

# Smart Words for Smart Homeowners

THE EXPERIENCE OF EXPERTS AND THEIR ADVICE ON RELEVANT HOMEOWNER TOPICS

## Repairing Open Wallpaper Seams

### Overview

It happens. And it's always that part of the room that the failed seam is much more noticeable. It shouldn't, but wall covering seams will occasionally open.

There is a process called double seaming that procedure seems to reduce the problem (glue the wall covering edges, let the glue penetrate the edge for a minute or so, then apply more glue to the entire sheet). However, even this super-saturating of the edges may not eliminate the irritant completely. Ask me how I know. On certain kinds of wall covering, over certain walls, in certain rooms, over time, open seams will occur.

Fixing the seams is a skill that anyone, with steady hands and patience, can master. Here are the steps and cautions. Read all the instructions before you begin the protocol.



Do not stretch the covering while you perform this operation. Do No Harm.

### Open The Seam

I suggest that your first seam is one that is hidden from view in case you make mistakes in any of the operations. This will be your test try.

With the damp towel wipe the seam area lightly. Do not rub hard because some wall coverings will broadcast your rubbing.

Drop the probes (the toothpick or bamboo skewer) in warm water. You want the probes to be moist and softer than when they are dry. This softness transfers some moisture to the underside of the wall covering while you open the loose seams. The probes point softness is also important so it doesn't penetrate or injure the covering.



Every seam will have a left and right, a top and bottom. You'll need to open, very slightly, both sides of the bad seam so the glue can get into the area. Find and probe the middle of the seam. Slide your pointed probe gently to its two extremes...up and down. Your objective it to locate the loose boundaries of the seam but not open any portion which is tight to the wall. This is wall covering surgery.

I like to use the long bamboo skewer for



this operation because when I hold it at its flat end, the pointed end touches the tight covering edge and the stick bends slightly, giving me a sense of touch...like the sensation offered from a good fishing rod. This light touch is important so you don't probe too deeply or stretch the covering. Once you have opened the seam you are ready for the next step.

### Insert The Glue

Insert the tip of the glue tube inside one of the flaps that you have opened. Right opening then left opening. Spew just enough glue inside the opening from top to bottom. Not too much.



Let the glue sit for 20 seconds. Now press the entire seam lightly, closing the two edge, with your finger. Push - Don't rub. Let sit for another 20 seconds. Remove excess glue from the surface of the covering. Let sit for 20 seconds. (Keep in mind that you should be wiping, scuffing or rubbing the covering as little as possible.)

### Remove Excess

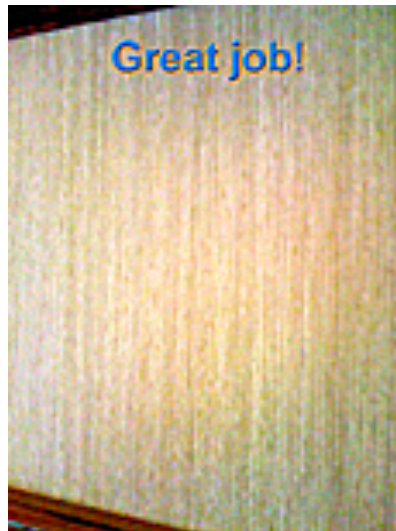
Now roll the seam with the wallpaper seam roller - one time, in one direction only. Glue will be squeezed out of the seam. Remove excess glue from the roller and the seam with the damp towel.



Keep the roller clean. You don't want to spread glue on the outside of the wall covering.

Repeat the rolling process a few more times and remove the spillage a few more times. Repeat until no spillage from the seam takes place. This insures a few things:

- That the mating of the surfaces is complete.
- There are no voids beneath the surface.
- The seams are closed.
- The glue is almost dry.



Now go on to the next open seam and repeat what you have learned. You may want to revisit the previous seam to be sure it has cured properly but don't fool with it after 30 minutes of dry time.

### Tools You'll Need

Round wood toothpicks (not square) or a long bamboo barbecue skewer with a point. These are the probes. Wet them with warm water.

A soft fluffy face towel. This is your wipe. Wet it with warm water and wring it out tightly.

A wallpaper seam roller. This is your coaxer, closer and excess glue extractor.

A tube of wallpaper seam repair glue. Buy the best. You don't want to do this again. Don't use regular glue (please don't ask me how I know this...it's too embarrassing.)

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