

# How To Hang Art in the HOME

A few useful tips  
from

**G e o r g e   l u c a s**

[www.georgelucasart.com](http://www.georgelucasart.com)

Copywrite 2008 All Rights Reserved

## How to Hang Art in the Home

The basics- How to get the work onto the wall

Your home is an expression of who you are, and your walls are your own personal gallery space. They should reflect your interests, your personality, your memories – in other words, YOU. Don't get hung up on "Does this go together?" Most likely, if you like A, and you like B, then A will go with B, even if it is in an abstract way.

I have a tee shirt that says, "Good Art Won't Match the Sofa." Words to live by.

(For reasons of clarity, I have to make a few assumptions in this first section-)

- that we are hanging framed work
- we are hanging a single piece of art rather than a grouping (more about that later)
- the work is complete with a wire or hanging bracket)
- you know which end of the hammer to use

TIP: The first tip I will offer is to always hang your art at 57" on center. "On center" means that the middle point of the picture is at 57 inches, or the average eye-level. If you use this one magic measurement, all your artwork will create a cohesive display in relation to each other.

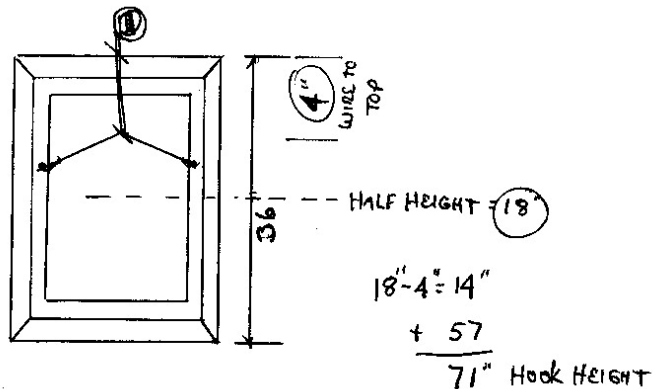
This will also solve the problem many people have, which is that they hang their pictures too high.

### Step By Step instructions:

1. Measure the total height of of the BACK of your picture frame, take that height and divide by 2 to get a "half height"
2. Hooking the end of your tape measure under the wire at the center and pulling up to the top of the frame, measure from the wire to the top of your picture frame (if you are using a metal bracket tacked onto the middle of the top of the frame, measure from the bottom of the bracket) and then-
3. Subtract this amount from the first number (the half height) and remember, or write down, the result (how far above the center point the wire is)
4. Add this number to the magic "57 inches" and lightly mark this height on the wall in pencil, (NEVER in ballpoint ink or marker which are impossible to cover up with paint, as they will bleed thru multiple coats) I've been known to use a thumb smudge when nobody is looking

Install your hanging hook at this spot, and be glad you paid attention in math class!

### Practical Example:



- Say your “Elvis on Velvet” is 36 inches tall, which makes the painting’s “half height” equal 18 inches
- Pulling the wire in the middle, it measures 4" from the top (too loose, but ok for now.) So 18 minus 4 equals 14
- Adding 14 to that magic 57 equals a hook height of 71 inches from the floor.

Huh? Say wha? All we are doing is going from the center of the painting at 57 inches, UP half the height (18 inches) to the top, and back DOWN (4 inches) to where the wire sits on the picture hook. Thank you, thank you very much.

This may seem complicated to read, but it is really quite simple when you do it. The thing to always remember is that the CENTER of all your pictures will be hanging at the same 57 inches, and we are just figuring out where the hook goes above that point.

**A TWIST\_ Using two picture hooks instead of one will help prevent pictures from rocking and tipping, except during the wildest of parties.**

**TIP:** For 36-inch, or wider, paintings, measure for two hooks. Follow the usual procedures, but instead of hooking the tape measure directly onto the wire to measure to the top, place a 1-foot ruler lengthwise under the wire. (The wire will angle up from eyelet, run horizontally 1 foot across ruler and angle down to eyelet) Measure up from the 6-inch center of the ruler to the frame top to get the number that is subtracted from the “half height” Complete the procedure as usual. After pencilling your dot on the wall, however, place the ruler on the wall horizontally level so the dot is at the 6-inch mark, and now make a dot at each end of the ruler. Results should be 3 dots in a straight line, 6 inches apart. Set a hanging hook at each of the outer dots and run the picture wire over both hooks when installing on the wall

## **Installing GROUPINGS- Plan Your Layout**

**It's important to achieve the right balance between your wall space, furniture pieces and the frames you want to display. Larger frames can stand alone, but smaller frames should be grouped together for greater visual impact. A grouping above a piece of furniture should not be wider than that piece. That way the combination of art and furniture will become a grouping.**

**TIP: leave AT LEAST 1 foot of space to the edge on each side over a wide sofa, eight inches on each side of a narrower sideboard, dresser or such.**

**Just a suggestion.**

**Grouping several works together can enrich any space. Think of the arrangement as one large picture. The most effective groupings are large oblong shapes. Size the grouping to fit into the space you are hanging. The shape does not have to be a rectangle.**

**The simplest way to design a grouping is on the floor, so lay your group out on the floor first. This gives you the chance to arrange and re-arrange without making a gazillion holes in your walls. Place a few pieces of tape on the floor to mark the width and height of the space you plan to fill.**

**Choose the pieces you want to use. For visual interest, use frames of varying shapes and sizes and hang frames both vertically and horizontally.**

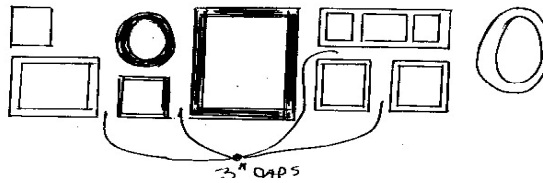
**TIP: Each picture will have its own "image direction"- the "action" will go to the left, right or be straight on. You want all the action to lead back INTO the grouping. Avoid placing a portrait such that the person is looking off toward the sidewall, or the country lane runs you off to the window. So determine which pieces should go on which side of the group first.**

**Once sorted, the simplest way to start is to select a larger central image first. Next arrange the pieces out along the top or bottom border of the grouping, even tops on one side, bottoms on the other. Now play with the interior space. Change the pieces around. Check the overall "balance" of the layout.**

**Remember the playground see-saw? It took two or three small kids to balance out the big bully (and he always jumped off when you were way high, but that's a story for therapy) Same thing applies to groupings. The balance thing, not the therapy. Counter-balance a large picture with several small pieces. Make sure you balance the heavier and lighter pieces, and spread color throughout the grouping. Avoid making an even, 1, 2, 3, 2, 1 symmetry. It's b-o-r-i-n-g!  
Go for a dynamic grouping.**

## GROUPINGS-

TIP: Keep the spaces BETWEEN the paintings all the same, side to side and top to bottom, for a neat, uniform look. A 3-inch space is a good gap to start experimenting with. Make a sketch of the layout before you move them to the wall.



Step back and look at the arrangement. How do the frames look next to each other? Do the colors clash? Re-arrange until you feel the group is visually balanced. Make a quick sketch of the layout before you move the pieces because you WILL forget where they go.

Once you have your arrangement drawing, start by hanging the middle picture and get it at the 57inch on-center height using the method already discribed. Then surround it with the rest of the group.

Now hang 'em up! The 57 inch height still applies when installing groups of pictures. Just keep thinking of the entire group as ONE picture. Consider using larger pieces in the center to anchor the grouping and space out the smaller ones to the sides. Keep the top edges and/or the bottom edges even

TIP: A shortcut for hanging the smaller companion pieces in the group: hold the small piece in position on the wall and make a pencil dot on the wall at the top center of the frame. Measure how far down the wire, or bracket, is from the frame top and place your hook on the wall that same distance below your first dot. Rinse, repeat.

Want to create more visual drama? Hang your frames following the upward angle of a staircase. Again, use larger frames as an anchor, then balance them with smaller frames. Hang the pieces at varying heights, but be sure spacing between the frames is equal to create a balanced look.

But not all pictures need to be hung – try arranging a group of frames in varying heights on a mounted ledge or bookcase to create a dramatic display. Overlap some frames and vary spacing for a casually elegant effect.

## MISCELLANEOUS THOUGHTS

- Many people believe you must find a stud in the wall to hang a picture, but that is a misconception. Picture hooks are meant to carry the weight of a picture and frame. So as long as you separate two hooks on the wall to distribute the weight of a larger painting hanging hooks should be fine.
- Materials and stuff you'll find useful:
  - tape measure
  - pencil
  - hammer
  - picture hooks
  - level or eye
- Steps for wiring a painting for hanging: (This is not as complicated as it reads)
  1. Measure the back height of the frame, and divide by 3. Round the number off to within  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch- this isn't rocket science here.
  2. Measure down from the top that  $\frac{1}{3}$  rounded length.
  3. Insert an eye screw on one side of the frame, at that point. Predrill a starter hole if frame wood is tough.
  4. Repeat for an eyelet on the other side.
  5. Tighten each eyelet by placing a small screwdriver blade or nail through the eye for leverage and turning it until it is tight.
  6. Cut a length of picture-hanging wire 6 to 7 inches wider than the distance between the eyelets.
  7. Start the wire up through one eye screw, leaving a 3-inch, or so, tag end sticking out.
  8. Wrap the tag end once around the wire, and back down through the eyelet.
  9. Twist the tag end FIVE times around the wire at a 90 degree angle (keep close to the eyelet) and finish wrapping the tag a few times along the wire to use it up.
  10. At the other eyelet, push the wire through the eyelet and pull the wire snugly across the painting.
  11. Again, wrap the tag end once around the wire and push it back through the eyelet.
  12. Complete the wrapping with FIVE tight 90 degree turns and then along the wire to use up what's left.

The resulting wrapping method should "give" only about 1 to 2 inches at the center- the more slack there is in the wire, the farther the painting will lean out from the wall when hung!

- To keep your artwork hanging level, take small pieces of mounting putty and place them under the corners of the picture between the picture and the wall. You should never have to straighten the picture again. (Mounting putty can be purchased at your local hardware store.)