

Shopping for Wall-Mounted Shelves

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Since wall-mounted shelves come in a wide range of shapes and sizes, some can offer as much sculptural appeal as the objects they are intended to hold.

When you need a little extra storage or display space, a weighty bookcase can sometimes be overkill. A wall-mounted shelf might do just as well, if all you want is a place to show off small accessories or stash a few novels — and it won't hog floor space or overwhelm a room.

"Wall-mounted shelves give the impression of lightness and floating in space," said the New York-based interior designer [Amy Lau](#). "They take up less visual space, because they don't have backs."

Where do shelves like this work best? In the bedroom or a home office, to display personal collections, she suggested, or in the kitchen, to hold decorative dishes. In a powder room, you might use them as a place to put candles and perfume.

"You can even use one as a desk," Ms. Lau said, if the shelf is the right size and mounted at the proper height.

And because they come in a wide range of shapes and sizes, she pointed out, some floating shelves offer as much sculptural appeal as the objects they are intended to hold: “Whether it’s slim, shiny, powder-coated or chunky, there are so many unique options.”

- Will your wall support a loaded shelf? Ensuring that there are studs at the desired points of attachment, or blocking behind the drywall, is critical to preventing shelf sag and collapse, Ms. Lau said.
- How many do you need? “If you’re looking at a larger system, consider the depth and height of the shelves,” Ms. Lau said, “and whether they can be moved around.”
- Are some materials better than others? Not necessarily — and sometimes the unexpected is the best choice: “I’ve seen shelves made out of driftwood, Lucite, thick ceramic and cement,” Ms. Lau said.



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