the hole and spread some compound over the tape. The compound will ooze through the mesh tape into the hole in the drywall, and once it has dried, it will form a new solid piece of drywall. Then all you'll have left to do is the sanding and re-sanding.

No matter which option you choose, if all goes well, your wall should look like new. And more importantly, your son will have learned not to play ball in the house...for now anyway.

Rearrange

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Create a Floor Plan

Many experts advise homeowners to draw a floor plan of their room and the furniture pieces within it on graph paper and use the two to create the ideal arrangement before moving anything. As you move the pieces around on your graph, consider the traffic routes. They should be a minimum 24 inches wide. Arrange the largest pieces first, allowing ample room between them. There should be at least 14 inches of space between the sofa and ottoman or coffee table and more than eight feet between pieces in conversational areas. If there is a television in the room, the chairs and sofas facing it should be

placed three times the size of the screen from the TV. Next, place the smaller pieces, making sure you have enough room to move in and around tables and to pull out drawers and shelves.

Create a Sense of Balance

Balanced rooms in general are more pleasing to the eye. Keep yours balanced by mixing smaller and larger pieces throughout the room. Don't sandwich a small end table between two overstuffed chairs on one side of the room and place an armoire and Grandfather clock on the other. Instead, scatter the taller pieces around the room and pair together furniture pieces of the same scale.

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