



Installing Works of Art Using 2 D-Rings Onto Anchored Screws or Hooks

Using Wire

The common method of hanging framed art using wire suspended on one picture hanger is not a safe system. The only positive attribute of the system is that it leaves only one hole in the exhibition wall but it does weaken frames, offers poor security, has no safeguard against the work falling and has a poor appearance with the work hanging forward and off-center.

A Better System: Using D-Rings Directly on Anchored Hardware On the Wall

The recommended hanging method for exhibition of conventional 2-dimensional framed works is a 2-point system. D-rings are screwed to the reverse of the work of art, positioned parallel to the edge of the frame and flush to the back so that they can hook directly onto hardware on the wall.

The D-rings allow for 2-point wall attachment. Works of art will also hang flush and immobile on the wall. The system works with rather than against the natural strength provided by a frame, since the weight of the work of art is distributed straight down a frame/stretcher/backer member.

The D-rings should be hooked directly onto hardware on the wall. The choices for wall hardware are the following:

1. **Anchored screws**
Flat-head screws (approx. # 6 or 8) should be installed to protrude about 1/8 inch from the wall. Anchors should be chosen to suit the type of wall, e.g. drywall, cement. Some screw/anchor combinations are available that include plastic anchors and matching screws.
2. **Picture hooks**
High quality anchored picture hooks have recently become available in hardware stores such as Rona. For example, the Cobra brand has a "Wall Biter" for light works (up to 15 pounds) on drywall and wood and a "Wall Driller" for medium to heavy works installed on drywall. Both are available in various sizes to support artwork of different weights.
3. **Common nails**
Large common nails can be used in wood (thicker wood, not paneling) or wood-backed walls.

Installing the Hardware Into the Wall

The 2-point attachment system does take some care and measuring. If the floor is level, screws may be placed by measuring from the floor to the intended position of the D-rings.

Another method of positioning screws for level installation of a work is to first hang one side of the work by attaching an anchored screw or hook to the wall, and dropping the work onto the screw/hook, holding the other side in place so it does not fall. Another person should then carefully set a level against the top or bottom member of the frame, and the installer should lift or lower the free side until level is obtained. The helper should then mark the position of the screw using a pen or pencil by looking into the space between the artwork and the wall. The work is removed, the anchored screw or hook is attached to the wall and the work is replaced.

How High Should Artwork Hang? Hanging at a Uniform Visual Center

It is recommended that an attempt is made to adopt a standard vertical center within a certain display area, so that the framed pieces have a visual flow that connects the art pieces to each other and to the room. Professional art preparators/installers that hang works of art in an art gallery, corporate and public setting (areas where furnishings are not often present) ensure that works have the same vertical center, or the center of the works of art is aligned. Normally, works are installed at a common vertical center height from the floor, normally between 56" to 58". This center height refers to the center of the painting (i.e. a 44 inch tall work has a vertical center of 22 inches). This rule of a common visual center still holds true if one cluster of tightly grouped works is placed in a room, the visual center being measured as the vertical center of the grouping. If a work of art is very large, sometimes the vertical height is adjusted slightly.

As an aid to finding the vertical center and its height on the wall, mark the center of the work on the side or reverse of the frame with a pencil. If the vertical center of the work is going to be 57" from the floor, add this to the distance between the vertical center mark and the D-ring to obtain the height at which the wall hardware will be secured.

For example: A painting is 44" high so the vertical center is marked at 22".
If the D-rings are 8" above this mark, the painting will hang on hardware positioned at $57" + 8" = 65"$ height from the floor.

In a non-gallery space, it is still possible to use a uniform vertical center for most works of art. For other works, height will vary to be positioned above furnishings, such as a couch, or architectural elements, such as a fireplace. Art should not be in danger of bumping from chairs, persons, desks, etc. and often needs to be positioned accordingly.

Contact us if you have any questions!

Fraser Spafford-Ricci Art & Archival Conservation Inc.
2276 134 Street
South Surrey, BC
V4A 9T9
(604) 536-3595
www.fsrconservation.com
info@fsrconservation.com