

Picture Perfect

Are your walls covered with beautiful original artwork? Or are they screaming to be covered? Do you have so many holes that you can connect the dots and create your own constellation? Or are you afraid of hammering that first nail and messing up the paint job?

Next to choosing a paint color, deciding what to hang on walls is the one of the biggest stresses when redecorating a room. Choosing what to hang on your walls doesn't have to be difficult, expensive or stressful.

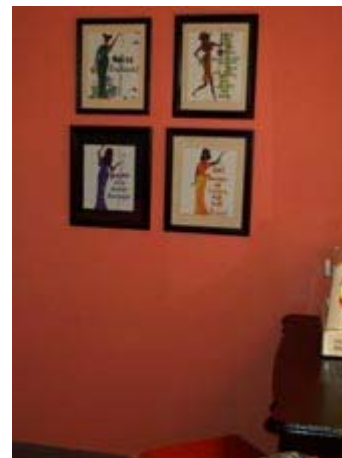
Here are some simple rules that will help make your wall decorating stress-free!

The first rule—**buy what you love**. Art is personal. If the painting, drawing or sculpture doesn't speak to you in some way, pass it up. You don't have to understand it to like it.

The second rule—**it doesn't have to 'match' anything else in the room**. A painting can stand on its own and become the focal point. Quite often when I help a client decorate, I ask about a favorite piece of art. It can become the inspiration for the entire design scheme, or you can simply pull colors out of it and decorate using those hues. What if you don't have a favorite piece or any artwork? How do you choose? Visit art museums and galleries. Look at what's on display in public places. Study design magazines to see what others are hanging. Start to get a feel for what you like. Then buy what you love. Don't limit yourself to 'mass produced starving artist sofa specials'. Goodwill and antique shops are great places to find recycled paintings, posters and frames.

The third rule —**Who said it has to be a painting or drawing?** Architectural artifacts make very interesting wall sculptures. Forget the canvas, and paint something right on the wall! Kid's artwork is wonderful especially if mounted in colorful, funky frames. For something totally different, just hang the frames sans pictures! Try three different sizes in various styles and colors and hang them within each other. The different texture and dimension casts unusual shadows, and frames within frames makes for a very interesting conversation piece.

The fourth rule—**find a common theme**. When grouping pictures together the secret is to find a common theme such as the same frame, similar



color/ size or common genre (flowers, black and white photos, city-scapes, etc.).

The fifth rule and the most important rule—**install artwork at eye level**. The biggest mistake most people make is hanging a picture too high.

If you are still uneasy about pounding those nails in the wall, try laying out your pictures on the floor until you get an arrangement you like. You can even trace your frames on brown paper bags and tape them to the wall. Rearrange them until you're happy with the results.

Keep in mind that decorating your walls really can be fun and easy. Just remember, buy what you love! Art should reflect your personality. Although artwork can last centuries, no one said you have to keep it forever. If you get tired of it, donate it to Goodwill and start over again!

