Patch Holes in Wallboard or Plaster

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simple home repairs
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PATCH HOLES IN WALLBOARD OR PLASTER

YOUR PROBLEM

- There's a hole in the wall.
- There's a crack in the wall.

WHAT YOU NEED

- Choose one of the two types of patching compounds—
  Spackling compound is convenient for small jobs but is more expensive. It can be bought as a powder or ready-mixed.
  Patching plaster can be bought in larger packages and costs less. Both spackling powder and patching plaster need to be mixed with water.

- Putty knife
- Knife
- Sandpaper—medium grit
- Old cloth or a paint brush

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HOW-TO

1. Remove any loose plaster. With a knife, scrape out plaster from the back edges of the crack until the back of the crack is wider than the front surface. (Fig. 1)

2. Thoroughly dampen the surface of the crack with a wet cloth or paint brush. (Fig. 2)

3. Prepare patching compound according to directions on package. Mix only a small amount the first time. (Fig. 3)

4. You can fill small holes with the patching mixture. Be sure to press the mixture until it completely fills the hole. Smooth the surface with the putty knife. (Fig. 4) After the patch has dried, you can sand it. Wrap the sandpaper around a small piece of wood. This makes the surface even. (Fig. 5)

5. Larger holes or cracks should be filled step-by-step. First, partly fill the hole. Let the patch dry. This gives a base for the final fill. Add a second batch of compound. Let dry. Sand until smooth. (Fig. 6)

6. You may need to fill in behind large holes with wadded newspaper. Start patching by working in from all sides. Let dry. Apply another layer around the new edge. Repeat until the hole is filled. After the patch has dried, sand until smooth. (Fig. 7)

NOTE:

If the walls have a textured surface, you’ll want to make the patch match it while the plaster is still wet. You might need a sponge or comb to do the texturing. (Fig. 8)