



in association with Halifax Home Insurance

**HOME**

# The House Doctors

GOT A QUESTION FOR RUSSELL AND JORDAN? EMAIL [2LG@METRO.CO.UK](mailto:2LG@METRO.CO.UK)

THE TWO LOVELY GAYS, AKA  
**RUSSELL WHITEHEAD** AND  
**JORDAN CLUROE**, DIAGNOSE  
YOUR DESIGN DILEMMAS

PHOTO: MEGANTAYLOR



## TODAY'S PAPERS

### THIS WEEK, NEW WAYS WITH BOLD AND MODERN WALLPAPER

**H**ANDS up, who loves a bit of wallpaper? Chances are you're either a lover or a hater – depending on whether you've had to remove any old woodchip. Ours are firmly in the air – and it may stem from our 1980s bedrooms that we decorated as kids, complete with borders and matching bed linen. We wouldn't go that far now (don't tempt us) but we do love the stuff and are thrilled that it's International Wallpaper Week. It's having a renaissance, and we couldn't be happier.

**I have been decorating my living room and am pleased with how it is going, but I want to use wallpaper as I love pattern. I don't have much money to spend on the room and the ceilings are high, so I'm thinking of a feature wall – either the fireplace wall or the wall behind the sofa. I would love your advice.**

Karen

Feature walls have been around for a while, and we would advise choosing the wall behind your sofa if you are keen on a bold pattern. But there is a feature wall that could be so much fun, and that is your ceiling. A ceiling is the great undiscovered space in a room. Think of your ceiling as the new feature wall if you like, and don't be afraid that it will make it feel oppressive. It's true that we wouldn't opt for this if your room had particularly low ceilings, but you don't have that problem and in a lounge it is lovely to make it more cosy with a statement ceiling. Choose a design that doesn't have a particular direction so that the pattern works from all views (graphics and florals or textures are great for this), and the

rest is up to you. Be brave and take it to the next level with a cool ceiling: the fifth feature wall!

**I noticed you are in the middle of your own renovation, and wondered if you have any tips for removing old wallpaper? I have recently moved into a Victorian terraced house and having dived enthusiastically into stripping the hallway, am struggling to see a light at the end of the tunnel as I can't get it all off. Should I give in and re-paper all the walls?**

Delphine

Never give in, Delphine! We have been there and it is not fun, but you will get there in the end.

With older properties the temptation is to use a wallpaper steamer, but you want to be careful not to use too much hot steam when taking off the existing wallpaper as you may end up with crumbly plaster or taking off the plaster entirely, leaving you with an even bigger problem.

A lovely plasterer we worked with once gave us this advice, and it has always worked for us: score the paper, get a brush and a bucket of water and flick lots of cold water on the wall you are stripping (covering any other surfaces you want to keep clean, as this can get messy). Then stand back and give it a chance to soak in. The soaking is key. After five or ten minutes you should be able to remove that layer with no problems. If there are more layers, score again, flick and soak again, then remove until all layers are gone.

So simple, but it requires patience and elbow grease. Very satisfying when you finally get there, though. For problem walls that are lumpy and

**'Once you get some colour and pattern into your life, you will be well on your way to bringing that soul you crave into your new home'**

bumpy, you may still want to line them if you aren't skimming with new plaster, and you can put up new wallpaper safe in the knowledge that technology has created papers and pastes that now come off walls easily and cleanly, unlike older papers.

**I have just moved into a new flat and I like the space, but it is beyond boring. It's a modern build with newly painted white walls and new wooden floors. I need to put my stamp on it, but to be honest I have no idea where to begin.**

Damian

Let go of the old and embrace your new place. It may not be filled with personality yet, but we can help with that. It can be hard to break up the space when you are faced with a lots of white walls, but once you get some colour and pattern into your life, you will be well on your way to bringing that soul you crave into your new home. A hallway is a great place to start. Sounds odd, but hallways connect all the spaces and will give you strong impact from the moment step through the front door. Get the hallways right and you will set the new place off in the right direction.

Try wallpaper – and we are not just saying that because it is Wallpaper Week – on your entire hallway. It is a space you move through rather than linger in, so you can go for it. Pattern and deep colour can make it really cosy, too, so that when you open out into your main spaces, they feel even brighter and bigger. Pop up a mirror by the door to bounce some light around and you'll be well on your way to making that boring white box a home to be proud of.

■ [2lgstudio.com](http://2lgstudio.com)

### WALLPAPER DOESN'T HAVE TO BE BORING...

#### OTTOLINE

This amazing lady is carving a niche for decorative papers, with a period edge to her contemporary colour palettes. We love them. So chic. From £135, [ottoline.nl](http://ottoline.nl)



#### CUSTHOM

Sometimes small is best. This independent print-design studio manufactures its own hand-printed designs in a small studio. They are more pricey, but so beautifully made. Use sparingly and add a touch of British craft to your home. This is the studio's newest design, Oblique. From £145, [cuthom.co.uk](http://cuthom.co.uk)



#### FEATHR

For modern impact, this brand offers a huge range of designer collaborations. From edgy graphics to bold, painterly prints, we love the scale of their designs. From £129 a roll, [feathr.com](http://feathr.com)



#### GRAHAM BROWN

This powerhouse of British industry is still a family business, and its design archive is immense. The company launches an annual wallpaper of the year and we have been lucky enough to work with them on our second collection, starring our very own dachshund, Buckley, as drawn by us. £50 a roll, [grahambrown.com](http://grahambrown.com)