

# WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO REMOVE WALLPAPER?

BY NOELLE LORD CASTLE

**R**EMOVING WALLPAPER ALWAYS involves water, sometimes steam, sometimes perforation, and usually scraping. Primarily it involves patience and elbow grease.

If you have vinyl paper on top, you must first tear off the vinyl covering down to the paper below. If you have wallpaper that has been painted over, you must perforate or score the surface so that the water can penetrate through the paint. With painted wallpaper, renting a wallpaper steamer is often well worth the cost, giving you the extra force you need to get through the paint to loosen the paper below. Steamers will not hurt plaster, but can be rough on drywall.

The key to removing wallpaper is to wet it and keep it wet. This is a messy (yes, and wet) process, so protect your area well by taping plastic carefully and using drop cloths and towels. Using very hot water and wallpaper remover in a pump sprayer, such as a garden sprayer, begin “marinating” the walls and keep them wet. It usually takes between 10-20 minutes of continuous soaking for the paper to begin letting go. Pull off what you can and use a 3-inch or larger flexible joint knife to coax the paper off. Continue the wetting, scraping process until all the paper is removed.

Once all the paper is removed, the walls need to be well scrubbed and washed to remove ALL the glue. Using wallpaper remover in hot water and a scrubbing sponge, wet and scrub all the areas and loosen the glue. Use a large, porous block sponge to squeegee off the loosened residue. Keep cleaning the sponges and continue until all glue and sticky residues are gone.

Using the block sponge again, follow with a 1:1 white vinegar and water rinse. If there is any mold (black or green dots) under the wallpaper, wash the wall with a 1:1 bleach and water solution, then the vinegar water rinse. All glue residue must be removed, or any new plaster or paint will not stick. ■

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Potentially facing multiple layer of paper, vinyl papers or painted over wallpapers, removal calls for patience and elbow grease more than anything else.

