

# HANGING WALLPAPER

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● If you can survive scanning endless pages of wallpaper books and find a pattern that suits your decor, color scheme and budget, hanging the paper will come easy.

For your first job, choose a wallpaper that is easy to install, such as an inexpensive (less than \$20 a roll) pre-trimmed vinyl paper. Vinyl wallcoverings come paper-backed and fabric-backed, and both go up nicely. These papers don't stretch out of shape, even if you reposition them several times on the wall. Fabric-backed papers are more expensive and well suited for bathrooms and kitchens, where humidity can be a problem. Fabric-backed vinyls can be scrubbed and easily stripped off the walls at a later date.

You can choose between pre-pasted wallpaper and those requiring adhesive. Pre-pasted paper only needs to be dunked or soaked in warm water to activate the paste impregnated in its back. Other wallcoverings are hung on the wall with an adhesive applied with a roller. If you use one of these papers, ask your wallpaper dealer for an appropriate adhesive.

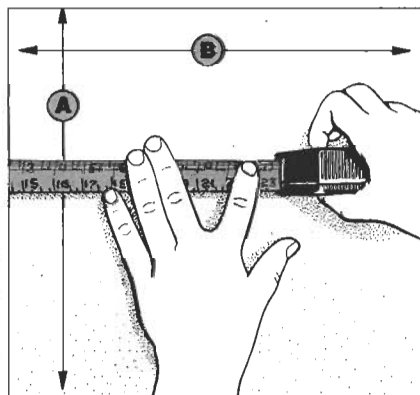
Look for a paper with a pattern repeat or drop of 10 in. or less. Pattern drop or repeat refers to a pattern's length (a repeat or drop of 10 in. is a pattern that repeats itself every 10 in.). The larger the drop, the more paper is wasted getting the pattern to align between pieces.



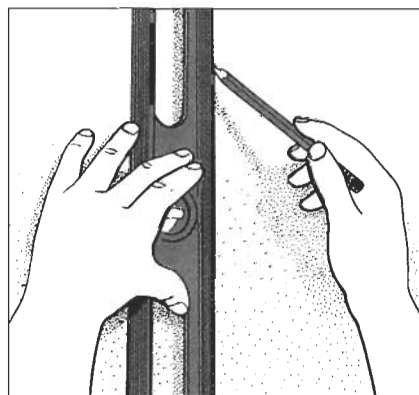
You'll find the pattern repeat on the back of each pattern in your wallpaper sample books and on the roll's wrapping. By choosing a pattern with a small repeat for your first project,

you can avoid excessive waste.

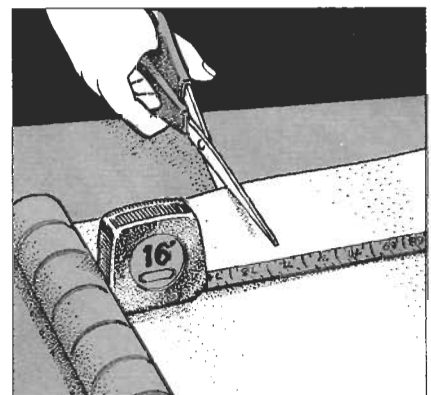
Build success into your first attempt by choosing a simple bedroom. Don't try a bathroom, kitchen or 2-story hallway at first.



**1** First, measure wall height, A. Now measure wall length, B. Multiply A x B and subtract door and window areas.



**2** Use a level or chalkline to make a vertical layout line on the wall. Align the first strip of paper with this line.



**3** Unroll paper and measure the length of strip allowing for pattern drop and trimming. Mark with a small scissor cut.



**4** Fold the roll back on the paper you just measured. Crease the paper at the small cut and use it as a cutting guide.

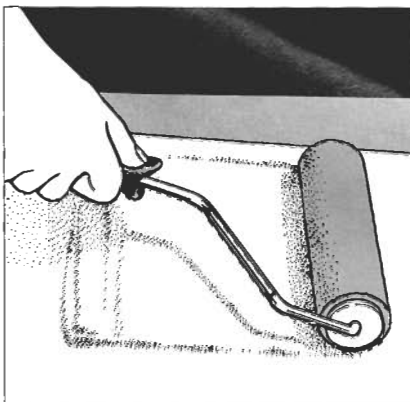
### Estimating paper and wall preparation

First, look in the back of the wallpaper book for a notice that tells you the area of each roll. Most rolls of American wallpaper contain about 36 sq. ft. of material. Allowing for waste due to the pattern drop and trimming, the roll covers about 30 sq. ft. A roll of European (metric) wallpaper contains about 28 sq. ft. and covers about 23 sq. ft. of wall (these are based on wallpaper with a drop under 18 in.).

To calculate how much paper you need, first find the wall area. Add the length of each wall, and multiply this total by the ceiling height (Fig. 1). Multiply the height of each door and window by its width. Add the door and window areas and subtract this from the wall area. This gives you the surface area to be papered. Add about 20 percent to the total papered area to allow for the few bad cuts you'll make (inevitable on your first job).

Divide this number by the area that your wallpaper roll covers, and that's the number of rolls you need.

Make sure the paper is from the



**5** Apply wallpaper paste using a paint roller or a wallpaper brush. Spread paste evenly over paper's back and edges.

same lot or batch. The batch number is stamped on each roll, and all the rolls should have the same number. If you run short and have to order extra paper later, you might get a roll from a different batch run. The color or repeat pattern might not match exactly, even if you order the same pattern from the same store.

Clean the walls thoroughly and repair holes, cracks or dents. Wash or paint the room's woodwork and trim. Unless the woodwork is natural or its paint is in good shape, it will probably look dingy next to the new paper. It's easier to paint it now than after the paper is in place.

Turn off the electricity to the room, and remove the light switch and outlet covers. You could hit an outlet or switch wire with your razor knife while trimming the paper and get a shock, so leave off the power while papering. Light the room with a lamp on an extension cord plugged into an outlet outside the room.

Next, size the walls. Sizing makes it easier to slide the paper around without tearing while you align the



**6** To prevent paste from getting all over when you handle the strips, fold the paper back over itself (pasted sides together).

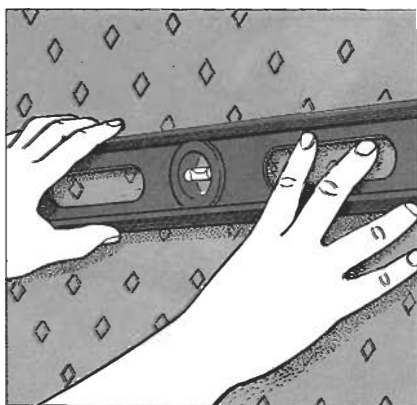
pattern. Because it seals the wall, sizing makes paper easier to remove at a later date.

Premixed sizing is easier to use, but more expensive than the type you mix. Either is simple to apply. Use a paint roller and pan to spread the somewhat watery solution. When it's dry, the wall is ready for papering.

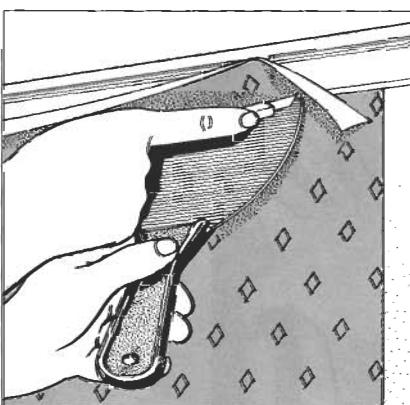
When hanging a wallpaper with a light-colored background on a dark wall, you may be able to see the wall where there's minute misalignment between seams. Prime dark walls with a coat of inexpensive white latex primer or use a combination primer/sizing.

### Layout: Getting started

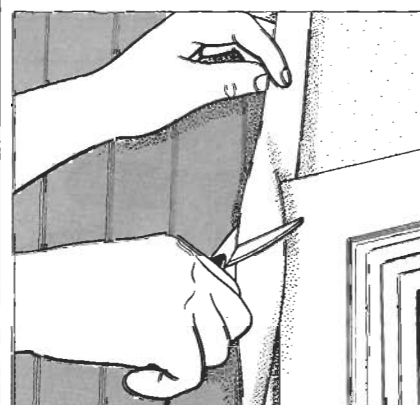
Begin your paper layout by establishing vertical guidelines to help you position the paper. Even with guidelines there's sure to be some misalignment between the first and last strip of paper you hang. To conceal this, lay out your job so you start and finish in an inconspicuous spot, such as over a door, a window or on the least conspicuous wall.



**10** When working with small patterns, check alignment between strips using a level. This assures pattern stays even.



**11** Push broad knife tight into corner at ceiling (or molding). Run razor knife along broad knife to cleanly sever scrap.



**12** Make diagonal relief cut from corner of window or door trim to paper's edge. This lets you work around projection.



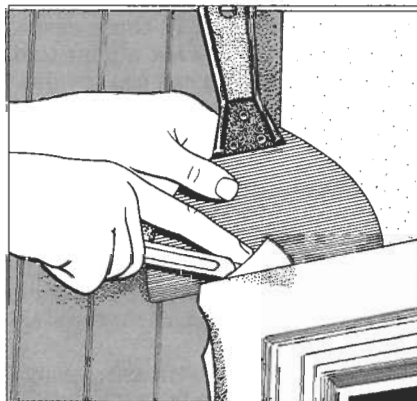
**7** Align first strip with vertical layout line. Smooth strip with wallpaper brush, working out from its center to the edges.

Hold up a roll of paper where you want to begin. Make a pencil mark equal to the paper's width minus  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. Use a carpenter's level or a chalkline to make a vertical plumb line through this mark (Fig. 2).

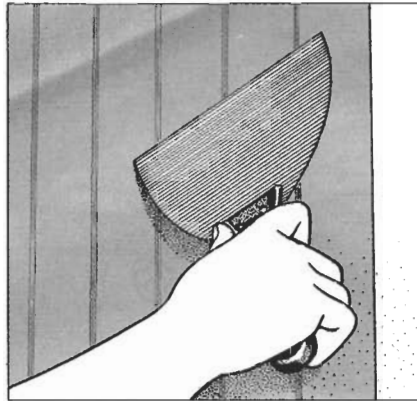
Align the edge of your first strip to be parallel and about  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. inside this layout line. This prevents the line from showing through the seam, but keeps the paper's edge close enough for accurate alignment.

Don't cut the first strip by measuring it. Take the roll over to the wall and unroll enough paper to reach from the floor to the ceiling. Hold the paper in place at the ceiling and move it up and down so you have a complete pattern at the top (if your paper's pattern requires alignment).

Make a light pencil mark on the paper at the ceiling. Remove the paper, and place it on a flat surface. Trim the paper 2 in. above the mark you made at the ceiling. Then, measure down from the ceiling, and mark the distance that the wall is high. Add 2 in. to this measurement for trim at the bottom. Make a small cut with a pair of



**13** Guide cut around window and door trim using broad knife. Trim away scrap before hanging next strip of paper.



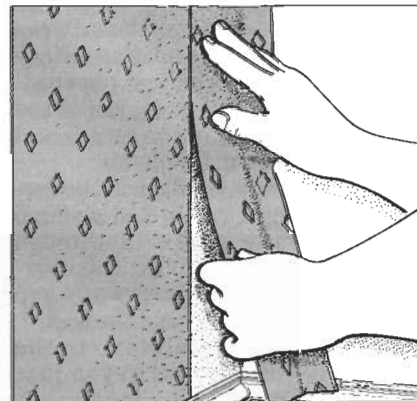
**8** If you work carefully, you can smooth paper with a broad knife. Pull knife gently across paper to avoid tearing it.

scissors, fold across the paper at the cut, then use the fold as a guideline to cut the strip (Figs. 3 and 4). Test fit this strip.

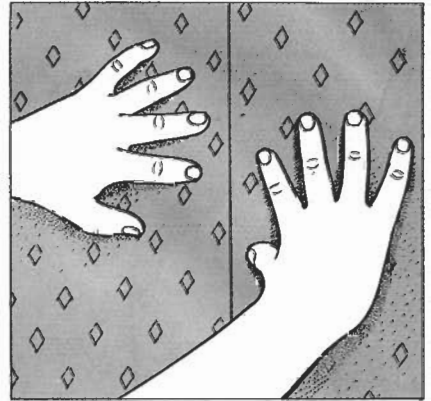
To cut the second strip, unroll the paper and lay it next to the first strip. Move up the paper until the pattern matches (the wasted paper should always be located at the top of the roll). Cut the paper so it's 2 in. longer at the bottom, leaving some paper to trim at both ceiling and baseboard. Avoid cutting a large batch of strips until you've tested a few pieces of paper to see how the pattern is lining up.

### Hanging paper

If you're using a prepaste wallcovering, use an inexpensive plastic container called a water box or trough. Fill this about half-full with warm water and place it on a plastic garbage bag covered by old towels to blot up spilled water. Let the strips of paper soak for the amount of time specified by its manufacturer (usually less than a minute). Keep the paper rolled loosely from bottom to top and rotate it in the water.



**14** Hang strip on an inside corner with about 2 in. of scrap on adjacent wall. Smooth paper toward corner and to seam.



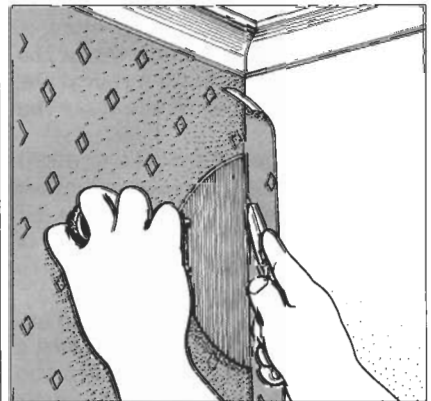
**9** Slide next piece of paper into position while adhesive is still moist. Smooth paper after pattern is aligned.

Follow the manufacturer's advice for wallpaper that requires adhesive. A vinyl paste is usually a good choice because it resists mildew. If you have had a mildew problem in the room, buy a mildewcide additive and mix it in the paste.

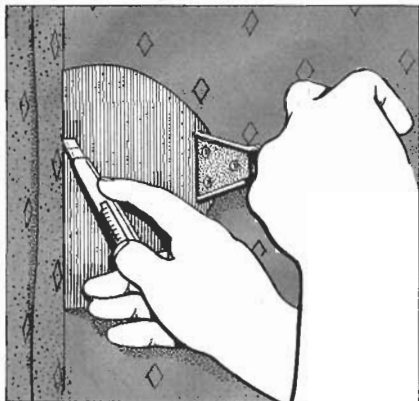
Smooth the paste onto the paper's back with a paint roller or wallpaper brush (Fig. 5). Spread the paste evenly, including the edges. To keep the paste from getting over everything, fold the pasted side of the paper back on itself (Fig. 6). This also prevents the adhesive from drying out. Work ahead and paste up a couple of strips so one strip can soak while you work with the other.

Wait at least 5 minutes after brushing adhesive onto a strip of wallpaper for it to set, or "wet out" as it's called, before you hang it. Wallpaper expands when wet and contracts as it dries, so this wetting out lets it reach its maximum expansion and prevents bubbles from forming behind the paper once it's hung.

Have your ladder in place and your tools at hand before bringing the fold-



**15** Trim paper flush working with broad knife and razor. This leaves a small bit of paper overlapping in the corner.



**16** Start next paper strip with an overlap. Match the pattern and plumb the strip. Cut through top strip to remove overlap.

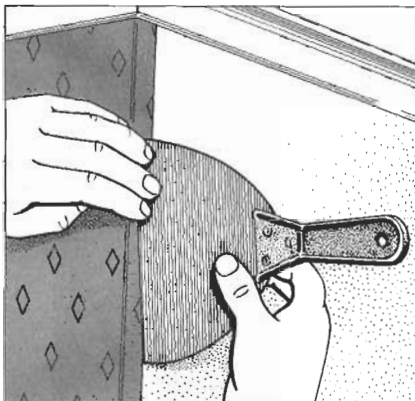
ed and pasted strip to your starting point. Unfold the top section and position the strip so it lines up with the plumb line. Don't forget that you allowed for an extra 2 in. at the top of the piece. Hold the top in place and unfold the pasted bottom section so it drops to the floor. Work your way down the strip checking alignment with the plumb line.

Press the strip firmly against the wall. Work out from the center of the strip using a brush or sponge to push air bubbles or wrinkles to the edges (Fig. 7). If you are very careful, you can use a broad knife (a 6-in.-wide scraper, also called a flat knife) to do this also (Fig. 8). Wipe off excess glue that oozes out of the edge of the strip. Hang the next strip and align the pattern by eye or with a level (Figs. 9 and 10). Use a seam roller to press the edge in place and again after each strip is hung to prevent the seams from opening.

Trim the paper at the top and bottom after you've hung several strips. This is best done using a broad knife and a razor knife. Press the knife into the corner where the wall meets the ceiling, and draw the razor along it (Fig. 11). Move the knife over as the razor reaches its end, then repeat the cut. Trim the paper at the floor the same way.

You have to negotiate around doors, windows, cabinets and other projections. To get the paper to lie flat next to these protrusions, use a pair of small pointed scissors or a razor to make relief cuts.

We'll use a window frame as an example. Carefully align the strip so it's plumb and its pattern matches the piece next to it. Smooth out the paper as much as possible. Make a 45° relief cut starting at the corner of the window trim, extending into the waste



**17** Overlap around outside corner should be under 1 in. Next strip should cover overlap. Then, trim strip flush to corner.

paper (Fig. 12). Then, finish smoothing the paper, and work out remaining wrinkles and air bubbles. Trim the paper flush against the edge of the opening the same way you trimmed up against the ceiling (Fig. 13).

### Hanging outside/inside corners

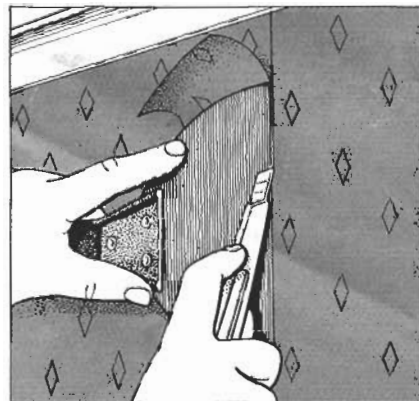
There's a great temptation to wrap a strip of wallcovering around an inside or outside corner, then continue on by butting the next piece of paper to it. This often results in a sloppy looking job. Corners are seldom square, and wrapping the paper around the corner will cause the pattern to run out of plumb. For best results, use a lap joint or double cut the seams.

To make a lap joint in an inside corner, trim the last strip so it's up to the corner and overlaps the adjoining wall by a couple of inches (Fig. 14). Push the broad knife into the corner and cut off the paper that overlaps on to the adjoining wall (Fig. 15). This leaves about ¼ in., or less, paper overlapping.

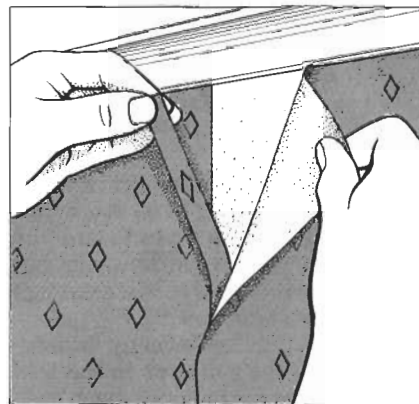
Make a plumb line on the new wall to align the first adjoining strip. This first strip on the new wall should wrap around the corner and overlap an inch or so into the wall you just papered. Carefully match the patterns of the overlapping paper in the corner and check the new strip for plumb.

Trim the new strip flush in the corner. Use a light touch and a sharp blade in the razor knife to cut through the top strip only (Fig. 16). This overlaps about ¼ in. and covers any gap between the new strip and the wall.

Next, add more adhesive to the joint by peeling the strip you just trimmed back and applying the adhesive with an artist's brush. Then smooth out the joint and sponge away excess adhesive.



**18** To make a double-cut joint, align the pattern with the strips overlapping. Press hard enough to cut both strips.



**19** The overlap falls away, but you must peel back the top strip and remove the cut-off section. Then, roll the joint tight.

Wrap the paper around an outside corner and trim it back so ½ in. of paper rounds the corner (Fig. 17). Mark a plumb layout line on the unpapered adjacent wall. Align the first strip with the layout line and trim it flush with the corner.

The inside and outside corner joints described here overlap. Some heavy papers will show a lump at the joint, and other vinyl papers do not stick well to one another. In these cases, and anywhere you want a joint that butts perfectly, you can use the double-cut method.

Overlap the strips where you want the joint, then cut through both strips with a sharp razor guided by your broad knife. The trimmed piece will fall away from the top strip, but you have to peel back the top strip to remove the trimmed piece from under it (Figs. 18 and 19). Smooth the top strip back into place.

While the paste is still soft, sponge away excess paste from the wallpaper's face and woodwork. Go back several times with a clean sponge to be sure you get it all.

PM