

The Temporary Wall Cheat Sheet by cityhammer.com

There are many reasons to put up a temporary or pressurized wall in your home, especially in the Big Apple. According to Wikipedia, "pressure walls have become a new phenomenon in New York City and are used to split large apartments and lofts, allowing roommates to afford privacy or to help defray the high and rising NYC rent costs..." But how are these walls installed and do they make sense for your living situation?

Building and Installation

While cityhammer.com is not a do-it-yourself site, we think it is important to understand how pressurized walls work before having one professionally installed. Pressurized walls are typically built with up to 1 inch reams of sheetrock or plasterboard. The installer uses metal 2x4's and pressure jacks up to 10 feet for height. During the frame out process, screws up to 3 inches long are used to attach the sheetrock to the pressurized 2X4's on the floor, ceiling and sides of the load bearing walls. Because the purpose of this wall is to prevent structural or architectural damage to the area, the screws are only used on the 2x4 studs. This way, the wall can be dismantled without any trace that it was ever there. These walls can be painted or wallpapered to match your décor. They also will have a door built in, but only a light-weight one. French or hollow doors are the way to go to prevent weight overload or shifting.

Temporary Walls to the Rescue

Roomates: The old saying goes, "Good fences make for good neighbors," and we think this can apply to walls as well, especially in an apartment. Whether you are just getting your career off the ground or you're a kid right out of college in Murray Hill, you may be living with a roommate out of necessity because rents in NYC are at or near all-time highs. A one bedroom can easily become a tolerable two bedroom with a pressurized wall, although starting with a junior four would be ideal because the dining room can be converted. In the same way, you can turn a two into a three, although you're on your own to fight the bathroom wars that come with the territory! With a loft, you can go in any direction. Noise reduction will be the key (if you plan on having a social life) so one suggestion would be to install sound-batt insulation in the stud cavities. You can also install different thicknesses of drywall on each side of the wall. For example, using 1/2 inch on one side and 5/8's on the other can eliminate noise caused by sympathetic vibrations.

Nursery: So you and your significant other have been very comfortable in your one bedroom and then all of a sudden, the stork buzzes your intercom with a special delivery. Moving to the 'burbs is not necessarily a foregone conclusion! While you decide between buying a house or going for a two bedroom, you can build a fantastic nursery using temporary walls. The key here is ventilation. Depending on your apartment's layout, you will either have a window accessible to the room or you'll need some kind of cut-out in the wall itself. Our summers can be brutal even with an AC, so make sure there is a window into the room so fresh air can get in when the door is closed. Once the crib moves out of your bedroom and into the nursery, you can have your life back and baby can get some privacy too!

Home Office: There are two types of people in this city; those who want to be seen with their laptops at Starbucks, and those who don't. Having an office at home can give you a lot of flexibility to be productive when you're not at work. Building that office can be as simple as

putting up a pressurized wall or two. Make sure that you have the light you need for reading and at least one outlet to power your equipment on the permanent walls you are using. Installing electricity in a temporary wall is forbidden for safety reasons. You can, however, run wires into your new office through a drilled opening if you have no other option.

Walk-in Closet: If you have enough clothing to warrant the building of a walk-in closet and wish to cede that much of your living space for that purpose, more power to you. Your main decisions here will revolve around width and depth for the closet and of course, choosing the right doors so that the closet is differentiated between the actual rooms and entranceways. A hollow double-door might be the best solution.

Tear Down This Wall

The great part about temporary walls is that when they've outlived their usefulness or its time to move, they can disappear without a trace. They will not hurt your place's resale value or put your security deposit in jeopardy. Your landlord will be thrilled and so will your real estate broker. Most installers will return to collect the wall and in a lot of cases, it's basically been rented. Sometimes, there is a foam covering along the top of the wall that cushions its impact on the ceiling. There are often plates installed to protect from friction, but you will still need a little plaster or paint to patch things up. These are minor fixes in the scheme of things and a reputable wall company will take care of them on the way out.

So remember, whether you need to create new space for a roommate, a new member of your family, a place to work or store your clothes, temporary or pressurized walls are a great way to do it without a major renovation. Contact any of the companies in our walls category for your upcoming divider project.