

Repairing Cracked Walls

(NAPSA)—There are easy ways to repair the cracks that can form in a home's plaster and drywall. In fact, the typical repair project requires only a few hours to complete using inexpensive materials.

Try these tips for patching small to medium-sized cracks in plaster and drywall. They come from experts at United States Gypsum Company, a leading manufacturer of gypsum board and plaster products.

- **Prep The Area**—For plaster walls, begin by pushing against the crack to determine how soft the surrounding wall area is. Remove any loose material with a screwdriver and then clean the area with a slightly dampened paintbrush or sponge.

- **Gather Your Materials**—You'll need a utility knife; two drywall knives—one that's four to six inches wide and one that's eight to 10 inches wide; paper joint tape for wider cracks; a ready-mixed or powdered joint compound product such as SHEETROCK® Brand Lightweight Setting-Type Joint Compound (EASY SAND™); safety goggles and a dust mask; and either a fine, 150-grade sandpaper or a sponge.

- **First Coat**—Fine to small drywall and plaster cracks require only one application of joint compound, while deeper cracks require two or more coats of compound. Using the four- to six-inch-wide putty knife, apply a generous amount of joint compound over the crack. Angle the knife to force compound into the crack and then smooth it out. Let the compound dry completely before sanding or applying additional coats (for deeper cracks).

- **Reinforce**—Deeper or wider cracks need to be reinforced with paper joint tape. Apply a thin coat



Cracked plaster or drywall can be easy to repair.

of compound over the crack. Then embed a strip of paper joint tape into the compound to bridge the crack. Draw a knife firmly over the crack to tightly embed the tape. Let the coat dry completely.

- **More Compound**—Apply a coat of joint compound over the tape to level the repair. Then apply a generous amount of compound with a drywall knife and smooth and feather the compound out along the edges of the repaired area. Let the repair harden and apply another coat of compound, if necessary.

- **Finish**—Smooth the surface once the wall is completely dry. Lightly smooth the edges of the repaired area with fine sandpaper or a damp sponge. Prime the patched area with a high-quality primer or a flat wall paint. Wait until the primer dries completely before applying a new coat of paint.

To obtain a free step-by-step guide detailing how to install, finish and repair drywall, contact United States Gypsum Company, 125 S. Franklin St., Chicago, IL 60606-4678, call (800) USG-4YOU or visit www.usg.com and request installation guide J371.