

Do It Yourself

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Drywall Repairs in Plaster

From "[Complete Fix-It](#)"

episode CFI-108 -- [More Projects »](#)

Note: [Illustration A](#), [Illustration B](#), [Illustration C](#), available using



Materials:

Pencil
Carpenter's square
Utility knife
Keyhole saw
Drill
Drywall screws
Sheet of drywall
Assorted wood: 1/4" plywood, shims, 1"x4"
Construction adhesive
Drywall tape
Drywall compound
Drywall knives
Sandpaper
Breathing protection

Removing the plaster

1. Snap a chalk line to form a rectangle that encompasses the damage.
2. To protect sound plaster from damage while clearing deteriorated plaster from the rectangle, screw plaster washers just outside the chalked lines.
3. Score the plaster along the chalked lines with a utility knife; then, with a hammer and cold chisel, remove the damaged plaster within the rectangle (**illustration A**, click above to view), chiseling gently to avoid loosening plaster outside the rectangle.



Mark the area to be cut out either with a carpenter's square and a pencil, as shown, or by snapping a chalk line around the damage.



When you're cutting drywall with a keyhole saw, cut as you push, not as you pull: this helps to keep from pulling the plaster out of the wall.

Attaching plywood strips

1. Cut strips of 1/4-inch plywood, 1 inch wide.
2. Edge the opening with the strips, loosely fastened with 1-5/8-inch drywall screws driven partway into the lath.
3. Shim the strips to position a scrap of drywall flush with the plaster (**illustration B**, click above to view). Tighten the screws.
4. Trim the protruding shims with a keyhole saw.



When you're working without a helper, start the screws to simplify attaching the braces. Pull the brace tightly toward yourself as you insert the screws.

Installing the patch

1. Cut a piece of drywall to fit the rectangle. Depending on the thickness of the plaster, you may use 1/4-, 1/2-, or 5/8-inch drywall.
2. Apply a bead of construction adhesive to each plywood strip, then press the drywall against the adhesive.
3. Fasten the drywall to the plywood strips with 1-inch drywall screws 6 inches apart, starting at the corners (**illustration C**, click above to view).
4. Tape the joints: Cut pieces of mesh drywall tape to cover the edges of the patch, and press them into place.
5. Using a 6- or 8-inch drywall knife, spread joint compound over the tape, just thick enough to cover the tape. Do not wrinkle the tape.
6. Allow the patch to dry for 24 hours, then apply a second coat, feathering the edges.
7. Once the patch has dried, smooth it with fine-grit sandpaper on a sanding block, feathering the edges.
8. It may take 3 or 4 coats to get a perfectly smooth patch.



If you can't find drywall the correct thickness, glue shims to the braces and use slightly thinner drywall.

Estimated cost:

1/4" plywood = \$10.27
1-5/8" drywall screws = \$2.47
Sandpaper = \$1.66
Shims = \$3.29

Drywall = \$9.38

Mesh drywall tape = \$5.88

Joint compound = \$6.29

Construction adhesive = \$3.25

Grand total = \$42.49

Note: To order the new *HGTV's Complete Fix-It* book, see Resources, below.

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RESOURCES:

HGTV's Complete Fix-It

Author: HGTV

Click [HERE](#) to order *HGTV's Complete Fix-It* book.

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