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FAQ: Wallpaper handling

Wallpaper estimation

- [1. How do I measure for wallpaper?](#)
- [2. Wallpapers without drop match - what does it mean?](#)
- [3. Wallpapers with drop match - what does it mean?](#)

Tools, Preparation

- [4. What wallpapering tools and -materials do I need?](#)
- [5. What do I have to do before installing wallcovering?](#)
- [6. How can I repair any defects in the wallpaper surface?](#)
- [7. How can I check the cohesiveness of previous coatings?](#)
- [8. How can I check the absorbency of previous coatings?](#)
- [9. How do I have to prepare the surface before application?](#)
- [10. How to strip stubborn wallpapers from the surface?](#)
- [11. Can I apply new wallpaper over existing wallpaper?](#)
- [12. Why do I have to completely remove old wallpaper?](#)
- [13. Which surfaces necessarily require a primer?](#)

Wallpaper Instructions

- [14. Where can I find handling instructions for my wallpaper?](#)
- [15. What is the pattern repeat?](#)
- [16. What do the batch numbers on the instruction leaflet mean?](#)
- [17. What is the "RAL quality mark"?](#)

Wallpapering

- [18. Wallpaper paste - which one to use?](#)
- [19. What means "soaking time" for wallpapers?](#)
- [20. Why do I have to stick to the soaking-times specified using paper wallpaper?](#)
- [21. How can I find out the exact soaking-time for my wallpaper if there is no information given by the manufacturer?](#)
- [22. How can I prevent the wallpaper paste from drying up during soaking-time?](#)
- [23. What happens if my wallpaper paste is too watery?](#)
- [24. How can I dispose remaining wallpaper paste?](#)
- [25. What means paste the wall not the paper?](#)
- [26. What advantage offer fleece-based wallpapers?](#)
- [27. Do fleece-based wallpapers also have disadvantages?](#)
- [28. Why do wallpaper seams gap apart after drying and how can I avoid it?](#)
- [29. What causes seam shrinkage? / Why have gaps formed at the seams?](#)
- [30. What may have caused air bubbles behind the wallpaper and how can I get rid of them?](#)
- [31. What is a double cut seam?](#)
- [32. How do I hang extra long wallpaper sheets?](#)
- [33. What do I have to keep in mind wallpapering round arches?](#)
- [34. Is there a way to patch damaged wallcovering that's already been installed?](#)
- [35. What do I have to follow papering window recesses?](#)
- [36. How do I wallpaper behind radiators?](#)
- [37. How to wallpaper round a door?](#)
- [38. What is important wallpapering on a pitched roof area?](#)
- [39. How to deal with sockets, switches, spot and ceiling lights?](#)
- [40. After wallpapering seams are visible between wallpaper lengths](#)

1. How do I measure for wallpaper?

Very simple: Wallpaper estimate depends on the wallpaper to be used – with or without drop match. (q. v. questions 2. and 3.)

A Euro(pean) roll is sufficient for a surface of about 5 m². If you want to do without an accurate measurement of all walls the following method helps you out.

First, add together the length of every wall that will be covered then (room circumference), multiply this number by your ceiling height and divide this figure by 5, the number of square feet in a single roll of wallpaper. Round up any fractions. This gives you the number of single rolls needed. Door- or window recesses are counted as wall surface and belong to the room circumference. So you have allowed enough wallpaper waste, which can result from wallpapers with large scale patterns. Those waste more paper. Some wallpaper may be deducted anyway. In almost every case it is better to have leftover wallpaper for repairs. The following tables illustrate the wallpaper estimate more detailed:

Wallpaper needs for walls

Room circumference	2,10 – 2,35 m ceiling height	2,40 – 3,05 m ceiling height	3,10 – 4,00 m ceiling height
6 m	3	4	5
10 m	5	7	9
12 m	6	8	11
15 m	8	10	14
18 m	9	12	17
20 m	10	14	19
24 m	12	16	23

Wallpaper needs for ceilings

Room circumference in meter							
	9-12 m	13-15 m	17-18 m	20-21 m	22-24 m	26-27 m	29-30 m
amount of rolls required	2	3	4	6	7	9	10

2. Wallpapers without drop match - what does it mean?

It is called wallpaper with a free or straight match. Free match is the easiest product to hang, as no matter how the strips of wallpaper are hung, next to each other, the design has no match, so no visible join or therefore seams. This also reduces waste. Straight match means that the left and right edge of the wallpaper match in a straight horizontal line with the left and right edge of the next strip of paper. If you are not sure layout two strips next to each other and you will see the match is straight.

3. Wallpapers with drop match - what does it mean?

Wallpapers are printed using cylindrical rollers, so as such the design on the printed wallpaper will repeat each time the roller turns. As wallpaper is hung in strips, it is important that where two pieces join, that the pattern on the roll matches. A drop match is one in which there is a vertical drop between the matching design elements, the so-called offset match. This is where the right hand edge of the first strip only matches with the left hand strip of the next strip, when the second wallpaper is dropped by a specified distance. For example a label will state a 64/32cm offset match. This means the design repeats every 64cm and the point at which they match from left to right is every 32cm. With drop matches, the number of strips hung before a strip is repeated is always dependent on the type of drop match. Patterns with a significant drop match (60cm or greater) will definitely require additional wallpaper to be ordered because the wallpaper waste is more significant. A European wallpaper roll has a length of 10.05 m and 0.53 m width. At a ceiling height of 2.5 m a roll without drop match is sufficient for 4 strips; wallpaper with a drop match for 3 strips only. Usually the drop match of the pattern can be seen at the wallpaper sleeve.

4. What wallpapering tools and -materials do I need?

To measure the room you need a pocket rule (folding rule) and a tape measure which should be at least as long as the room's ceiling height.

Vertical and horizontal reference lines can be determined by using a plumb line or a water level. For separating the wallpaper sheets a scissors made of stainless steel is the better choice instead of a common scissors to prevent oxidation caused by the wet wallpaper paste. A tearing bar is also very convenient to separate dry and pasted wallpaper sheets likewise.

Furthermore you need:

- **Plastic buckets** – for mixing the paste in and for wallpaper waste
- A **wallpaper stripper** – to completely strip your old wallpaper from the walls
- An **angled radiator paint-brush** – for missing the paste
- **Pasting and smoothing brushes** – to press on and smoothing the wallpaper
- A **soft pencil** (4B) – to mark lines
- A **craft knife** and/or utility knife (Stanley knife) – to separate the wallpaper sheets, edges etc.
- **Plastic spatulas, brushes and rolls** for pressing out trapped air bubbles
- A **seam-roller** or a soft towel-sized cloth to press on the wallpaper seams
- A **pasting table** – at least 10cm longer than the wallpaper sheets to be pasted
- A **stable, robust step ladder** with a tray for the pasting tools
- Suitable **wallpaper paste** – mostly recommended by the manufacturer

Tools you may need



- plastic spatula (1)
- wallpaper brush (2)
- (sponge) rubber-roller (3)
- pasting brush (4)
- seam-roller (5)
- pocket rule (6)
- pencil (7)
- wallpaper scissors (8)
- utility knife (9)
- metal spatula (10)
- plumb line(11)
- tearing bar (12)
- cutting bar for edges (13)
- craft knife (14)
- plastic buckets (15)

Source: http://www.ps-international.de/gifs/serv_werkzeug.gif

5. What do I have to do before installing wallcovering?

Mask the baseboard – except upper angle – with adhesive or masking tape. Cover the floor and the remaining furniture – preferably put everything together in the middle of the room – waterproof with plastic foil. Detach all protective covers from sockets and switches in the room. Shut down electricity but sufficient (day)light should be provided anyway. Make bags, bins or boxes for the old, stripped wallpaper available. The room has to be ventilated properly but draught must not result from it. Do not heat the room to much. That could let the wallpaper dry too quickly and uneven. 18 – 20°C is the ideal temperature. Check absorbency resp. cohesiveness of previous paints. Any defects in the wall surface such as unevenness, dents and holes have to be repaired beforehand and should be filled with drywall patching compound or gypsum based filler with plaster walls.

6. How can I repair any defects in the wallpaper surface?

Wall-plug holes can be outstandingly filled with instant filling-compound. The processing is very simple and clean. Mixing is not required. Hands stay spotless as well. The filling compound is ready-made and can be used instantly on old and new plasters, concrete, brickwork, natural and artificial stone, soft boards and Styrofoam. With larger cracks and holes as you may find them in older buildings' walls or after wire relocations you can not do without mixing the filler. For large area filling or with gypsum plaster board joints the best product you can use is super-adhesive filler. This filler is reinforced by synthetic resin and forms a solid compound with the level surface. It can be smoothed very easily and dries evenly without to sink or to generate joints.



7. How can I check the cohesiveness of previous coatings?

Press a small strip of adhesive tape (e.g. Tesafilm®) against the wall and remove it. If you see paint as plaque or floury spots on this strip no wallpaper paste will adhere on that wall surface. In that case the old paint has to be washed off and a primer has to be applied.

8. How can I check the absorbency of previous coatings?

The absorbency can be checked by moistening the wall with water; if it rolls off the absorbency of the wall is too low; pasting of waste-paper is required. An immediate dark discolouration of the moistened area signifies too high absorbency; pre-pasting or priming with a solvent-free primer can put things right.

9. How do I have to prepare the surface before application?

Wallpaper needs to be hung over a sound, stable, dry, firm, even, smooth and absorbent surface. Best prerequisites provide newly plastered, dried walls, whose surfaces consist of gypsum based plaster.

10. How to strip stubborn wallpapers from the surface?

Use a customary wallpaper stripper that makes it very easy to remove old wallpaper. It only needs to be added to the water that you want to soak the old wallpaper with. Alternatively washing-up liquid can be used. Using one of these additives can guarantee a quick and easy penetration of the old wallpaper and its adhesives. Waterproof wallpaper has to be perforated or slit by a spiked roll, spiked board, wire brush or similar tools that allow the water to penetrate the wallpaper. An adequate soaking time makes the removal of the old wallpaper with a spatula obviously much easier. If you deal with really stubborn wallpaper you can repeat the soaking procedure. Sometimes the addition of a small amount of wallpaper paste can be quite helpful. That allows the water to penetrate the wallpaper easier and it does not pour down on the wallpaper surface.

A completely new method uses steam to remove old wallpaper. Appropriate gadgets can be obtained from specialised traders.

11. Can I apply new wallpaper over existing wallpaper?

No! With a renovation the removal of old wallpaper before hanging new is always essential. To paste over old wallpaper layers is unprofessional and can easily cause defects and damages.

12. Why do I have to completely remove old wallpaper?

To avoid unevenness it is essential to remove old wallpaper layers. Otherwise old seams and joints could emerge on the newly covered wall. Potentially the adhesion could also be affected by not removing old wallpaper sheets. The new wallpaper possibly adheres perfectly on the old wallpaper but not on the wall surface. The new moisture loosens the adhesive on the back of the old wallpaper and at the same time those sheets themselves.

13. Which surfaces necessarily require a primer?

Solvent-free primer should be used on heavily soaking surfaces. These can be either water based (acrylic) or oil based. Most primers are applied to make the substrate more uniform for acceptance of the finish coat. They also improve the adhesion of the topcoat. They also will improve the removability of wallpaper and decrease the chances of wall damage (during a future renovation) in particular on plasterboards. The primer has to be diluted but not too much. The surface still has to be absorbent.

14. Where can I find handling instructions for my wallpaper?

Appropriate handling instructions for your wallpaper can be found on the insert or instruction leaflet. If you can not find any, please let us know. If you have a request concerning wallpaper handling please write an email to info@tapeto.de.

15. What is the pattern repeat?

The distance up and down before the printed pattern exactly repeats/duplicates itself is called pattern repeat. It is distinguished between the vertical and the horizontal repeat. The vertical or lateral distance from one point on the design to the identical point again. Almost all wallpaper has a vertical repeat, except for those papers with a random match. There are corresponding symbols for unidirectional or drop matches indicated in cm. They essentially have to be taken into account.

16. What do the batch numbers on the instruction leaflet mean?

The manufacturers label every new print of a wall covering with a new and unique dye lot-number (also referred as run, batch or shade number). Prior to covering the walls it has to be found out if all rolls for a certain wall or ceiling come from an the same run. Different numbers and letters on the instruction leaflets mean the rolls come from different printings. In such a case differences in colour, pattern, shade and texture are likely. Rolls from different runs have to be used on separate walls.

17. What is the “RAL quality mark”?



Wallpapers that carry the RAL quality mark meet the highest ecological claims, are in compliance with the quality guaranteed and meet the consumers' demands. Wallpapers with that quality mark do not contain volatile plasticizers, CFC or chlorinated resp. condiment-containing solvents. Prior to the wallpapers are allowed to be marked with the RAL quality mark they have to take severe tests by a neutral institution.

18. Wallpaper paste - which one to use?

Selecting the right adhesive for the job is very important, if not the most critical part of wallpaper installation. The wallcovering manufacturer will recommend what is best for their products on their directions (instruction leaflet, insert).

Principally three types of wallpaper paste can be distinguished:

Normal paste: Pure methyl cellulose for any kind of wallpapers.

Special paste: Pure methyl cellulose plus synthetic resin additions for pasting raised pattern, solid acrylic coated or molded wallpapers.

Paste for pasting machines: Pure methyl cellulose plus synthetic reinforced by resin additions resp. dispersion adhesives.

19. What means “soaking time” resp. “booking time” for wallpapers?

The allowing time for the adhesive to soak into the paper is called soaking or booking time. During that time the applied paste penetrates the wallpaper and the fibres swell. The paper expands in width by about 2.5% and in length by about 0.5%. The correct amount of booking time varies between 8 and 12 minutes, and should be noted on the directions that come with the wallpaper. It must be strictly adhered to. Otherwise the consequences are bursting seams or wrinkling.

20. Why do I have to stick to the soaking-times specified using paper wallpaper?

By the water absorption of the paper the fibres expand and the wallpaper sheet is getting wider and longer. Booking time and expansion depend on the type of wallpaper (weight, even or raised, surface). The correct amount of booking time should be noted by the manufacturer on the directions that come with the wallpaper. Different booking times of single sheets can result in pattern offsets!



21. How can I find out the exact soaking-time for my wallpaper if there is no information given by the manufacturer?

The exact soaking-time can be checked by pressing the edges of the folded wallpaper strip in the loop area which forms when the pasted wallpaper is folded over itself, pasted sides together with the edges in alignment. If the edges open up after a very short time, the soaking-time has to be extended. Only when they do stick together the wallpaper strips can be hung.

22. How can I prevent the wallpaper paste from drying up during soaking-time?

The wallpaper strips are folded paste-layer on paste-layer and the edges are pressed on. The strips are wrapped from both ends towards the middle. After that they have to be stored in logical order. The first strip to be installed on the wall is the one that was pasted first.

23. What happens if my wallpaper paste is too watery?

If the paste is too watery the wallpaper soaks completely through. As a result of that conventional wallpapers tear apart very easily and can not be adjusted or trimmed without difficulties. Besides, the adhesion is weakened and the wallpaper can come off.

24. How can I dispose remaining wallpaper paste?

In small amounts remaining quantities can be watered down and disposed in the toilet.

25. What means paste the wall not the paper?

'Paste-the-wall' is industry talk for wallpaper that has a special backing, which allows it to be hung dry from the roll, and thus reduces the installation time by around a half. In simple terms this means that unlike conventional wallpapers, the backing paper is dimensionally stable, so does not expand when it gets wet. This means you do not have to paste the back (although you can if you prefer) or soak it (like pre-pasted products) so there is no need to "book" or soak the wallpaper. This means you can save around 5 minutes on every piece hung. And there is no need for a pasting table or soaking trough and because you are hanging from the roll dry. There is less mess and the paper is easier to cut and trim.

26. What advantage offer fleece-based wallpapers?

Fleece-based wallpapers are very heavy duty, dimension stable, steam transmissible, crack bridging, do not have drying tensions and are very durable. There is also no soaking time required. The paste the wall not the paper technique, manual pasting as well as the use of a pasting machine are possible. So to speak they are very easy to handle. Compared with other types of wallpaper even the removal during a later renovation turns out to be extremely simple, because this sort of wallpaper can be stripped dryly.

27. Do fleece-based wallpapers also have disadvantages?

Due to the fact that these wallpapers are heavier, wallpaper paste with a higher adhesiveness is required. Some fleeced based wallpapers tend to gleam which calls for a pre-coat. The expected timesaving from the processing of such wallpaper is foiled by the 6 - 8 hours drying time of the pre-coat.

28. Why do wallpaper seams gap apart after drying and how can I avoid it?

Mostly this is caused by an inappropriate surface pre-treatment, patchy pasting, too short soaking times or too watery wallpaper paste. Even a too quick drying of the paper taken to the wall can lead to seams that dehisce. It is advised to re-unroll the wallpaper after pasting and folding. This prevents separation or too quick drying up along the strip edges. Take care not to overwork wallpaper because you can damage it, causing the seam to gap apart after drying.

29. What causes seam shrinkage? / Why have gaps formed at the seams?

Most likely, the paper was not permitted to book properly. The paper may have expanded when wet, but not permitted to relax properly prior to taking it to the wall. Also, the sheet may have been stretched into position



or worked too aggressively with the smoothing tool. Or if a paper wallpaper is not pasted to the wall surface properly because it expands by water absorption prior to taking it to the wall and shrinks during drying. Causes: inappropriate paste or surface pre-treatment, wallpaper dries too quick by heat irradiation or draught.

30. What may have caused air bubbles behind the wallpaper and how can I get rid of them?

Mostly, improper booking is responsible. Allow the wallpaper to book (relax) per manufacturer's recommendation (generally 5 to 10 minutes). Also an after-expansion on the wall, a non-absorbent surface, too watery paste or if the wallpaper needs to long to dry by too high humidity can cause air bubbles. To find a remedy extend the booking time, check and if necessary improve paste preparation, absorbency or construction level.

31. What is a double cut seam?

This is a type of seam used in situations where it is necessary to overlap two strips of wall covering (5-7cm) and yet avoid a raised ridge. One example would be when a border is being used as a chair rail with coordinated wall coverings above and below the border/wall covering. A straightedge is placed at the centre of the overlap and, with a razor knife or blade a cut is made through both layers. The top cut off section is removed and then the bottom cut off portion is removed leaving a clean, tightly butted seam.

32. How do I hang extra long wallpaper sheets?

The strips are folded accordion-like in loops of a length of about 40 - 50cm. They are carried on a pad (board or something like that) while taken to the wall. This prevents them from expansion by their own heaviness which could lead to problems with the pattern repeat. This is in particular important with heavy raised pattern wallpapers.

33. What do I have to keep in mind wallpapering round arches?

The round arches are ready wallpapered plus 2 - 3cm for good measure with the taping off strips in the bend area. That surplus is cut with a scissors every 3 - 5cm and wallpapered into the bend. Thereafter a strip matching in pattern and width is wallpapered in the left and right halves of the round arch. By this pasting method only one seam is generated in the middle of the round arch. The pattern only fits until the beginning of the curvature but not behind it. With very pattern marked wallcoverings it is possibly advantageous to use matching unicoloured wallpaper for the arches.

34. Is there a way to patch damaged wallcovering that's already been installed?

A pasted piece of the same wallpaper is laid over the damaged spot. Pay attention to the pattern match. With a sharp utility knife the wallpaper is cut around the spot, enabling to patch the new piece of wallpaper. Paste scraps on the wallpaper face can be removed subsequently with a sponge and clear water.

35. What do I have to follow papering window recesses?

With the first wallpaper strip one usually starts on one side of a window. Allow small overlaps towards the window that the window embrasure is sufficiently covered. At the edge of the upper window embrasure and towards the sill the overlap is carved which the embrasure thereafter is lined with (for vinyl papers you may need to use a vinyl to vinyl adhesive).

36. How do I wallpaper behind radiators?

Generally it is not wallpapered behind radiators. They are only "framed", i. e., no wallpaper is taken behind radiators!

37. How to wallpaper round a door?

Paste and hang a full width. Cut away surplus to within 3cm of the frame edge. Cut diagonally at the top corner. Push the overlaps top and side with your brush into the edge of the frame. Mark them with the back of



scissors, pull them back and trim them to the mark, then smooth them back. Do not hang a full length on both sides next to a door wallpapering patterned styles.

38. What is important wallpapering on a pitched roof area?

At first the pitch is wallpapered. Thereafter the lower part is pasted overlapping. With a double seam cut flush fitting trimmed edges are formed. The resulting seam is pressed and smoothed with a rubber roller.

39. How to deal with sockets, switches, spot and ceiling lights?

The power supply should be switched off! Then paste down over the obstruction. Push scissors through paper at the centre e. g. of the switch socket only after the wallpaper has completely dried and cut diagonally to beyond the corners. Fold back, score and trim. Clean the switch mechanics from paste after you have finished installing and cutting the wallpaper properly.

40. After wallpapering seams are visible between wallpaper lengths

Even professionals have this problem from time to time. It is caused by the fact that the wallpapers are not completely dyed but only on the top layer. The white seams are visible especially with dark coloured wallpapers. If you don't want to completely re-wallpaper the room perhaps you can put things right by doing the following:

Take an offcut of the wallpaper to your local DIY store. Let them ready-mix paint in the desired colour. Take a cloth with a smidgen of paint and smear the seams with it. But immediately remove paint that has gone on the wallpaper with a clean wet cloth.

**No responsibility is taken for the correctness of these information.
If there are any questions or suggestions, please use our [contact form](#).**