

If you are considering using a peel and stick wallpaper, please read and watch the following information.

Peel and Stick Wallpaper

There is a new type of material called "Peel and Stick" Wallcovering. Some have said it is more like contact paper and not really wallpaper.

I agree completely ... it is not really wallpaper.

Yet they are selling it all over the internet as a "wallpaper option." Yes, it is always an option...but a really bad one: Please watch [this video](#) on the problems with peel and stick wallpaper.

Non-Wovens

Originally conceived as the magic alternative to plain papers, the newer Non Wovens (NWs) were produced to get the look of plain paper without the disadvantages of plain paper in terms of removability. The #1 selling point to them is that they are strippable in the same way that Fabric Backed Vinyl is strippable....you pull on non wovens and you have stripped the room of old paper very quickly. Or so it is advertised.

Everybody loves a strippable wallcovering. It's true the NWs are more durable than plain paper and more washable than plain paper. They are also being sold as "mildew resistant" since they breathe extremely well, but his mildew resistance remains to be seen. We'll just have to wait a few years to see how the non wovens handle mildew. Just be aware that there are two varieties of non wovens (but unfortunately sample books don't help you differentiate between the two)--Unsealed Nonwovens (without a vinyl top sheet that are very porous) and Solid Vinyl Non-Woven (a non-woven sheet with a watertight vinyl sheet on the surface). The first type NW can be actually MORE delicate than a Plain Paper, yet the second type NW mentioned is almost as bullet proof as a ultra-durable Fabric Backed Vinyl;

Be advised that when you shop for NWs the marketers do not help the consumer by labeling how resistant the the different NW materials are to staining. The ultimate Reality Test in terms of durability in a bath, kitchen or hallway consists of putting a drop of cooking oil on the pattern side to see how well they can handle it without permanent staining. Here is a [quick test for grease staining](#) I did on a poorly sealed NW to show just how easy it is to ruin a NW that has no vinyl top sheet protection.

For Baths and Kitchens I strongly recommend that you look for a heavily inked or vinylized Non-Woven. Unsealed Non Wovens are actually more absorbent than plain paper and they are just not good candidates for any area that will be exposed to grease or moisture.

I know it is confusing thanks to the marketing people that some NWs have a thick solid vinyl sheet on the pattern side and appear to be just as durable as the traditional canvas-backed Fabric Backed Vinyl which can last decades--- yet an unsealed Non-Woven as seen in the test above could last just minutes around a three-year-old with greasy hands.

One last thing about non-wovens: Avoid natural products like linen or silks backed with NW backing----reach for the traditional ones that are paper backed.

Non-Woven removability is guesstimated to be around 5 to 10. The reason for the guessing is that they are too new to have a solid record of removability. Unlike hefty, very removable fabric backed vinyl, some of these NW offerings are thin and flimsy so they can tear as you pull on them to remove them. To

get this dry strippable effect (no misting or steaming) these should be hung with pre-mixed adhesives that have the designation "strippable" on the label, Even though these are supposed to be dry strippable you may want to mist the more unsealed ones with removal solution if there aren't stripping off dry and in one nice piece.

Grass cloth and Natural Fiber

Grass cloth has become a "catch all" term for any wallcovering that uses natural fibers like sea grass, hemp, recycled paper paper-weave, jute and raffia. They have been around for a very long time but the current resurgence can be traced back to the LEEDs standards for healthy buildings since there is no vinyl used in their manufacture and many times the inks are vegetable dye. They are almost all backed with a plain paper backing and most have no sealing whatsoever--hence the warning on them to "vacuum only."

To the list of "the naturals" we can add linen and silk. So far most of these products are backed with a rice paper and I hope it stays that way after seeing some of the problems caused by backing them with super-moisture-transmitting NWs.

Grass cloth and the Naturals removability rating 5 to 8: As long as the manufacturer sticks with all-natural ingredients like plant fibers these can be pretty easy to remove since they soak up removal solution very well.

BEWARE of a very large potential problem when installing natural material mated to paper-backed metallic foil laminates. These types should be tested for good water infiltration for later removal. **Otherwise, they may possibly be considered "not removable" and the removability rating would be 0 to 1.** [Here is a video I did on that...](#)sorry about the audio.

Plain Pulp Paper

Plain Paper....or what many people in the trade call "Paper Papers." Some call them "Brit pulps" since these are mostly British imports nowadays. They are matte in finish and there is no vinyl at all to them so, watch out, they can be as delicate as snowflakes. They have no protection against staining, and they are to be avoided where there is water or steam as in a shower bath. Most of them require a [Blankstock liner](#) to prevent paste staining (among other reasons) which can come from behind the paper. There's no doubt these papers are beautiful...just know in advance that they are delicate.

You can spot these papers by the ampersand "&". The manufacturers are mostly from the UK with brand names like:

Farrow & Ball

Cole & Son

Cowtan & Tout

Colfax & Fowler

Osborne & Little

and Sanderson, Zoffany, Wm Morris.

Plain Paper removability difficulty rating 3 to 6: It must be soaked and scraped (or steamed) but usually they accept removal spray quickly. The problem arises when these were hung on a Blankstock liner and that can make the job go much more slowly.