

Drywall Anchor Quick Reference

5 anchor types compared — weight ratings, drill bit sizes, and when to use each.
buildtoolhq.com/post/types-of-drywall-anchors

Type	Best For	Ultimate Load*	Drill Bit	Reusable
Plastic Expansion	Picture frames, small decor	10–25 lbs	Matches anchor body	Yes
Self-Drilling Threaded	Curtain rods, light shelving	50–75 lbs	No pilot hole	Yes
Molly Bolt	Mirrors, towel bars	55–65 lbs	Matches sleeve OD	Sleeve stays in wall
Standard Toggle Bolt	Shelving, light fixtures	50–100 lbs	1/2" (clears wings)	No — wings drop in wall
Heavy-Duty Strap Toggle	TV mounts, grab bars, cabinets	238–265 lbs	1/2"	Yes, fully

*Ultimate values from manufacturer lab testing, not safe working loads — see the callout below.

The number on the package is not the number to design around. Every rating above is an ultimate figure — the load at which the anchor fails in a lab test. Industry standard practice is to use about 1/4 of that number for anything you actually hang. A SnapToggle's marketed 265 lbs is closer to a 60–66 lb safe design load.

How Much Weight Can Drywall Itself Hold?

Standard 1/2-inch gypsum wallboard is tested to a minimum 77-lb nail-pull rating under ASTM C473. Independent lab testing puts the real-world average closer to 96 lbf. That's the ceiling for any anchor that loads the paper face directly — anchors that brace against the back of the board (like SnapToggle) bypass it by spreading load over a wider area instead.

Ceiling Use

Ceiling loads are pure tension with no shear component helping, so ceiling capacity typically runs about half the same anchor's wall rating. SnapToggle-style anchors are commonly rated for ceiling use; many self-drilling anchors explicitly are not — check the specific product. Hit a joist directly whenever you can.

Common Installation Mistakes

- **Drilling the pilot hole too small** — cracks the surrounding gypsum before the anchor does its job.
- **Stripping the screw before the anchor is seated** — drive threaded anchors slow and steady.
- **Using a toggle bolt where a stud was reachable** — move the mounting point and use the stud instead.
- **Ignoring the wall thickness rating** — strap toggles and heavy-duty mollies have a max thickness they set properly in.