

An engaging cluster of things secured with masking tape lends character to a room and is simple to refresh. 2019 Tattoo Lady Calendar, £18, by Karolin Schnoor, thefuturekept.com



the [♥]comfort of things

PICTURES
& PHOTOS

There are certain things in your home that are like old friends: they always cheer you up. We feel the love for hanging things on the wall

Words: **CLARE GOGERTY**

Stick something on a wall – whether it's a painting, print, photograph, or something quite else – and every time you pass by, you will glance at it. Just a sideways look as you walk from the kitchen to living room, or as you flop on to the sofa before picking up the remote. Depending on the image, this glimpse generates a fleeting emotional response. Photographs of family members flood the synapses with feelings of connection; a landscape of a favourite place takes you there mentally for a moment; a joyful painting lifts the spirits a little.

"Glimpsing a joyful painting lifts the spirits a little"

As all homes, no matter how small, have walls, opportunities are all around us to punctuate our daily lives with these small bursts of pleasure.

Choosing what to put on your walls and how to do it, however, can be a daunting prospect. It is easy to get it wrong and impulsively buy a print, say, have it framed, and then decide you don't really like it. Or to be too concerned about what others may think of your choice, and be paralysed by indecision. Plus, when it comes to hanging, once you have drilled a hole in the wall, it feels like there's no going back.

One way to tackle a reticence to hang pictures is to think small and impermanent. Find a collection of things that have meaning: family snapshots, postcards, eye-catching bits of typography, packaging – then fix to the wall in an engaging cluster with masking tape or Blu-Tack, making it easier to remove, pack away and replace with another.

Hanging actual framed pictures is a skill worth developing, however, and these days there are a number of clever devices to make it more manageable. A home with bare walls reveals little about its owners; but one filled with carefully curated visual delights and curiosities, is full of personality, and a place we'd all like to hang out. »



HOW TO HANG

Easy ways to display your treasures

Poster hangers

Neat ways to suspend postcards, photos and any paper document no wider than 10cm. Poster hanger rail, £4.95, thehambledon.com

Bulldog clips

Very handy if you like to change your wall display around. Tap a nail into the wall and hang the clip – or clips if the photo/print/map is large – from it. 19mm Rapesco Foldback Clips, 83p for 10, staples.co.uk

Propped up

Instead of hanging, prop a few framed prints and photographs against a wall. Sit on surfaces that are not in constant use, such as a mantelpiece or sideboard, and arrange in a considered group to avoid a sense of clutter.

Masking tape

Best used unapologetically taped over the corners of prints, photos, etc. Not the stickiest tape but leaves no trace. Also use to display nature finds such as leaves or feathers. Dial masking tape, £2.39, screwfix.com.

A metal grill

Look out for old metal grills or buy a Rumcent metal mesh grid panel (£20.99 for two, amazon.co.uk). Clip (with a peg or bulldog clip) or tie anything you like on it without damaging the wall.

THREE TO MAKE, BUY OR CUSTOMISE

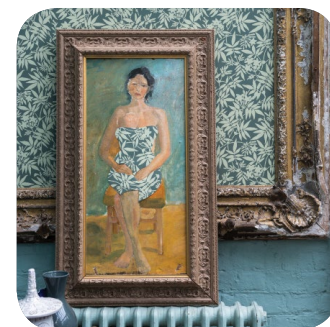
Getting a picture framed can cost a fortune, but there are alternatives – a little clever crafting or a bit of upcycling may be all it takes. Failing that, buy one ready-made



1 Make
For a simple wooden frame, measure your picture carefully then buy enough timber to frame it. Picture frame moulding is ideal; from £2 per m (bramptonframing.com). Use a saw and a mitre box (pictured, £14.40, faithfulltools.com), to cut accurate, 45-degree corners. Lay pieces flat and join with wood glue. To strengthen joints, staple or hammer in metal brackets over each. Fill gaps with wood filler. Attach picture to back of frame with duct tape. Fix screw eye bolts into rear of frame to hang.



2 Buy
Ready-made frames are a great choice for smaller images such as photos or memorabilia (a selection of small items from a trip stuck onto a piece of card and inserted into a frame works well). So does the photocopied jacket of a favourite paperback or a postcard. There are plenty around, from ornate gilded frames to elevate any image to stately status, to ones made of concrete for a rougher, urban look. Gold frame (pictured), 7x5in, £18, ayersandgraces.com.



3 Customise
Root about in charity shops and the chances are you'll find an old framed picture or two. The images may not be to your taste, but the frames could be. Smarten up an old wooden frame with gold paint (£5 for 250ml, wilko.com), or paint, distress or decoupage it to your taste. If the glass is missing, go to a hardware store and ask them to cut a piece to size (take the frame along). Fix your art, backed with cardboard, into the frame with glazier's points (£1.75 per box, wholesaleglasscompany.co.uk).

Monochrome face plates, from £18.50, audenza.com



HOME QUANDARIES

The idea of putting 'art' on my walls fills me with dread. I am sure that whatever I choose will either offend visitors or risk exposing me as someone with no taste. Plus 'art' is really expensive, and I can't imagine where to begin looking for it. Have you any alternative suggestions?

Answer in brief: think beyond art and raid your kitchen cupboards. Although blank walls may have a serene quality, they can also be boring. It sounds like you are a person of character, and your walls are the place to reveal it. The secret is to look beyond 'art'. Scrutinise what you already own and see if it is worth digging out and displaying. A favourite dress hung on a wooden hanger from a picture rail, perhaps. Or a map of a favourite holiday spot, stuck on a wall with Blu-Tack. Decorative plates are another good option and work best clustered in imaginative groupings. Fix to the wall either with an invisible disc plate hanger, from £2.50, hobbycraft.co.uk, or a wire plate hanger, from £1.25, johnlewis.com. **S**