

Professional Installations

by T. Scott Stose

While the creativity of framing design may be your favorite part of being a framer, offering installation services to your clients may be a way to increase your income. Following are a few tips that can come in handy the next time a client asks if you do installations.

Stability in a Shaky Environment

Several times, framers have asked me if there are any good tips for hanging art in earthquake prone areas. While doing an installation on a wall adjacent to an indoor racquetball court, we came up with a design with extra stability. We could have used several security systems and they would have worked fine, but the owner was trying to keep it simple. So we decided on a system as seen in Figure 1.

Simply install three screws across a level line at the desired height for the frames. In most

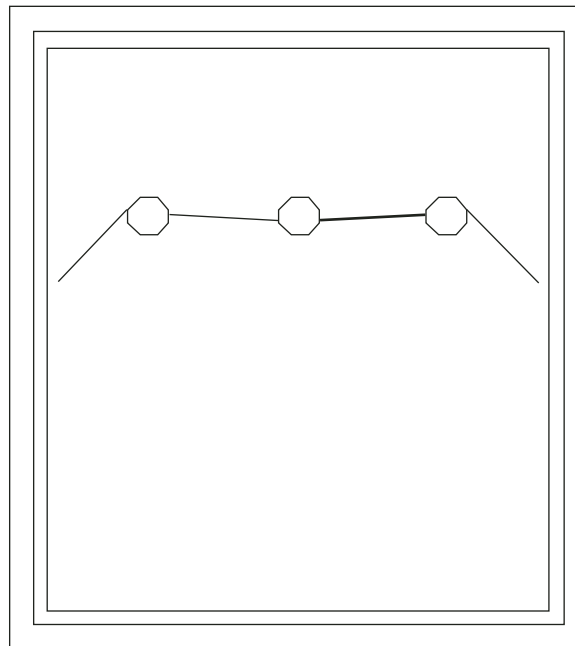


Figure 1: Using more than one anchor on the back of the frame adds stability to the piece.

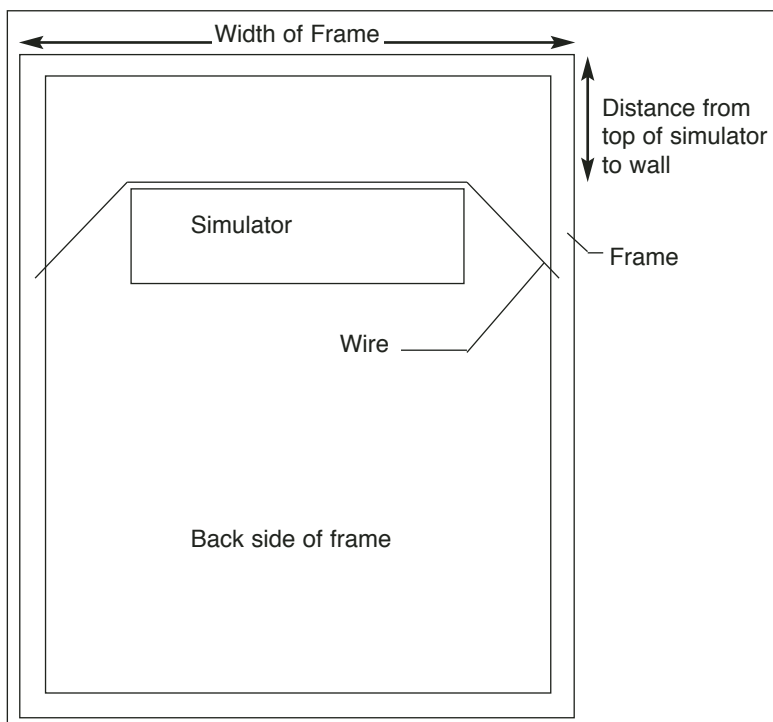


Figure 2: When hanging multiple frames at the same height, simulating how the wire will hang when actually on the wall minimizes trial and error.

cases two anchors are sufficient, but by adding a third in the center, the frame cannot be lifted up off the two outer screws without lifting up and out first. Gravity helps lock this in. By adding the third anchor, you raise the frame about an $\frac{1}{8}$ " higher. That can make it difficult to use when grouping frames side by side at the same height.

This design seems to keep standard wire hung frames fixed rather well. This also helps keep a picture from becoming off center, as well as keeping it from becoming unhooked if it is bumped. Using rubber mar guards (bumpers) are still recommended so if the picture does swing it will not scratch the immediate areas.

Frames of the Same Size, Side by Side

If the job is to hang frames of the same size at the same height and they are wire-hung, trial and error seems to

be the most common approach since the length of a wire will affect how high or low a frame hangs. All of this can be avoided by planning the installation ahead of time. Whatever the size of the frames, you can use a simulator about half the width of the frames. A block of wood works great but you can easily use cardboard if it is substantially thick.

If the frame is 24" wide, use a simulator about 12" wide. A simulator is merely a block of wood that you can hang the picture wire on to simulate the two points that the frame will ultimately be hanging on. In other words the two anchors in the wall should be installed 12" apart as well.

Place the frame face down on the floor. Lay the block of wood on top of the back of the frame, below the wire and near the center. Push toward the wall or the top of the frame until you feel slight resistance. Measure the distance from the wall to the block in about the center of the frame.

Even if the block is not parallel, as long as you measure near the center you will average out the high

and low sides. This height will be where you should put your anchor or picture hook. Repeat this process to all other frames and write down the size differences on each frame. Depending on the variances, the frame should hang higher or lower than the selected mark on the wall.

The more accurately you measure the closer your installation will be. About a $\frac{1}{16}$ " to an $\frac{1}{8}$ " should suffice. After hanging all your frames, minute adjustments can be made by pulling down on the frame while it is hanging on the wall. The wire will stretch or the knots will tighten to make the wire longer.

We once hung 75 photographs of past company presidents for a corporate client this way. All of the frames were wire hung and virtually parallel to each other. This process may take a little more time but prevents unwanted holes in the wall, and gives a more professional look to your work. ■