

Do It Yourself

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Repairing Damaged Wallpaper

From "[Ask DIY](#)"

episode ADI-412 -- [More Projects »](#)

Q: The wallpaper in my home has a damaged spot. Is there a way to patch damaged wall covering that's already been installed?

A: (from Sharon Hanby-Robie, *Ask DIY* Remodeling expert) If you have wallpaper that's been scratched, marked or marred in one isolated spot, there are ways to patch it. In our demonstration, we repair an area of wall covering that was damaged with a permanent marker (**figure A**).

Materials:

Wall-covering patch (spare piece of wallpaper in a matching pattern)

Sponge

Utility knife

Steps:

1. You can use a piece of wall covering that was left over from when the covering was initially installed. If you didn't save a piece, look for a place where you can "steal" a patch -- such as behind the refrigerator, inside a closet or behind a mirror. You'll need to cut a patch that's slightly larger than the damaged area (**figure B**).
2. Determine how the original paper was applied. In our demonstration, we had a spare piece of paper that was already prepasted on the back (**figure C**). To prepare the patch for attaching, the back was dampened using a damp sponge. (Other methods for applying wall covering may involve mixing your own paste.)
3. Make certain that your patch lines up precisely with the pattern on

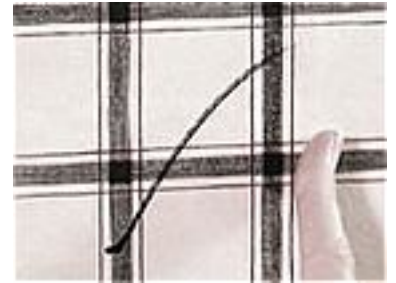


Figure A



Figure B



Figure C



Figure D

the installed wall covering (**figure D**).

4. Press it firmly into place (**figure E**), and wait for three to five minutes while the paste sets up.
5. Once the paste has had a chance to set up, use a utility knife (with a new blade) and a straightedge to cut a rectangle around the patched area (**figure F**). Cut straight lines to form a neat cutout, and avoid overcutting the corners, which would result in cut lines extending out beyond the rectangle.
6. Once you've made your cuts, remove the portion of excess wall covering that surrounds the patched area (**figure G**).
7. Carefully pull off the newly made patch (**figure H**).
8. Use the utility knife to pull up the newly cut corners of the damaged piece that was underneath the patch, and carefully pull up and remove the damaged section (**figure I**).
9. Replace the damaged section with the newly cut patch (**figure J**). Make certain that the lines in the pattern match up, and press the patch firmly into place. The patch should cover the cutout exactly since the new patch and the old damaged section were cut out together.



Figure E



Figure F



Figure G



Figure H



Figure I

Q: What can I do to repair separations between wallpaper seams that allow the wall underneath to show through (**figure K**)?

A: Though it may not be possible to eliminate the separations, there is something that you can do to make them less noticeable. It involves painting the seams using craft paints color-matched to the colors in your wallpaper pattern.

If your wallpaper is a solid color, you'll simply need to match the one color, or you can use a color-matched permanent marker to conceal the seam. In our demonstration, the pattern in the wallpaper required selecting three colors of paint (**figure L**) to match the existing colors.

Materials:

Craft paints in colors to match your paper pattern
Craft paintbrushes

Steps:

- Begin with the dominant background color, and paint down the length of the seam where the wall is exposed (**figure M**).
- Once you've painted in the background color, go back and touch up with the other colors to blend with the pattern. In our demonstration, the black lines were not solid black, so the black paint was blended with the lighter background color, and a stippling technique was used to achieve a good match (**figure N**). The final detail was to dab red color to match the thin red lines in the pattern

Q: Can I use the same wallpaper border at the chair-rail and at the ceiling?

A: Yes, unless you're using a very thin border. A thin border doesn't look weighted at the ceiling height. It's generally better to use a heavier, more weighted border at the top (**figure O**). The wider dimension is more appropriate for giving a sense of height to the room. If you're using a wider border, it's fine to use the same border at both locations.

RESOURCES:

Painting Walls, Ceilings and Woodwork: Color Your Home With



Figure J



Figure K



Figure L



Figure M



Figure N

Paints, Varnishes, and Wood Stains

Model: 1842154109

Author: Mike Lawrence

Southwater Publishers - \$4.95

Hardcover - 64 pages (June 2001)

Grand Finishes for Walls and Floors

Model: 1564404870

Author: Matt Nikitas

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Figure O