

# Putting up pictures and shelves and cabinets

## Cavity walls

As with most newly built houses, our walls are dry lined, cavity walls, containing insulation. So there is no skim of plaster over the walls and there are gaps between the plasterboard and the structure behind.

The plasterboard on external and internal supporting walls will be fixed using the 'dot and dab' method, where dabs of plaster or other adhesive are used. For other walls the plasterboard will be fixed on a stud (a wooden frame of crosspieces and uprights).

This makes it more challenging to successfully put up shelves, mirrors etc. In traditional houses you would use a screw and rawl plug to fix something on a wall. Here you have to use specific fixings or anchors designed for hollow walls.

Hollow wall fixings work where simple screws won't. They are designed for use in thin or hollow walls such as drywall, plasterboard, and other board materials that will not support the weight of heavy wall hangings. They normally work by biting into the board or wall and spreading within its cavity to get a fix, but there are lots of variations.

When deciding where to drill a hole, as well as avoiding electrical cables and pipes, you need to find the studs or dabs of plaster as screwing into them will help your fixing to be stronger.

## Finding studs and dabs

To find timber studs you can use a stud detector, which will help you identify electricity cables, studs or dot/dabs in your walls

A low tech method is to knock on the walls and listen for hollow or denser sounds. Where it sounds denser could be a stud or dot/dab. If these places are at regular intervals (400-450mm) and run in a line from the ceiling to the floor, then they are studs. If they are random it more likely to be dot and dab.

## What fixing to use?

There are many types of hollow wall fixings or anchors. The best explanation we have found is in these You tube video channels

- Charlie White DIY <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QHoKBuDP2pY>
- Ultimate handyman <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mIEY3E4fiDk>

## Self adhesive hooks

For lighter items such as pictures, self-adhesive hooks (one trade name is Commando hooks) can work well as an alternative to drilling holes.

## Internal doors

Some of our houses may have fire doors but mostly we have hollow core doors, so self-adhesive hooks or the correct fixing are needed.