

TODAY'S CREATIVE home arts

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Fixing nail holes

QUESTION: I've heard many times that to fill a small nail hole in a white wall, you should dab some white toothpaste on it. I tried this, and now my nail holes are covered in toothpaste that has taken on a yellow tinge. How do I fix this?

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ANSWER: First clean out the toothpaste. The yellowing in the toothpaste most likely has to do with the fact that the nail you used rusted, according to DAP Inc., headquartered in Baltimore, Maryland. "Whether you are talking about a drywall (gypsum) wall or a plaster wall, never use toothpaste to fill [those] holes," the company says.

The proper product to use to repair such damage is spackling, which was created to fill holes, dents, and cracks in most types of walls. There are many types of



spackling on the market today. The company says that premium-priced spackling means less shrinkage—thus no need to refill the hole—and little chance of yellowing.

Nail holes need only a small amount of spackling. DAP makes a variety of spackling products in half-pint sizes that you could use for this application.

If you plan to paint after spackling, make sure the material has dried thoroughly. One product that makes this easier is DAP's DryDex Dry Time Indicator Spackling. It goes on pink but dries white, in effect telling you when it is okay to paint. For further information, call (888)DAP-TIPS or visit www.dap.com.