

Stretching Canvas on stretcher bars

Dober's Palette
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Lake House Studio



Material needed
Canvas
Stretcher bars
Stretcher pliers
T-square
Stapler (heavy duty)
Ruler of measuring tape
Hammer
Screw driver

DIRECTIONS: Firstly I'm not a writer and it's easier to how you but I'll give it a go anyway.



STEP 1:

Assemble your stretchers, making sure they are square and snug. Use your T-square to square them just right. Some stretchers only have a lip on one side, so remember to assemble them with the lip facing the canvas. (the side you won't see) Check to make sure the corners are squared with a t square. Another way to check if the frame is square is measuring criss cross on the frame. Measure the two dimensions they should be equal. Nudge things until it's square and the measurements diagonally are equal.

STEP 2:

Place your assembled stretcher frame on the canvas (lip-side down if your stretchers have a lip on only one side). Try to orient the edges of your stretchers square with the weave of the fabric. Cut your canvas, leaving enough room on all sides for the canvas to fold over the edge of the stretchers and be stapled on the frame edge or back.

* If you staple it down along the edge of the frame you need less canvas than if stabled onto the back side.



STEP 3:

Fold over the canvas and place your first staple in the center of one side of the stretcher frame.

The First Staple Into the Canvas at the Bottom of the Frame

Note: The canvas can still appear wrinkled, so you may iron it first if you choose, but the wrinkles should disappear once it is stretched to full tension.



STEP 4:

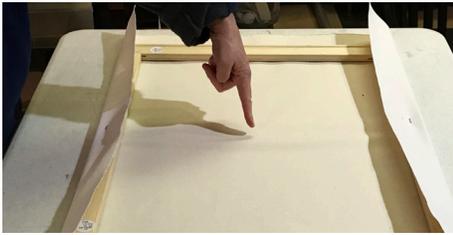
Rotate your stretcher frame 180 degrees, pull the canvas taut and place a staple on the opposite side as the first staple.

Stapling into the Top of the Frame. Use the stretching pliers to stretch the canvas to the desired tension and while gripping with the pliers place the staple in.

Staple already in directly across

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STEP 5:

Do the same for the sides, rotating and pulling the canvas tight each time.

You should see evidence of some tension.



STEP 6:

Add staples to each side of the initial staple, pulling tight across the frame and away from the innermost staple.

STEP 7:

Continue working from the inside staple out, rotating as you go to keep consistent tension on all sides until your staples are about 2 inches from the corners. Your canvas should already be nice and taut, except in the corners.

A diamond shape should appear with the tension on the canvas once the first four staples are placed. One and each frame side.

STEP 8:

To fold over the corners, first pinch and pull a bit of canvas from the corner and fold it tightly against the frame at a 45 degree angle. Then, while holding your first fold down with one hand, pinch and fold the excess fabric so it lines up along the edge of the frame, and staple it down.

Corner Folds



Do the same for all four corners, and you will have a tightly stretched, wrinkle-free canvas that should spring back when you thump it with your finger.



If there are still some wrinkles or the tension isn't high enough, you may have to remove staples with a flat-head screwdriver (starting from the outside in) and re-staple. If you find you have too much canvas hanging over the edge of your stretchers, you can cut it off with scissors.

Also, if you can't achieve the desired tension in your canvas just by pulling with your fingers, you can use the canvas pliers to hold your canvas taut against the frame while you staple. It's a lot easier on your knuckles



At this point secure the corner with a staple. The corner should appear tidy.