

Shelves require proper installation

Have you ever put up a shelf for decorative glassware or a collection of beer mugs? Later, you load on books and stereo equipment — and your shelves fall off the wall.

Most shelves will have to handle heavy loads either now or later, so it pays to get them up right the first time, especially wall-hung shelves that have no floor support. Commercial shelf hardware comes in types and styles to suit any need.

For wall-hung shelves, you face two basic considerations: proper wall attachment to support total load, and proper bracket spacing to prevent sagging shelves.

In general, the maximum safe span for a heavily loaded 1/2-inch wood shelf, with no support at the back edge, should not exceed 32 inches. Shelves in enclosed bookcases with back support can span up to 48 inches. Glass shelves of 1/2-inch plate, such as typically used in medicine cabinets, should not exceed about 20 inches between supports, though much heavier 1/2-inch plate can safely span up to 40 inches.

Screws turned into thin wood paneling or plasterboard will soon pull loose. Whenever possible, it's best to screw shelf brackets into wall studs. This way, the studs, not the surface wall, support the load and no special anchors are needed. Since studs are generally spaced on 16-inch centers, you can

screw into every other one and maintain a sturdy 32-inch spacing.

BUT STUDS ARE often hard to find or may not fall where you want the shelf-bracket. Here you need anchors made specially for hollow walls. Screws turned into plastic sleeves will support hundreds of pounds and stay put indefinitely. Other anchors made of lead or zinc are used in masonry walls.

Metal utility shelving, once relegated to the basement, now comes in attractive decorator colors, making it at home in a family room, den, pantry, home office and children's room.

These bolt-together units, consisting of pre-drilled angle-iron legs and lipped metal shelves, can be assembled in minutes with only a screwdriver. They provide fast, flexible storage wherever substantial shelving is required. The leg angles have rows of closely spaced bolt holes so the height of the shelves can be adjusted easily.

Most metal utility shelving is designed to be freestanding, making it readily movable. Some units, however, can be wall-hung with special clips. Stock sizes range from 47-inches high by 30-inches wide up to 71-inches high by 42-inches wide. Shelves come 9 to 24 inches deep.

Adjustable shelving provides one of the most versatile and attractive systems for wall-hung shelves. It uses

slotted metal uprights, called standards, that can be attached to any wall surface. Metal arms, keyed to fit into the slots, lock in at any height to support a series of adjustable shelves wherever they are needed.

The standards come in lengths of 1 to 6 feet and in a variety of finishes, including brass, bronze, aluminum, chrome, black and white. Matching brackets are available in 6-, 8-, 10- and 12-inch lengths and take either prefinished shelves in stock widths or plain boards you finish yourself.

The great advantage of this type of

system is its flexibility. You can add shelves at any time, rearrange them to suit changing needs, and lift them out for easy cleaning.

Perforated hardboard such as Masonite's versatile Peg-board is widely used for storing tools, sports equipment and other gear. It also can serve as the basis for a flexible shelf system. Metal shelf brackets, made to hook into the pre-punched holes in hardboard, are available in 4- to 8-inch lengths and can take prefinished or homemade shelving boards.



When you install shelving keep in mind the proper wall attachment to support total load and proper bracket spacing to prevent sagging.

Here's some tips on shed selection

When you decide on the need for a prefabricated outdoor shed on your property, there's more to it than just purchasing it.

Although a shed comes in a kit with pre-cut parts, assembling it can be either a tedious or a fairly easy task, depending on the type of shed you want.

Many factors affect the amount of time and work necessary to assemble the shed. Considerable thought should be given ahead of time to how the shed will be used, where it will be placed

and what your local building codes will and will not permit.

Expect to spend between \$100 and \$700, with wood sheds costing a bit more than metal ones. Site preparation and any materials not specifically included in the kit, such as anchors for metal sheds, will be extra.

A metal shed is particularly vulnerable to strong winds, heavy snows and salt air. Choose aluminum rather than steel for a seaside location. Pick a structural design suitable for the location.

Metal sheds are easier to put up than wood and are fairly standardized in form. The main differences are in size, roof style and features such as door-closing systems and protective finishes.

Wood sheds kits come with pre-cut, partially pre-cut and uncut materials. Wood sheds require some carpentry skills, but are easier to customize than those of metal.

Select a site that is level, firm and well-drained, so that the shed will sit squarely, settle evenly and be subject

to minimal moisture.

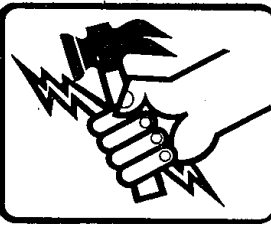
Depending on your local building codes, you have several choices for a foundation or pressure-treated lumber.

Consider whether the things to be stored can be put in and taken out easily. For example, you don't want to have to turn sharp corners to maneuver in a lawn tractor. Think about access in bad weather, too. If you must use the shed regularly despite precipitation, put it close to the house so you won't get drenched each time.

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