

Do It Yourself

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Repairing Large Holes in Drywall

From "[Complete Fix-It](#)"

episode CFI-102 -- [More Projects »](#)

Cutting Between Studs or Joists

Note: [Illustration A](#), [Illustration B](#), [Illustration C](#), [Illustration D](#), [Illustration E](#) available using



Materials:

Drywall (comes in 4x8 and 4x12 sheets)

Joint compound

Drywall tape

Sandpaper, fine grit

Drywall screws (1-5/8")

Wood screws (3")

2x2 and 2x4 (one each)

Tools:

Hammer

Drill with screwdriver bits

6- or 8-inch drywall knife

Drywall or keyhole saw

Hand saw or a circular saw (to make the cleats)

Carpenter's square and pencil

Utility knife

Tape measure

Stud sensor



It's helpful to use a utility knife to score along the ceiling and all pencil marks before sawing out the damaged area.



If the damaged area came out in one piece, use that section as a template when cutting a patch. Be sure to match the tapered area of the new piece with that of the old one.

1. Locate the position of the nearest stud or joist on each side of the hole.
2. Using a carpenter's square, mark an opening with 90-degree

corners to be cut around the hole. Draw along the inside edges of the two studs or joists that flank the hole, and along any framing members between them.

3. If a stud frames a window or door, continue the marks to the next stud: doing so avoids a joint in line with the opening, which would otherwise be subjected to cracking from repeated opening and closing (**illustration A**, click above to view). Where a hole lies within 8 inches of an inside corner, draw to the end of the panel to avoid forming a new joint too close to the corner.



Score the drywall's paper with a knife, then simply snap the area to be cut out.

4. Cut out sections of drywall between framing members with a drywall saw or a keyhole saw.
5. Clean the edges of the cuts with a utility knife.

Making the Patch

1. Measure each side of the opening as well as the sizes and positions of any electrical boxes, door frames, or window frames within it.
2. Transfer the measurements to a panel of the same type and thickness as the damaged drywall, using a carpenter's square to ensure 90-degree corners (**illustration B**, click above to view). Do not use the panel's tapered edges for the patch's edges unless an edge of the opening falls at an inside corner.
3. Cut out the patch, positioning the saw blade on the outline's inner edge; for an opening within the patch, cut just outside the line.

Adding Cleats

1. For fastening the patch, cut 2-by-4 or 2-by-2 cleats to fit alongside the joists or studs at the edges of the opening. Where possible, cut the cleats 2 to 3 inches longer than the opening.
2. Secure the cleats flush with the studs or joists by driving 3-inch screws every 4 to 6 inches along the cleat (**illustration C**, click above to view).

Installing the Patch

1. Before positioning the patch, mark the location of any exposed stud or joist on the wall or ceiling near the opening.

2. Fit the patch in the opening and drive 1-5/8-inch drywall screws through the patch about every 6 inches into each cleat, stud or joist, starting at the middle and working to the edges (**illustration D**, click above to view). Do not screw the patch to a top plate or a sole plate.

Reinforcing the Patch With Tape

1. Cut a piece of fiberglass tape 2 inches longer than the crack, which is self-adhesive, and press it into place over the crack.
2. Spread a wide layer of joint compound over the tape, feathering the edges (**illustration E**, click above to view).
3. Allow the area to dry, then apply a second coat, feathering the edges.
4. After the patch dries, sand it smooth.

Estimated Cost:

Drywall (4x8x3/8" thick) = \$7.85

Joint compound (5 gal.) = \$9.75

Drywall tape = \$7.88

Sandpaper = \$1.96

Drywall screws = \$3.76

Wood screws = \$3.00

(1) 2x2 and (1) 2x4 = \$5.50

Total = \$39.70

Note: To order the new *HGTV's Complete Fix-It* book, see Resources, below.

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RESOURCES:

HGTV's Complete Fix-It

Author: HGTV

Click [HERE](#) to order *HGTV's Complete Fix-It* book.

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