



# Putting up a Shelf

## Important things to consider

### Safety

#### Safety First:

- **PPE Matters:** Always wear safety goggles and gloves.
- **Noise Protection:** Drilling into solid walls can be loud—ear defenders are a great idea.
- **Clear the Area:** Ensure the workspace is free of hazards. Don't leave tools or materials lying around where they can cause trips or falls.

#### Identifying the Type of Wall

- Before drilling, read our [Notes on Drilling](#) to identify the type of wall you're working with (e.g., plasterboard, brick, or concrete).

#### Locate Safe Drilling Spots:

- Think about [Electrical Safety Zones](#) - Avoid drilling near electrical outlets or switches to prevent hitting cables. If you're not sure, then check out the post on our website.

## Preparation

### Gather Your Tools & Fixings

- Make sure everything you need is within reach. It's frustrating to perfectly level your shelf, only to realise your bradawl is across the room!
- Avoid last-minute runs to Screwfix or Toolstation—double-check you have screws, wall plugs, and other essentials.

### Protect Furniture & Floors

- Use a dust sheet or old towel to protect carpets and furniture—brick dust is messy!

### Check Your Space

- Move furniture before you start—it's easier than doing it mid-project.
- If using a step ladder, ensure there's enough room to set it up safely. Never take shortcuts with ladder safety!

## The TWO GOLDEN Rules:

### Build in Wriggle Room

- Mistakes happen—plan for adjustments!
- For example, when attaching a wooden batten to support an alcove shelf, drill holes in the batten slightly larger than the screws (e.g., a 5mm or 6mm hole for 4mm screws). This allows height adjustments before tightening.

### Don't Over-Commit

- Drill one hole at a time. Avoid marking and drilling all holes at once—walls are rarely straight or flat, and lumps or bumps can throw measurements off.
- Use the shelf as a template. Drill one hole, secure the shelf, and then mark the next hole. This way, if something goes wrong, you won't end up with a wall full of misplaced holes.

# The Process of Putting up a shelf

Just keep the **Two Golden Rules** in Mind, and you're good to go:

## Choose the Location

- Decide where you want to put your shelf. Ensure it fits the space and isn't too close to an electrical safe zone.
- Check for any suspicious lumps or bumps on the wall that might indicate hidden cables or pipes.

## Find the Centre (Optional)

- If you want the shelf centred in a space, measure carefully to locate the middle. Need help? Refer to our [Measuring & Levelling Information Sheet](#)

## Mark Your First Hole

- Use a sharp tool like a bradawl, awl, screw, or nail to mark the first hole.
- Avoid pencils—making a small hole gives the drill bit a clear starting point.

## Drill the First Hole

- Drill a hole for the wall plug and insert the plug securely.
- If the wall plug doesn't go in fairly easily, you may just need to drill the hole again, just to clean out the sides.
- You will probably need a hammer to push it in flush

## Attach the Shelf with One Screw

- Screw the shelf to the wall with one screw. Tighten it as much as possible to let the wall help support the shelf.
- You can use an electric screwdriver or a drill with a screwdriver function to speed up the process, but finish tightening manually with a screwdriver for better control.

## Check the Level

- Place a spirit level on the shelf to ensure it's straight. Adjust as needed.

## Mark the Second Hole

- Mark the location of the second hole through the shelf into the wall. Use a bradawl, awl, screw, or even a drill bit for this.

## Drill the Second Hole

- Remove or slightly move the shelf to drill the second hole. Insert a wall plug into the hole.

## Secure the Shelf

- Attach the shelf using both screws. Before fully tightening, check the level again with your spirit level.
- Adjust the height slightly if you need to, then tighten the screws completely. Remember, you built wiggle room into the process right from the start

## Drilling More Holes

- If your shelf requires additional holes for extra security, you now have a perfectly level template to work from.
- Mark the remaining holes in the correct positions, drill them, and fit the shelf securely in place.