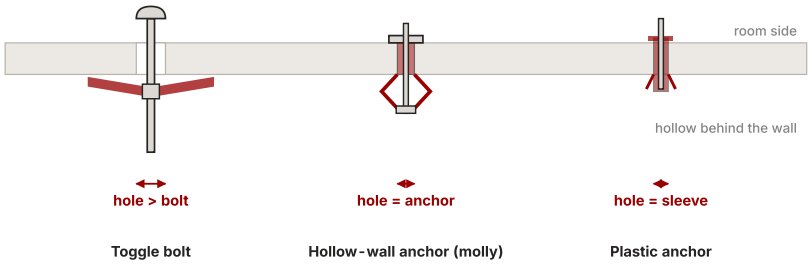
Hollow-Wall Anchor Sizes

jandesupply.com/reference-hollow-wall-anchor-sizes.php

J & E Supply & FASTENER CO.

Hole size and thread for toggle bolts and toggle wings, and hole size for hollow-wall (molly) anchors and plastic anchors — where two anchor makers agree. No load ratings: those come from the maker of the anchor.

A hollow-wall anchor holds by spreading **behind** the wall, so the hole has to be the right size: too big and it spins or pulls through, too small and it won't go in or set. A **toggle bolt** needs a hole much larger than the bolt, because the folded wings pass through it; a **molly** and a **plastic anchor** go in a hole their own size. Pick the anchor for the wall and the job first (see Choosing the Right Anchor), then drill to this chart. For concrete and masonry anchors see Concrete Anchor Sizes.



The part that grips is shown in red. A toggle's wings open in the hollow behind the wall; a molly's sleeve draws up into legs against the back of the wall; a plastic anchor spreads in its own hole. Not to scale.

Loads come from the maker

No load figures on this chart. What a hollow-wall anchor holds depends on the wall — drywall, plaster, paneling or block, its thickness and its condition — and on the anchor itself, and each maker tests and publishes its own anchors, with different results. Use the rating on the package or in the maker's published data for that exact anchor and your wall.

Overhead and life-safety: never hang anything overhead or anything people depend on (grab bars, handrails, fixtures over people) on a hollow-wall anchor without the maker's rating for that use; when in doubt, fasten into the framing.

Hollow-wall anchor types — what each is for

TYPE	HOW IT HOLDS	WHAT IT'S FOR	HOLE
Toggle bolt	A machine screw and spring-loaded wings; the wings fold to pass through the hole and open behind the wall	Hollow block, wallboard, plaster and plywood	Much larger than the bolt — it has to pass the folded wings
Hollow-wall anchor (molly)	A slotted metal sleeve; tightening the screw draws the sleeve up into legs behind the wall	Hollow walls; the anchor's length goes by the wall's thickness	Sized by the anchor
Plastic anchor	A plastic sleeve a sheet metal or wood screw spreads as it is driven	A screw in concrete, block, brick or a hollow wall; light duty; not overhead	Sized by the screws it takes

The sizes are in the tables below. Which anchor for which wall: Choosing the Right Anchor.

Toggle bolts — hole and thread (inches)

BOLT SIZE	HOLE (WALLBOARD)	BOLT THREAD
3/16″	1/2″	—
1/4″	—	1/4″-20
3/8″	7/8″	3/8″-16
1/2″	1-1/4″	1/2″-13

Spring wing toggle bolts and toggle wings, by bolt diameter. The hole has to pass the folded wings, so it is much larger than the bolt. Not on this chart: 1/8″ — the makers we checked list different sizes; 5/16″ — only one maker we checked lists it. Use the size printed on the package. A dash: the makers we checked differ, or only one lists it — your anchor's maker governs.

Hollow-wall anchors (molly) — hole (inches)

ANCHOR SIZE	HOLE
1/8″	5/16″

Sleeve-type hollow-wall anchors (molly, wall grip, Polly / Rawly), by anchor diameter. The length (XS, S, L, XL) goes by the wall's thickness — the makers we checked give different wall-thickness ranges for the same length, so use the range on the package. Not on this chart: 3/16″, 1/4″ — the makers we checked list different sizes. Use the size printed on the package. A dash: the makers we checked differ, or only one lists it — your anchor's maker governs.

Plastic anchors — hole (inches)

SCREW SIZE	HOLE
#6–#8	3/16″
#10–#12	1/4″

Plastic anchors for a sheet metal or wood screw, named by the screws they take. Not on this chart: #4–#6–#8, #6–#8–#10, #8–#10, #8–#10–#12, #12–#14, #12–#14–#16, #14–#16 — only one maker we checked lists it. Use the size printed on the package. A dash: the makers we checked differ, or only one lists it — your anchor's maker governs.

Drilling and setting

Drill the hole the chart gives for your anchor — or the size printed on the package where the chart has a dash.

Toggle bolts: the wings fold back to pass through the hole and spring open behind the wall, which is why the hole is so much larger than the bolt. Toggle bolts are used in hollow block, wallboard, plaster and plywood.

Hollow-wall anchors (molly) are made in lengths for the wall's thickness — pick the length for your wall from the package. Tightening the screw draws the sleeve up behind the wall, or set it with a setting tool (puller).

Plastic anchors take a sheet metal or wood screw in the size range they are named for. They are not recommended overhead or where holding values are critical.

Not on this chart: Toggler / SnapToggle channels, plastic and poly toggles, self-drilling drywall anchors and drive anchors — each is one maker's own design; follow the size and the instructions on its package.

Quick answers

What size hole for a 3/16 toggle bolt?

A **1/2″** hole in wallboard — the makers we checked agree. The hole has to pass the folded wings, so it is much larger than the bolt.

What size hole for a 1/4 toggle bolt?

The makers we checked print different hole sizes for a 1/4″ toggle, so use the size printed on your package. The bolt is **1/4″-20**.

What size hole for a 1/8 toggle bolt?

The makers we checked print different hole sizes for a 1/8″ toggle (and name its thread differently), so use the size printed on your package.

What size drill bit for a 1/8 molly (hollow-wall anchor)?

A **5/16″** bit — the makers we checked agree for 1/8″ anchors of every length. Pick the length for your wall's thickness from the package.

What size hole for a plastic wall anchor?

A plastic anchor for #6–#8 screws takes a **3/16″** hole and one for #10–#12 screws a **1/4″** hole (two makers agree).

How much weight can a toggle bolt or drywall anchor hold?

There is no one number: it depends on the wall (drywall, plaster, block), its thickness and condition, and the anchor, and each maker publishes its own values. Use the rating on the package or the maker's data for that exact anchor and wall — and never hang anything overhead or life-safety on a hollow-wall anchor without the maker's rating for that use.

Reference values drawn from the governing standards. For critical applications, confirm against the standard and the manufacturer's published data. Technical information disclaimer →