

HOW TO

Mount canvas onto a stretcher frame



MATERIALS NEEDED:
Primed or unprimed cotton or linen canvas.
Canvas pliers and ruler
Heavy duty staple gun
Staples to suit staple gun
Stretcher bars, two equal horizontal and two equal vertical sizes, possibly braces for the centre, depending on the size.

STEP 1

Assemble frame by fitting together tongue and groove ends of the stretcher bars. Check the squareness of the frame by measuring across the diagonal corners so that both are equal. Attach bracing if needed.



STEP 2

Cut the canvas approximately 10cm longer on all four sides than the assembled stretcher frame. Centre the canvas face down, on a clean, flat surface. Align stretcher frame with the vertical and horizontal weave of the canvas.



STEP 3

Fold one side of canvas over longer stretcher bar and drive a staple into the centre of the back of the stretcher bar, flush with the wood.



STEP 4

Go to the opposite side. Grip the canvas with the canvas pliers (with left hand for a right handed person) and stretch tight, until a straight crease is formed running across the canvas. Maintain tension and drive a staple into the centre of the back of the stretcher bar, flush with the wood. If staples are not flush with the wood, maintain tension with pliers and hammer staple until flush. Do not overstretch. (unprimed canvas may go out of alignment or damage stretcher frame with canvas shrinks during priming).



STEP 6

Drive in staples every 3–5cm, moving outwards from the centre, alternately switching to opposite sides. Drive in one staple to the left and right of the centre, then go to the opposite side and repeat. Then go to adjacent sides and repeat. Work from the centres to the corners. Pull tightly; using canvas pliers, but not so much that it will wrinkle canvas between staples. First pull tightly towards you, then with your other hand pull at right angle, towards the corner, for an even stretch in both directions, then staple.



STEP 7

Stop around 10cm from the corners. For rectangular stretcher frames, adjust stapling so that you arrive 10cm from the corner on both sides at the same time. Double fold canvas at corners, so that the final fold lines line up with the edge and staple through folded canvas into the back of the frame while exerting finger tension.



STEP 8

Fold the excess canvas to the back of the frame and staple to allow for remounting in the future. If the canvas is trimmed flush with the frame, which looks neater, remounting to the same size is difficult.



STEP 5

Stretch and attach canvas to the centres of adjacent stretcher bars in the same manner. Canvas will now have a diamond shaped wrinkle.



THE FINAL RESULT

