Turning houses into homes

It’s all in the finish. Once the background is in place, you’ll need to decide the most suitable way to finish walls and ceilings to create a seamless and smooth look and feel, ready for final decoration.

This guide will help you choose the best way to finish the background, whether plaster skimming or drylining, as well as show you in detail how to get the best finish.

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Ready for the finish?

Before you think about getting the finish right, backgrounds must be adequately prepared to ensure the best results.

As a quick reminder:

• If jointing or skimming plasterboards, ensure the board is fixed the correct way round, finishing onto the front face of the board.
• All walls and ceilings should be secure, flat and smooth.
• Previously wallpapered surfaces must have all wallpaper and paste removed from the wall so the surface is clean.
• Repair any damage to the wall prior to applying the finish, allowing adequate time for fillers to dry.

If you still need to do some preparation work on the background, request our ‘Installation guide’ containing information on how to prepare wall and ceiling linings, as well as show you how to build partitions, separating walls and floors.

To receive your copy, you can join our mailing list using the reply card at the back of this guide, or download a copy from www.british-gypsum.com

What do I need?

Make sure you have all the equipment you need before you start

Once you’ve decided which finishing system to use, you’ll find details of all the tools you’ll need to complete the job at the beginning of each section.

Don’t forget to consider the environment you’ll be working in, so you can perform the job as safely as possible, including:

• Using purpose-designed equipment to reach ceilings and the tops of walls.
• Tidy the rooms you’ll be working in to remove obstacles and potential trip hazards.
• Protect the floor and furniture from dust and splashes with dust sheets.
• Ensure rooms have adequate ventilation for dispersing dust and to aid drying.

Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)

PPE is often required when using plaster and drylining materials.

Here’s a list of items you should consider when undertaking these activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Equipment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using all jointing materials and plasters</td>
<td>Safety shoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gloves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eye protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixing powders and installing insulation</td>
<td>Dusk mask</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working overhead (ceilings)</td>
<td>Hard hat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Which finishing system should I use?

In some circumstances the background surface will influence the finish that should be used. Where options are still available, we’ve put together the key benefits of using each one, so you can feel confident with your choice.

The background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Background</th>
<th>Finishing system</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New undercoat plaster</td>
<td>Plaster finish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plasterboards (Gyproc Moisture Resistant board must be pre-treated with</td>
<td>Plaster finish or basic jointing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ThistleBond-it before plastering)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old plaster in reasonable condition (secure, flat and smooth, with some</td>
<td>Plaster finish or full surface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minor damage such as nail holes)</td>
<td>coverage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Method of finishing

Plaster skimming

- Plaster skimming provides a smooth seamless surface to the entire wall or ceiling.
- Easy to achieve good airtightness for both thermal and acoustic insulation.
- The speed of finishing is not reliant on the weather, as there’s no need to wait for drying, it can also continue in cold weather.
- Resilient and scuff-resistant reducing the need for maintenance.
- Finished in one visit.

Basic jointing

- Smaller amounts of material is used, so less material is required on site.
- Consequently less water is also needed.
- The process can be done in stages over several days where this suits.
- Full plastering skills are not required.
- Imperfections can be removed through sanding.

Full surface coverage

- Consistent surface texture and suction over plasterboards and joints.
- Can cover minor damage such as picture hook holes, etc, to existing walls.

Installation details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plaster skimming</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic jointing</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full surface coverage</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Plaster skimming

Finish plasters can be used to skim plasterboards or provide the final layer over undercoat plaster as part of a solid plaster wall or ceiling.

### Choice of plasters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plaster Type</th>
<th>Suitable for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thistle Board Finish</td>
<td>Skim finishing plasterboards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thistle Multi-Finish</td>
<td>Finishing undercoat plasters, plasterboards or a combination of both</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Tools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool Type</th>
<th>Suitable for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clean mixing bucket</td>
<td>To mix the plaster in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixing paddle or wheel</td>
<td>To mix the plaster with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gyproc Bucket Trowel</td>
<td>To aid mixing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gyproc Hawk</td>
<td>To place plaster on whilst trowelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thistle Plaster Finishing Trowel</td>
<td>To apply and finish the plaster</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Installation options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Installation Type</th>
<th>Suitable for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thistle ProTape FT50</td>
<td>Reinforcing plasterboard joints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gyproc Joint Tape</td>
<td>Reinforcing plasterboard joints (more resistant to cracking than fibre tapes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ThistleBond-it</td>
<td>Use on moisture resistant grade plasterboard and smooth concrete to ensure bond with the background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thistle Thin Coat Angle Bead</td>
<td>Reinforces edges of the skim finish on plasterboards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thistle Thin Coat Mini Mesh Bead</td>
<td>Reinforces edges of the skim finish on plasterboards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thistle Thin Coat Plaster Stop Bead</td>
<td>Defines and reinforces edges of the skim finish on plasterboards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For further information on plaster accessories see page 24.
Plaster skimming

Installation tips

- Ensure the room temperature is controlled. Plaster should not be applied to frozen backgrounds or in very hot or dry conditions. Take precautions to avoid rapid loss of water.

- Check the use-by dates on the bags, making sure you use the oldest material first.

- Sequence the work. Setting time is approximately 90 minutes, but finishing times can be extended in low temperatures by 30 minutes or more. As a result, do not mix more than you’ll be able to use in this time, we suggest a maximum of two bags.

- For coverage guidance, one bag will cover 10m², but add an allowance for waste.

- Avoid excessively polishing the surface as this will make it harder to decorate with a paint finish.

- Use ThistleBond-it on Gyproc Moisture Resistant board, to ensure a strong bond with the background.

Example guidance applying Thistle Board Finish plaster to Gyproc plasterboards (when applying a finish plaster to an undercoat plaster ignore stages 2 - 4):

Stage 1:

- All mixing equipment should be cleaned before use to prevent contamination of the plaster.

- Thistle plasters are pre-mixed. Add only clean water and do not use any additives.

- Mix Thistle plasters by pouring the required amount of clean water into the mixing bucket and then adding the plaster.

- Mix using a mixing paddle to disperse lumps and achieve a thick creamy consistency.

Stage 2:

- Fix either Thistle Thin Coat Angle Bead or Thistle Thin Coat Mini Mesh Bead to external plasterboard angles, by embedding in finish plaster.

- Before the plaster sets, any surplus must be wiped from the corner as scraping it away may affect the zinc coating of the bead.
Plaster skimming

Stage 3:
- Pre-fill any gaps between plasterboards exceeding 3mm.

Stage 4:
- Reinforce joints and internal angles using Gyproc Joint Tape.
- When lining internal angles, crease the tape down the centre to aid application.
- Spread plaster along each joint, press Gyproc Joint Tape firmly into the plaster and immediately cover with a further application.
- Leave sufficient plaster beneath the tape to ensure adhesion.
- Remove any air bubbles.
- Alternatively use self-adhesive Thistle ProTape FT50.
- Be aware that glass fibre mesh tape is not a direct substitute for Gyproc Joint Tape and is less resistant to cracking, particularly where board edges are not fully supported.

Stage 5:
- Position the tape and spread plaster along each joint.
- To minimise the risk of cracking, ensure plaster is pushed through the tape well into any gaps between the plasterboards.
- Apply plaster to the plasterboard surface and joints with firm pressure, after the joint treatment has stiffened but not set, to approximately 1mm thickness.

Stage 6:
- Apply a second coat of plaster building out to total of 2mm in thickness.
- Apply onto first coat whilst still wet.
- Trowel to a smooth matt finish as the plaster is stiffening.
- Use any additional water sparingly and only in the latter stages of trowelling.
Basic jointing

Using Gyproc jointing compounds to fill and finish each plasterboard joint can be staged to suit your timings. It can also be sanded to give a smoother finish and remove any imperfections.

**Choice of jointing compounds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choice of jointing compounds</th>
<th>Suitable for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gyproc Joint Filler &amp; Gyproc ProMix LITE</td>
<td>Bedding corner tape and angle beads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gyproc Easi-Fill</td>
<td>A ready-mixed compound used in the second and third finishing stages over Gyproc Joint Filler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gyproc Easi-Fill</td>
<td>Used on its own as an alternative to both the above products, it will bulk fill and finish in all stages of the jointing process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tools**

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<td>Gyproc Bucket Trowel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gyproc Hawk</td>
<td>To place jointing compounds on whilst trowelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thistle Plaster Finishing Trowel</td>
<td>To apply jointing compounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gyproc Jointing Knife</td>
<td>To apply jointing compounds at internal angles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Installation options**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Installation options</th>
<th>Suitable for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gyproc Joint Tape</td>
<td>Reinforcing flat and internal angle joints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gyproc No-Coat Ultraflex 325</td>
<td>Reinforcing internal and external corner joints at any angle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gyproc Drywall Metal Angle Bead</td>
<td>For exterior reinforcement of 90° angles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gyproc Drywall Primer</td>
<td>Use before decoration to equalise suction on joints and plasterboard liner before painting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gyproc Drywall Sealer</td>
<td>Use before decoration with wallpaper to protect the surface against subsequent steam-stripping of wallpaper</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Tapered edge Gyproc plasterboard
2. Gyproc Joint Tape with Gyproc Joint Filler or Gyproc Easi-Fill
3. or Gyproc ProMix LITE or Gyproc Easi-Fill
4. or Gyproc Drywall Primer or Gyproc Sealer

For further information on plasterboard accessories see page 24.

There is a wider range of Gyproc jointing compounds available. For more details visit www.british-gypsum.com
Choosing the method of jointing

Drylining plasterboard joints is done in stages, by firstly bedding in the joint tape or angle bead using Gyproc Joint Filler and finishing the joint in two subsequent stages using Gyproc ProMix LITE.

Internal and external joints:

A Gyproc Drywall Metal Angle Bead provides impact resistance on external 90° angles.

B Gyproc Joint Tape provides crack resistance on internal joints.

C Gyproc No-Coat Ultraflex 325 provides high performance corner reinforcement for all angles.

Flat joint:

1 First fill:
Gyproc Joint Tape is bed into Gyproc Joint Filler.

2 Second fill:
Gyproc ProMix LITE is feathered out beyond the joint.

3 Third fill:
A final layer of Gyproc ProMix LITE is applied.

4 Gyproc Primer can be applied for paint preparation, or Gyproc Sealer can be used for subsequent wallpaper stripping.

Alternatively Gyproc Easi-Fill can be used to bed in the tape and finish the joint, reducing the process to two stages.
Basic jointing

Installation tips

• Ensure the room temperature is controlled. Jointing compounds must not be used in temperatures below the minimum specified on the packaging, and this applies at all stages during application, setting or hardening.

• Check plasterboards are securely fixed with no steps between adjacent boards, driving in any protruding screw heads prior to jointing.

• Pre-fill gaps between boards greater than 3mm prior to taping with Gyproc Joint Filler.

• Sequence the work. Setting time is approximately 90 minutes, as a result, do not mix more than you’ll be able to use in this time.

• To achieve a smooth continuous crack-resistant surface, use of tapered edge plasterboard and Gyproc Joint Tape is widely regarded as best practice.

Example guidance applying Gyproc Easi-Fill to Gyproc plasterboards:

Stage 1 - bedding the reinforcement:

• Mix Gyproc Easi-Fill with water to a thick creamy consistency.

• Apply Gyproc Easi-Fill to the Joint.

• Bed the joint reinforcement into the Gyproc Easi-Fill. For flat joints and internal angles use Gyproc Joint Tape. For external angles, Gyproc Drywall Metal Angle Beads can be used to protect 90° angles, alternatively use Gyproc No-Coat Ultraflex 325 for any angle (internal or external).

• As you work, fill any gaps and edges as close to the finished surface as possible, this will better prepare the joint for stage 2.

Stage 2 - finishing coat:

• Allow the joints to set.

• Trowel apply Gyproc Easi-Fill feathering out beyond the previous application. One coat is normally enough.

• If board edges are cut or square-edge boards are used, the joint treatment will be raised above the board surface, which is more difficult to conceal. In this case two or three further joint treatments will be required.

• If you are not using Gyproc Easi-Fill, for example Gyproc Joint Filler to bed the tape and Gyproc ProMix lite to finish the joint, it will need two finishing coats.

• Apply another application of Gyproc ProMix lite once the previous layer has set, feathering further out.
Basic jointing

Sanding
• Allow the joints to fully dry and lightly sand where required to remove any minor imperfections.

Full surface coverage (optional)
• See page 21 for further details.

Pre-decoration
• Remove any surface dust and ensure background is dry prior to application.
• Apply Gyproc Drywall Primer or Gyproc Drywall Sealer to the entire board surface and jointed areas, to prepare the lining for the final decorative treatment.

Full surface coverage

Using jointing compounds for full surface coverage can provide an enhanced finished to basic jointing, as it masks the joints between the plasterboards even further.

It can also be used when covering old plastered walls with minor damage, for example a wall that has small imperfections such as picture hook holes or small chips, as long as the wall is still secure, flat and smooth.
### Full surface coverage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choice of jointing compounds</th>
<th>Suitable for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gyproc ProMix LITE</td>
<td>A ready-mixed compound suitable for full surface coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gyproc Easi-Fill</td>
<td>A powdered compound suitable for full surface coverage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Drylining
- Where plasterboard has been jointed, continue using the same jointing compound to complete the job.
- Trowel apply a very thin layer and scrape across the entire wall and or ceiling surface, moving around the room in sequence.
- Once dry, sand any minor imperfections to leave a smooth finish.

### Over old plaster
- When covering old plastered walls, ensure that the wall is secure, flat, smooth and dust free.
- Trowel apply a very thin layer and scrape across the entire wall or ceiling surface, moving around the room in sequence.
- Once dry, sand any minor imperfections to leave a smooth finish.

### Pre-decoration
- Remove any surface dust and ensure background is dry prior to application.
- Apply Gyproc Drywall Primer or Gyproc Drywall Sealer to the entire surface to prepare the lining for the final decorative treatment.

### Tools

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<td>Gyproc Hawk</td>
<td>To place jointing compounds on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>whilst trowelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thistle Plaster Finishing Trowel</td>
<td>To apply jointing compounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gyproc Jointing Knife</td>
<td>To apply jointing compounds at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>internal angles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Installation options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Installation options</th>
<th>Suitable for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gyproc Drywall Primer</td>
<td>Use before decoration to equalise suction before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>decorating with a paint finish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gyproc Drywall Sealer</td>
<td>Use before decoration with wallpaper to protect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the surface against subsequent stream-stripping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of wallpaper</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

For further information on plasterboard accessories see page 24.
System warranty

Using the British Gypsum systems and components featured in this guide, you’ll be able to qualify for the SpecSure® system warranty.

SpecSure® is simple, we guarantee that our products, when installed in accordance with our recommendations, will achieve the performances stated, giving you peace of mind that the systems will last.

To qualify for the SpecSure® warranty, ensure you choose all British Gypsum products and accessories, including plaster and jointing accessories.

Plaster skimming accessories

**Thistle ProTape FT50**
- A self-adhesive mesh tape for reinforcing flat joints.
- Available in 90m rolls.

**Gyproc Joint Tape**
- A paper tape alternative for reinforcing flat joints with a greater overall cracking resistance.
- Available in 150m rolls.

**Thistle Thin Coat Angle Bead**
- For reinforcing external angles.
- Available in 2400mm and 3000mm lengths.

**Thistle Thin Coat Mini Mesh Bead**
- An alternative angle bead for reinforcing external angles.
- Available in 2400mm and 3000mm lengths.

Jointing accessories

**Gyproc Joint Tape**
- A paper tape for reinforcing flat joints.
- Available in 150m rolls.

**Gyproc Corner Tape**
- A paper tape with two corrosion resistant metal strips for reinforcing external angles.
- Available in 33m rolls.

**Gyproc No-Coat Ultraflex 325**
- A joint tape providing high performance corner reinforcement, which can be adjusted for both internal and external corners.
- Available in 30m rolls.

**Gyproc Drywall Metal Angle Bead**
- Galvanised metal angle bead used for reinforcing 90 degree external angles; ideal where maximum protection is required.
- Available in 3000mm lengths.

**Gyproc Drywall Metal Edge Bead**
- Galvanised metal edge bead used for protecting and defining exposed edges of plasterboard.
- Available in 2400mm and 3000mm lengths.

**Gyproc Drywall Primer**
- A general purpose plasterboard primer used before decoration to equalise suction.
- Available in 10 litre tubs.

**Gyproc Drywall Sealer**
- A single coat provides protection from future steam-stripping and two coats provides a vapour control barrier.
- Available in 10 litre tubs.

For further information on SpecSure® visit www.british-gypsum.com
Minor damage repair

Repairing minor damage to walls and ceilings can be carried out without the need to completely replace the existing surface.

It is easier if repairs are made ‘like-for-like’, so if the finish is a skim plaster, jointing materials should not be used, and vice versa. For more information about British Gypsum products please visit www.british-gypsum.com

Guidance for minor repairs to plasterboard walls:

**Stage 1:**
- Lightly sand the surface to remove any burrs and fill flush with Gyproc Easi-Fill or two applications of Gyproc ProMix –.

**Stage 2:**
- When dry, apply Gyproc Drywall Primer or Gyproc Drywall Sealer to leave the surface ready for decoration.

Where damage is through the core of a plasterboard wall, larger repairs will need to be made.

Further training

The British Gypsum Drywall Academy is the industry leading centre for training and development in plaster and drylining courses.

**Finishing courses available:**
- Basic trowel skills and skim finishing
- Hand jointing and finishing plasterboards
- Mechanical jointing

**Also available:**
- Drilyner ‘dot and dab’ systems
- GypLyner wall lining systems
- Combined partitioning and ceiling systems

Courses are run throughout the year at all of our training centres at Erith in Kent, East Leake near Nottingham, and Kirkby Thore in Cumbria.

If you would like to attend a training course to enhance or refresh your skills, then call us to request an information pack.

Training enquiries: 08702 406040
If you want to keep up-to-date with information from British Gypsum, then join our mailing list.

We’ll keep you informed on the latest plaster and drylining product and system developments suitable for use in refurbishment, to help make your jobs trouble-free, and keep you ahead of the game!

Just fill out your details below, tick the relevant boxes and send to the freepost address overleaf. No stamp required.

First name
Surname
Position
Company
Address
Postcode
Email

What is your main activity?
Builder □ Dryliner □ Plasterer □ DIY □
Other (please state)

In which area do you spend most of your time?
New-build □ Repair and maintenance □

Where did you find this guide?
Builders merchant (please state)
British Gypsum website □ From a colleague/friend □
Other (please state)

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