

Dear Cathy,

I moved in a few weeks ago--I've never lived anyplace where wall material was anything but drywall. I assume you can't hang things on Parkfairfax unit walls the same way you do for "newer" construction. What exactly do I have to do?

Handy, But Not Old-fashioned

Dear HBNOF,

You're right, the usual nails and adhesives are not good to plaster walls and can cause damage. Also, there are some interesting facts regarding how our units were constructed (wartime shortages being what they were), so don't try to find wooden studs, because many interior walls have very few or none at all. There are a couple of solutions, one of which, for lighter-weight items, is to buy the "Ook" nails found at most hardware stores—these are particularly sharp, thin nails that do far less damage to plaster walls (some are supplied with hooked anchors). The other solution is to use wall anchors called molly bolts. There are varying sizes and types, depending on the weight or use of the item you're hanging. You'll need a drill (and masonry bits if the plaster has concrete behind it). Basically you are placing a threaded sleeve into the wall and then screwing in the provided screw, which expands the sleeve to anchor the hardware. Detailed instructions are provided on the packaging. Disclaimer: your success in hanging items is dependent on the condition of the wall and the weight and use of the item you are hanging. I can't offer any guarantees, but these are a couple of solutions other residents have found.

Hope this helps,

Cathy