

# So simple you can mount your painting on a stretcher frame

Time required approx. 20-30 minutes



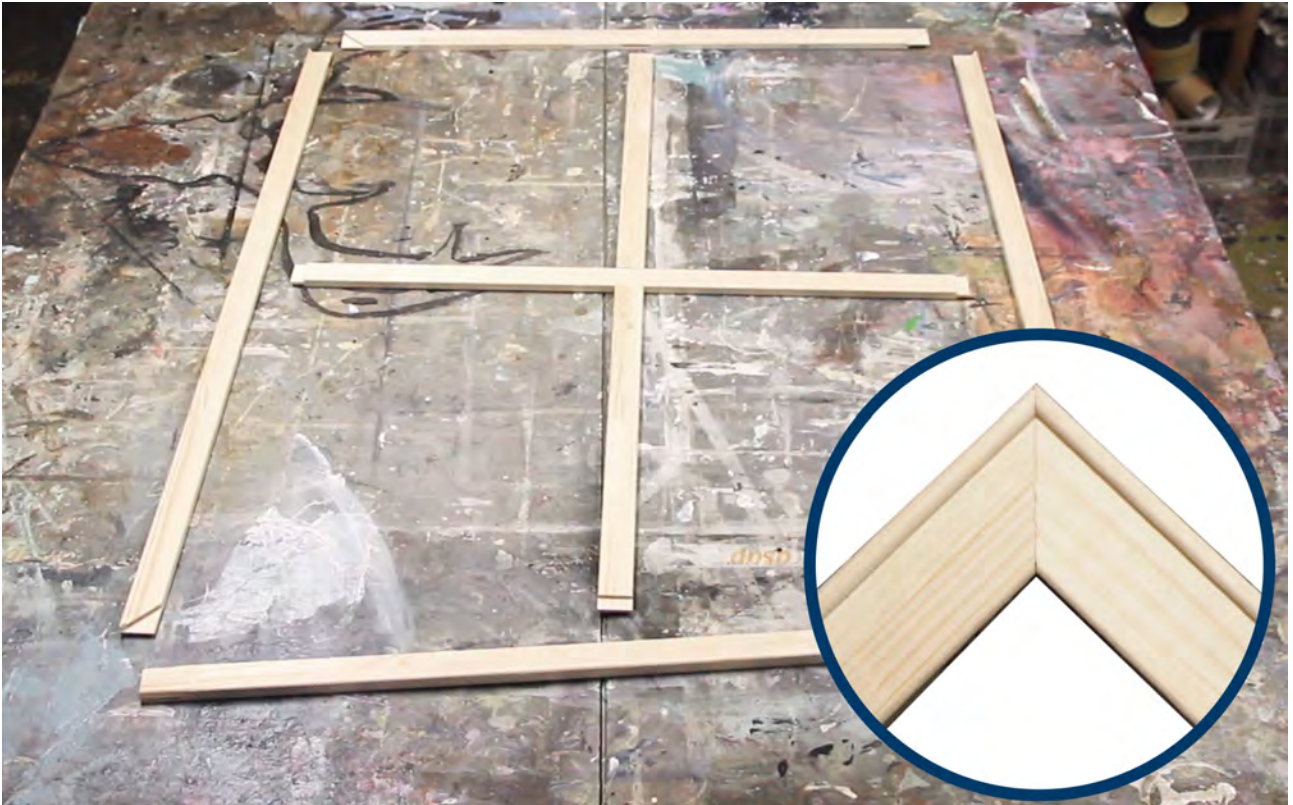
## The following is required:

- Hammer/rubber mallet
- Stop angle (or similar)
- Folding rule or tape measure
- stretching pliers (look last page)
- soft underlay (blanket, cloth)
- spray bottle/wet cloth
- mechanical/ electric staple gun
- approx. 100 - 200 staples
- flat slotted screwdriver
- small cross-head screwdriver for the hangers

 **YouTube** Video tutorial: <https://www.youtube.com/@kollegativ/>

## 1. Assemble stretcher frame

Lay the complete frame including the spacers/inner cross (the reinforcement) on a large table or the floor. Make sure that the bead is on the same side of each edge bar (all down or all up).



Now put the bars together and tap them carefully into each other, if necessary with the help of a rubber mallet (in an emergency, a normal mallet also works).

Finally, check that all the corners are in the right angle.



**Important: NOTHING will be glued/screwed/nailed!**



## 1-1. Stretcher frame - SPECIAL CASE

There are stretcher frames which are partially divided because of the size. For the construction sort them. Outer bars: with bead, ends are beveled // Inner cross: straight ends, often with recesses in the middle.



As in step 1, first roughly put everything together, and then connect them with each other. Start with the divided bars, then everything will be clearer.

A particular detail to note here is that the transitions at the bead can be uneven. You should straighten these with e.g. sandpaper or a wood file.

In addition, make sure that the divided bars are straight after they have been joined together. To do this, simply lay them on a straight surface and straighten them if necessary.



Continue as described in step 1.

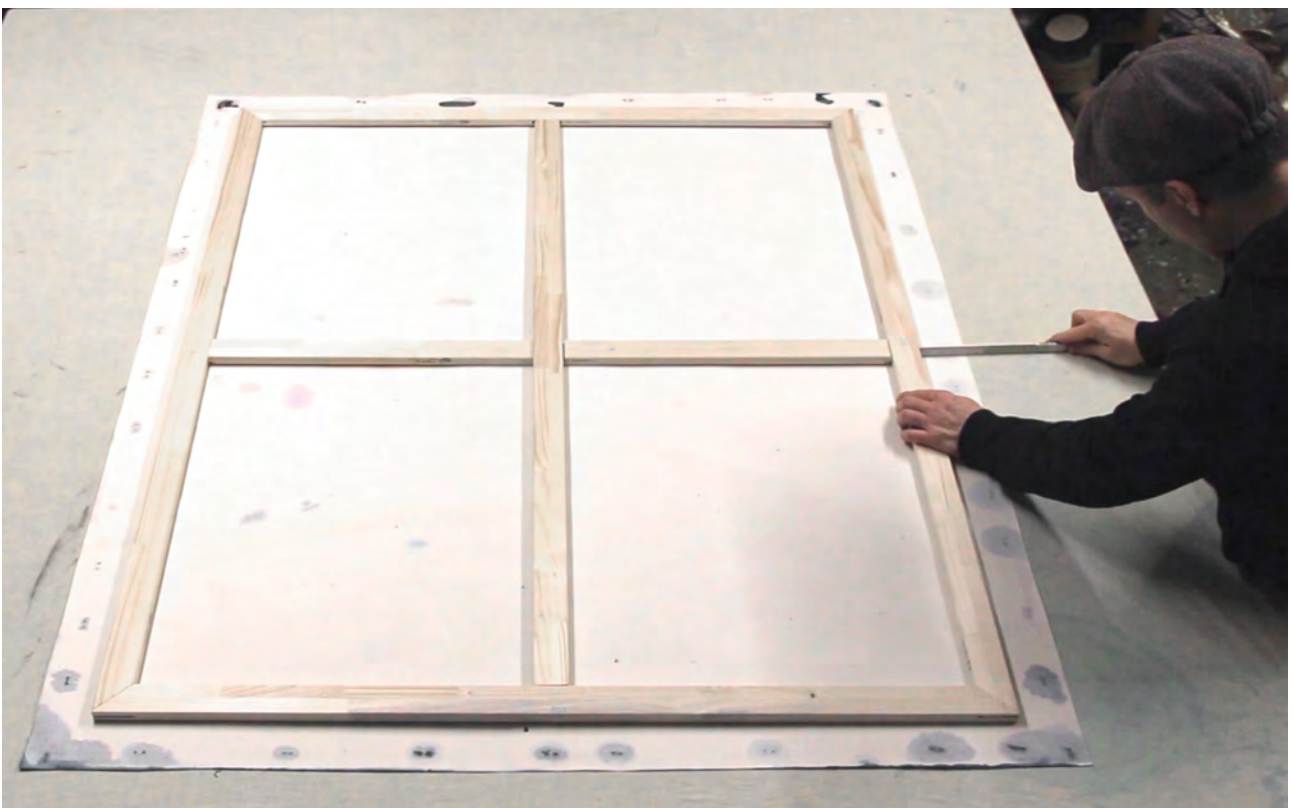
**Important:** Also here NOTHING will be glued / screwed / nailed!

## 2. Connect canvas with stretcher frame

Now spread out a thin blanket / cloth as a base so that the painted canvas will not be damaged. Make sure that nothing lies underneath, so no little stones or something similar, everything must be really clean because otherwise it can also damage the painting.

Then place the canvas with the painted surface down on the base, smooth it out a bit.

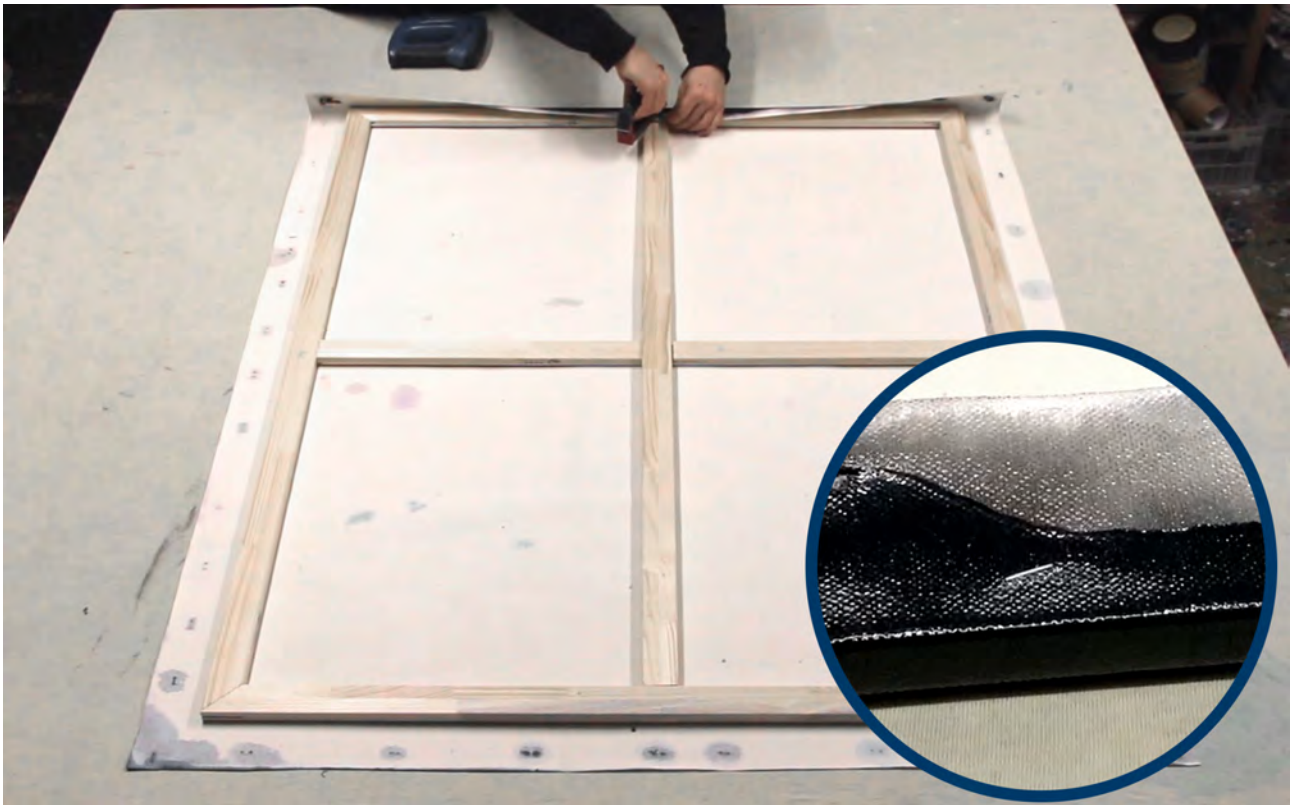
Then carefully place the finished frame, **with the bead down**, centered on the canvas.



Measure all protruding edges of the canvas and align the frame as centrally as possible. A painted canvas is always slightly warped, differences (in width and length) of 1-2 centimeters are normal. The main thing is that it is approximately centered.

Now staple, in a slight angle, from above, on the short side of the frame the canvas as follows:

- in the middle
- 10cm left from the edge
- 10cm right from the edge



Next, staple the canvas, again in a slight angle, from the above, to one of the long sides of the frame, as follows:

- in the middle
- 10cm to the left of the edge
- 10cm to the right of the edge

Finally, fix the second long side, this time **with some tension**. To do this, pull the canvas over the stretcher with your fingers and staple it in place, also in a slight angle, from above, as follows:

- in the middle
- 10cm to the left of the edge
- 10cm to the right of the edge

By stapling in a slight angle, the staples hold better in the wood and tearing is prevented.

### 3. Check

Ideally with the help of a second person, you can now carefully turn over the canvas with the stretcher frame to check the position before finally fixing everything together.



## 4. Stretching canvas on stretcher frame

With the help of the second person, carefully rotate the painting/stretcher frame over again.



Now flip the canvas over on the short (not yet fixed) side.

Now carefully place the stretching plier in the center (right next to the spacer). Grasp the canvas on the inside of the frame and pull the fabric slightly over the edge, using the leverage. Just enough so that the edge in front of you appears cornered. Then secure the canvas with two staples.

Now work your way from there closer and closer to the corner, stretching the canvas and stapling it in place. You should put a staple about every 5-7cm, you could also shorten the distance and use more staples but please not less. Do the same on the other side of the spacer until you have fixed the whole side.

In the corners and at the spacer bar you can also tighten the canvas with your fingers and then fix it with staples. To do this, simply grab the canvas firmly and then press the stapler against your finger (preferably your thumb) so that it is also stretched, then finally staple it in place.

Next, repeat these steps on the opposite short side of the frame.

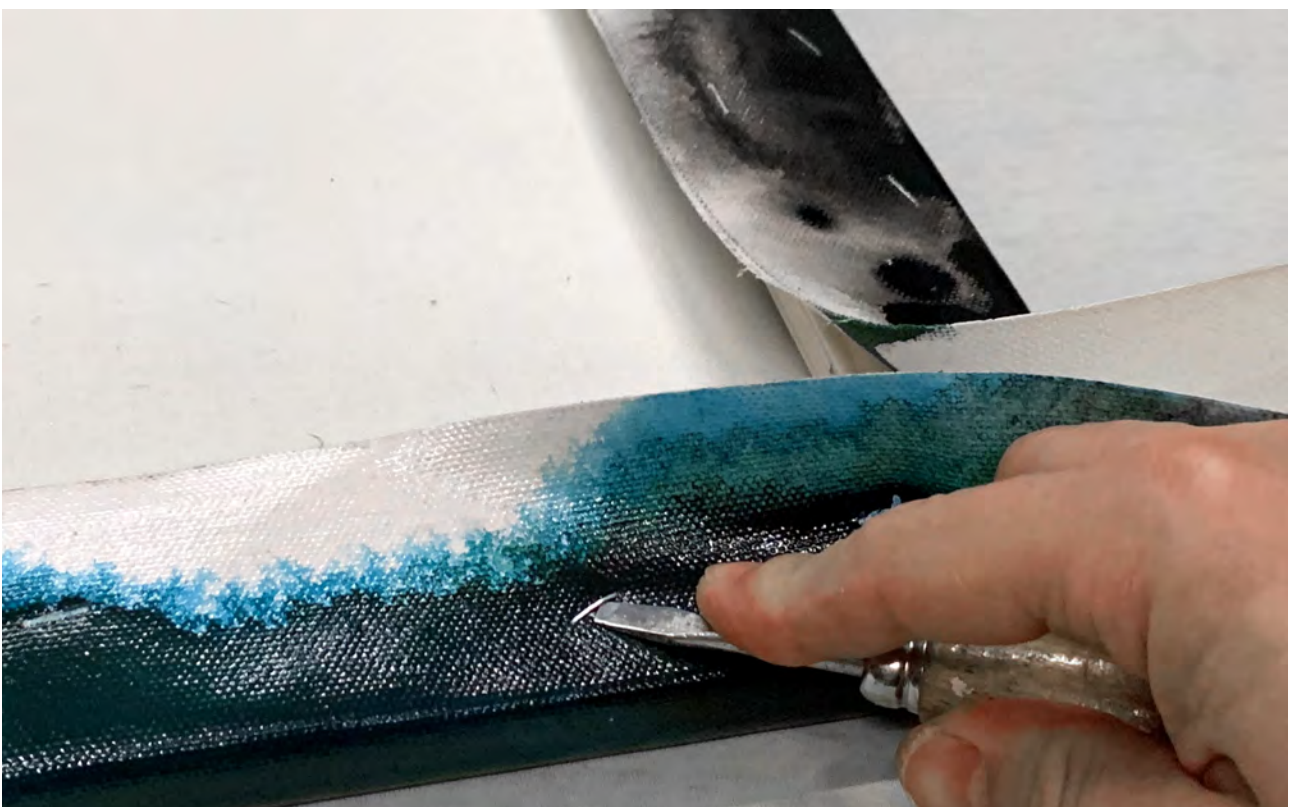


Then on one of the long sides and finally also on the last long side.

If the canvas is loose i.e. there is air between the stretcher bar and the canvas (outer edge), or the already mentioned edge in front of you is not properly cornered, then remove this staple(s). Do this with the help of the slotted screwdriver. Slide it very flat under the staple to lift and release it.

After that tighten the canvas more firmly with the stretching plier and fix it again.

This often happens at the three staples, which we placed in Step 2. They were only used to roughly position the canvas.





## 5. Insert tightening keys (optional)

You do not need to do this step.

The canvas will be tightened again by wedging it out. However, be **really careful** here, theoretically the canvas should already be sufficiently taut. If the canvas is tight enough for you, you can simply omit the keys as already mentioned.

Insert the keys with the beveled side to the frame leg and **tap them in carefully** just a little with the hammer.



Normally, the keys are used as the last part of a stretcher frame to tighten everything again. However, since it often happens that the folded canvas of the corners is fixed inappropriately (wedging will be prevented), we do that here before fixing the corners.



## 6. Fix corners

There are countless methods to bend or fold the canvas in the corners. Many implementations are complicated and others are more suitable for an unpainted canvas. It is also possible to cut the canvas in the corners, but this is not recommended, as it can quickly destroy the whole painting.

Painted canvas is always thicker and stiffer than raw canvas, so the following method has proven to be effective. Basically, the canvas is now folded only on the left/right sides, therefore nothing will be seen at the top/bottom.



Please figure out which sides of the painting are left/right and which are top/bottom. You are welcome to look at the painting again.

At the top / bottom, the edge remains flat while the left / right side of the canvas is simply folded over, like wrapping a gift. With the help of your fingers, pull the creased corner taut and fix it. Then fold the remaining canvas of the corner smooth and staple it.



## 7. Completion

Still existing slight wrinkles / bumps can be easily removed with a bit of water. To do this, gently rub with a moistened cloth over the unpainted canvas or moisten it with a spray bottle, then let it dry for about an hour.



Finally, just screw the hangers on top (on the back) and you're done.





If you need help, please feel free to contact us at:  
[mail@kollegativ.de](mailto:mail@kollegativ.de)

You can get a stretching plier in the internet and in artists' supplies e.g. at Boesner and Gerstaecker (both internationally represented) for approx. 10- 25 Euro (no guarantee). You should get one, it will save you a lot of nerves and the result will usually be better.



Everything else like rubber mallet, staple gun, angle, screwdriver, etc. you get if necessary in the hardware store.

And if you finally do not trust yourself and would rather have it professionally stretched, then take a look on the Internet as well. Many frame stores, dealers for artist supplies and also artists stretch you the canvas on the stretcher frame for just about 50 - 100 euros (no guarantee).