

EVERY TUESDAY
Western Mail 

168 16 April 2007

How to be a domestic goddess

A BLAGGER'S GUIDE TO CONVINCING THE WORLD THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN'T DO

How to put up a shelf, by Mark Lewis of Lewis Homes Wales

THE TOOLS

As anyone embarking on a shelf assembling mission knows, you are only as good as the tools you use.

First and foremost, a level and a tape measure are vital to ensure that your shelf is perfectly straight.

You will need a drill with a masonry drill bit (which can drill through stone). You must ensure that your drill bit is sharp. A cordless drill will be easier to use as there will be no problems with wires getting in your way.

It is best to use a Stanley screwdriver as they are of the highest quality, and with this you will obviously need screws and wall fixing plugs.

Next, you'll need brackets to actually hold the shelf on the wall. These are 'L' shaped and can be found in most DIY stores.

Finally, to complete your tool kit you should have a claw hammer, and of course, a pencil.

With the correct tools you will be able to tackle any shelf of any size.

DECIDE WHERE YOU WANT THE SHELF TO GO

Now, you must decide where to put your shelf. This is down to you entirely but before doing so you should check that there are no power sockets below your chosen position, as wires are installed vertically and you obviously do not want to electrocute yourself by drilling through one.

You also need to consider the length of the shelf, as the amount of brackets needed depends on this. A 1.2 metre-long shelf will need three brackets – one at each end and one in the middle.

If you would like to put more than one shelf up you need to consider the dimensions of the items you are storing on the shelves. You don't want to put up your shelves and then find they are useless as you can't actually store anything on them.

PUTTING UP THE SHELF

The first thing to do is measure the length of your shelf using your tape measure, and mark a horizontal line of the same length across the wall using your trusty pencil. Ensure the line is totally straight using the level.

Mark where your brackets are going to go evenly along the pencil line you have just drawn on the wall by drawing vertical lines through it, using your tape measure and level again.

Next, put your bracket against the wall using the lines you've just drawn as guidelines for where they are going to go. Then using your pencil, mark the wall through the screw holes in the bracket. Do this with every bracket, so you know where to start drilling into the wall.

You are now actually ready to start drilling. Drill holes into the wall to the same depth as your wall fixing plugs. The best depth to use is 8mm for shelves. Using your claw hammer, tap the wall-fixing plugs into the wall. This will create the foundations for where the screws are going to go.

It is best to use 7mm screws to go with these wall fixing plugs. Fix the brackets to the wall using your screws and screwdriver. Make sure they are tight and steadfast, as the last thing you want is the shelf falling down once you have put everything on it.

The last step is just to place the shelf on top of the brackets. As long as it is steady and level, you now have a fully functional shelf.

A TRICK OF THE TRADE

While you are drilling the wall, get somebody to hold the head of a Hoover directly underneath the hole. This means you will avoid getting any dust or mess on the floor.