

Hanging Wall Art

A chore for most of us. But what's the real reason? Is it too difficult, or is it a royal pain because of uncertainty about what the proper hanging height should be? I expect mostly the latter.

Although there are some exceptions to every rule, in general, there are a few easy pointers to help you determine how to hang wall decor and at what height.

Most wall art tends to look best when hung at or slightly lower than eye level. However, consider how the art will most often be viewed. Will the viewer be seated or standing? Viewed from an entranceway, or further down a hallway? Consider the line of sight. Put yourself in the position of the viewer and study the piece at varying heights before committing to the final hanging. Kids art should be hung at the level of the child.

Hanging decor above furniture is always part guess work. To simplify, you should consider twice as much space above the art than below it. A general guideline, especially for framed artwork, is to allow 4 to 8 inches from the top of the piece of furniture to the bottom of the frame. This will also appear to give your room more height.

A big challenge in hanging art prints and pieces requiring a wire, is trying to figure out the distance the wire will extend to the hook. A good rule of thumb is to center the frame 60 inches off the floor. To do this, measure the height of the frame (ex: 20") and divide by two ($=10"$). Next, measure the space from the wire to the top of the frame, subtracting this number from the first number (ex: 3"). Then add 60 inches to this figure ($10"-3"=7"+60"=67"$). This is the point where you will insert the hook (67"). When your art hangs from the hook it should hang approximately one-third from the top of the frame.

Formula:

- $20 / 2 = 10$ inches

- $10 - 3 + 60 = 67$ inches.

Your hook should be 67 inches from the floor.

Heavy artwork is most secure when mounted to wall studs, pieces of wood inside the frame of a wall that are typically 2"x4" or 2"x6". Standard stud placement in most newer homes is 16" or 24" inches apart. Locate your wall studs by rapping on the wall with your knuckle until you hear a solid sound, which should be the stud. You can also use an electronic stud finder that beeps or flashes when it passes over wall studs. These can be found at most hardware stores, but are not always accurate. Move them slowly across the wall!

If you are hanging a heavier piece of wall decor and are forced to anchor into the wallboard, check with your local hardware store for hooks or specialized drywall hangers/screws rated for the weight of your artwork. If hanging a picture on a plaster wall, use a piece of clear tape to mark the spot where you will hammer in the nail; this will keep the plaster from crumbling around the hole.

Use two picture hooks for wide artwork or heavier wall sculptures. This method will more evenly distribute the weight of the hanging.

Don't use adhesive picture hangers, especially in humid areas. The best hangers can be attached to the wall by driving a nail in at an angle. The hooks should be hammered into the center of the wall stud. If you're able to pull the picture away from the wall, it is not hung securely.