

Why is my Drywall Cracking?

Drywall cracks appear due to movement or settling of a house. This does not necessarily mean your house is going to fall down. Some settling is normal.

Cracks can sometimes be found above the corners of doorways and windows. Nail pops are also relatively common. You may also notice cracking in the ceilings on the uppermost floor of your house.

While all these problems are caused by settling there are different reasons that they occur.

Cracks Above Doors & Windows. These cracks usually appear because the drywall installer placed a seam above the opening. While it is not wrong to install drywall this way, it does create a weak spot in the wall in an area very susceptible to movement.

To repair these cracks, we will clean the crack by removing any loose material. We then use Drywall Setting Compound and paper tape to fill the crack. Setting compound makes a much stronger repair than standard drywall mud because setting compound becomes hard through a chemical reaction as opposed to simple evaporation with premixed mud. We will float the seam, sand, then repaint the effected area.

Nail Pops Nail pops appear because the wallboard moves but the nail doesn't. To repair nail pops, we place a screw directly above the pop to stop the movement of the drywall. After that we apply drywall compound, sand the area, then repaint the effected area.

Ceiling Cracks Cracks found in the uppermost floor of a house are usually caused by "Truss Lift". Originally, houses built in the early to mid 20th century used ceiling joists and rafters to create the ceiling and roof. The rafters and joists do not necessarily depend on each other to do their jobs, but around the late 60's, builders started using "trusses" to construct ceilings and roofs.

While rafters and joists are separate units, Trusses are (generally speaking) a system of triangles that distribute loads equally across the whole roof/ceiling unit.

Trusses have many benefits. They are easy to install, they are self supporting so you are allowed much larger room sizes, and because they are very good at distributing load, trusses can be built using (dimensionally) smaller lumber.

The problem with trusses is that they move. As the weather changes, trusses will expand and contract creating cracks in the drywall that can be very hard to control.

Cracks along corners where the ceiling meets the walls can sometimes be attributed to screwing the drywall (on the ceiling) too close to the wall, this doesn't allow the drywall to flex when the truss moves and this creates the crack.

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