



Homework

by Danielle Switalski

Tacky florals. Noisy prints. Outdated patterns. After years of the same ol' surroundings, the ultimate update for any room starts with an easy and accessible process: wallpaper removal.

According to Pete Curtis, president of Madison Brushworks, there are three things to keep in mind before you start tearing off wallpaper. First, protect your work area with tape or plastic as the process can be messy. Second, budget ample time to finish the removal in one sitting. "It's not a complicated task," Curtis says. "But if you're multitasking with many other commitments, you'll get frustrated."

Finally, get the right tools: a stiff-bladed putty knife (about \$6 at local hardware stores), a few sheets of coarse sandpaper, stripping pads, wallpaper removal solution and wall primer.

Let the removal begin! Scratch the face of the wallpaper with the coarse sandpaper. "You don't have to spend hours doing this," Curtis says. "Just a quick scuffing one time across the whole surface will be enough."

Next, mix the removal solution with hot water and apply with a roller or cloth. Then, Curtis advises, "Take a break, have a cup of coffee and let chemistry help you."

The paper should loosen up in 15-20 minutes but you may have to re-wet the wall a couple of times before seeing results. When it's ready, you should be able to reach for a corner and gently pull the wallpaper away. It might remove in large sheets or little pieces, but either way there will be a layer of light brown backing underneath — which is the underside of the wallpaper — as well as possibly glue residue. These layers should also be removed; simply reapply the solution and scrape them off with the putty knife, using the stripping pad if needed.

After fixing any nicks or holes in the wall, the last step is applying the primer to stop any leftover glue residue from mixing with future paint applications.

So while a day of painting may be in your near future, take a moment for a pat on the back — you've single-handedly escaped the old-wallpaper woes!

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