

HOME SERVICES ENGINE'S
Ultimate DIY Guide To

BETTER HOMES

Find practical home renovation & repair tips with this handy guidebook



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Introduction

Welcome to the ultimate DIY guide to better homes. The information contained within this e-book will make your DIY tasks a lot easier to accomplish. Whether you are looking to impress your girlfriend by fixing her kitchen drain; or saving important dollars and repairing the driveway yourself, the ultimate DIY guide to better homes will be your step-by-step tutorial.

What is so ultimate about it?

The ultimate DIY guide to better homes is a vast resource of helpful hints and guides on a multitude of repair and renovation tasks around the house. It is an exhaustive guide to DIY tasks around the house.

This e-book is the best way to acquire comprehensive and up-to-date information and attempts to give you the best, most relevant hints, guides and tips to make your DIY experience easier.

Starting from the smallest and simplest of tasks and leading to the bigger, more challenging ones, this e-book enables you to become the champion for DIY tasks for your home.

Kitchen

One of the most repair worthy places in the house; an efficient kitchen saves time and nine! Following are some easy tips and tricks to become your own handy man around your kitchen.

Is Your Garbage Disposal Singing

The best way to troubleshoot issues with the garbage disposal is to diagnose the problem through the sound it is making. If the garbage disposal is making a humming sound, it means that there is a flywheel stuck. In this scenario the garbage disposal will reset itself sooner than you think; therefore you need to think fast. Follow these few simple steps to get the garbage disposal started again

- 🏠 Start by switching off the garbage disposal. Do not put your hand down the hopper or the drain.
- 🏠 Take an offset wrench and insert it into the flywheel turning hole in the bottom of the unit.
- 🏠 Once the wrench is inserted, turn it clockwise to dislodge the stuck impeller or flywheel. When it dislodges, you'll feel the flywheel turn freely.
- 🏠 But wait! Don't turn on the unit yet. Press the reset button and run some water down the drain first. While the water is running keep switching the unit on and off. This will help the stuck object to pass down without further obstruction.

QUICK TIP

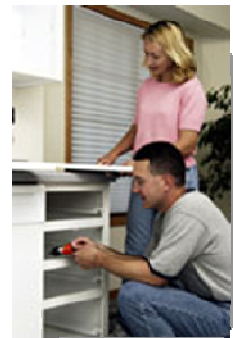
You can also try and use a wooden broom-handle or similar wooden object like a spoon to free the stuck impeller and flywheel from the top of the unit through the drain.

- 🏠 Place the wooden object into the hopper and against an impeller. Use leverage to try and free the stuck flywheel. As before, when it dislodges you'll feel the flywheel turn freely.
- 🏠 This works best when you don't have an offset wrench easily available and buying one is costing the same as calling the plumber

If the disposal is not making any sound check the outlets to see if you are getting power. If the power is on, unplug the unit and check the electrical connections of the cord to the appliance. If all seems ok, the motor may be burned out and you may need to replace the motor or the entire unit.

Creaky kitchen cabinets

Loose kitchen cabinet doors can be dangerous especially if you have young infants and toddlers in the house. An open cabinet door means they can get their hands easily on something like fabric conditioner or worse rat kill! Definitely a horrifying thought. Follow these simple steps to fixing the cabinet door yourself.



- 🏠 First and foremost you need to choose your tools. To do this check to see what types of hinges are holding the door together? If the head of the hinge appears like a cross, choose a Phillips screw driver. And if the hinge head appears to be like a straight line opt for a flat head screw driver.
- 🏠 That done, next comes the interesting part. Align the cabinet door holding it in place as if nothing is wrong. You may want to ask somebody else to help you out here. Once the cabinet is held in place, using your chosen screwdriver, quickly tighten the screw back into its place. Lastly check to see if the door now opens and shuts smoothly. Ta da! Your work is done

Easy, breezy appliance installation - dishwashers

The new varieties of dishwashers are more user friendly, cost effective and environmentally friendly than those of yore. So if you have gone ahead and bought

yourself a dandy new dishwasher, it's time to save some dollars on the installation. The newer versions are far simpler to install; follow these easy steps and add those saved up dollars to your Porsche fund.

- 🏠 If you are just replacing an old dishwasher with a new one, start with shutting off the power from the electrical panel.
- 🏠 Next close the hot water valve from under the sink
- 🏠 To disconnect the old unit always unscrew the unit from the underside of the counter before you pull it out.
- 🏠 Once this is done, all you need to do is connect the new dishwasher to the same connections and you are ready to go.

QUICK TIP

You can further save energy by connecting the dishwasher to the cold water supply. The water will then be heated up in the dishwasher. This is more efficient because the heating element in the dishwasher uses less power than a water heater.

Your beautiful kitchen's sink & drain

The kitchen drain and sink are probably the quickest things to clog up. If this happens to you, read on ahead for some simple and effective means to clean up the mess.

- 🏠 To perform this simple function you must have a cup plunger handy
- 🏠 Place the cup plunger over the drain hole, making sure that the two are firmly packed together.
- 🏠 Plunge the hole with quick, sharp plunges. This basically means leveraging the wooden stick on top of the plunger in an up and down manner without the rubber plunger losing contact with the drain hole.
- 🏠 If you do this right, you will notice the drainage will start making a swallowing sound. This is a good sign. It means the stoppage is getting cleared up.

- 🏠 At this point remove the plunger and run some tepid water rapidly from the tap into the drain for 3-5 minutes.

Home appliances – Convenience with a smile

Electrical appliances need regular maintenance and care, to ensure long term use. Following are some tips to keep in mind when cleaning your electrical appliances.

- 🏠 Start with mild cleaning - Clean with a dry lint cloth every week or so. This will keep the appliance in tip top condition right from the start
- 🏠 You may want to ensure that the appliance is unplugged from its sockets when you are taking it apart for a thorough cleaning
- 🏠 Clean the areas which are non- electrical with a damp cloth or wet sponge soaked in warm water and soap. On the other hand never immerse parts like electrical cords, or the motor in water.
- 🏠 Every now and then check the electrical cords to chalk out damages, and to prevent buildups of dirt and grease. If the cords are damaged replace immediately. Wipe clean with a slightly damp cloth to get rid of dirt and grease on the cords.

Working woman's best friend! The food processor

If your food processor is beginning to smell like yesterdays pesto, it's time for a thorough cleaning. A good option for this is a tried and tested home remedy.

- 🏠 For this home remedy, mix a 1 to 1 ratio of baking soda and water. Store it in the bowl of the processor for 10-15 minutes. It will absorb odors.
- 🏠 Following this, dismantle the bowl from the processor and wash thoroughly with soap and water.
- 🏠 To clean the blades, use nylon brushes. These are safer to use than are hands. Be sure to dry all the pieces thoroughly to prevent bacteria growth or damage.

Calcium free electric kettles

Boiling a cup of tea could be your favorite way to relax, but cleaning the kettle off the lime scale and deposits after frequent use definitely does not fall within the same head. But of course the kettle needs to be cleaned or the lime scale may just become a part of your cup of tea every day. In order to do this, here is an easy to follow trick.

- 🏠 Fill half of the kettle with water and add a quarter cup of white vinegar. Let this mixture sit for 10 to 20 minutes.
- 🏠 After the kettle parts have soaked well in the water/vinegar mixture, clean the kettle with a soft dish sponge to gently remove any remaining deposits. The vinegar/water mix will have softened the deposits, which should be quite easy to remove.
- 🏠 Don't scrub the heating element, as this has a special coating to protect it.
- 🏠 Pour out all the water and calcium deposits from the kettle and rinse the kettle with plenty of cool fresh water.
- 🏠 Clean the outside of the kettle as needed.
- 🏠 You may want to let the kettle dry completely before using it again.

Read more:

<http://www.thisoldhouse.com/toh/asktoh/question/0,,216645,00.html>

Gardens & Outdoors

The exterior of your house is really the first thing anybody notices as they walk up to your house. A nice, clean exterior is far more welcoming than a gritty, dirty one. Additionally if the patio, driveway and garden all appear broken down, it does not send a good message to others about you.

May be its time you spring cleaned the outdoors. Once you have your checklist ready, here are some hints and tips to get started on your outdoor renovations.

Fence repairs

Wind, rain, snow, rot all serve to beat your fence down. If that is the case with your fence as well, read on for some quick fix-it tips.

- 🏠 Opt for rot-resistant lumber. Align the rails and make sure they are level.
- 🏠 Then fit a 2x4 snugly underneath the rails and nail it to the post with galvanized nails.
- 🏠 Caulk the top and sides of the new lumbar. This will also serve to keep out moisture.

Gutter repairs

Gutters usually get a beating during the winter months. Here are a few tips to repair small issues with the gutters

Patching a hole

If the gutters are gaping with a hole, rust may be the culprit. It is a good idea to patch any hole right away so it doesn't grow larger.

- 🏠 Clean all debris from the gutter. You can use a wide putty knife or plastic gutter scoop.
- 🏠 Next scrub the area clean with a stiff-bristle wire brush. It is advisable to wear gloves while doing this.
- 🏠 Clean the rust around the hole with an industrial grade rust cleaner

- 🏠 Paint on the area which is prone to rust.

Patio

The patio is a great place to relax. If your patio needs renovation or repair, here are some hints and guides to help you out.

- 🏠 To start repairing any cracks in the patio, clean the patio with an acid cleaner. This will help the new cement to attach securely to the old cement.
- 🏠 Buy a good quality epoxy and insert it inside a caulk gun.
- 🏠 Using the gun inject the epoxy into the cracks in the patio surface. Give each insertion some drying time.
- 🏠 Mix the concrete and apply a thin layer over the areas where the epoxy was inserted. You may want to let the area dry completely before walking on the patio.

Patio furniture

Patio furniture can be made of any material, but often people opt for plastic furniture due to its low cost and easy portability. If your plastic patio furniture has started to look old, explore these hints to re-paint it. You may not need to buy new furniture at all.

- 🏠 Wash the patio furniture with a sponge and some soapy water.
- 🏠 Sand the surface of the patio furniture gently with sandpaper. The rough surface which emerges will help the primer stick to the furniture.
- 🏠 Apply a coat of primer making sure it is as smooth as possible. You may want to select an adhesive based primer for this job.

Clean the furniture from time to time. Dirt can play a big role in deteriorating your furniture. Clean with material suitable for the furniture at hand.

- 🏠 Let the primer dry overnight, before you add paint on top.
- 🏠 Choose 100 percent acrylic exterior latex paint to paint the furniture. This will protect the furniture against the elements.

QUICK TIP

Cover your outdoor furniture with waterproof covers. This will protect against the rain and the sun.

Ponds and fountains maintenance

Ponds and fountains form a very attractive part of your landscaping strategy, but they need to be cleaned from time to time. Here are DIY tips to help you do that

- 🏠 To get rid of algae introduce some fish and plants into the pond. A good option is to plant water lilies. These help to restore a healthy balance to the pond.
- 🏠 Fight buildup in the ponds and fountains by adding a clarifier every time you refresh the water
- 🏠 Maintain the water level. This may require weekly monitoring specially in the summer months.

Lawn mowers

If your lawn mower has decided to stop working and it just won't start here are some ways to get it started again

- 🏠 Check to see if there is ample gas in the machine, or if the gas is viable. The gas may have gone bad. In this case a simple refurbishment of the gas should get the lawn mower going again.
- 🏠 If it runs and then starts sputtering, you may need a new air filter. You can buy a new air filter at the local hardware store. Follow the instructions on the pack to replace the old filter with the new one.

- 🏠 If gasoline gets into the oil filler simply drain it out. The little residue left over will quickly evaporate.

Lawn sprinklers

Lawn sprinklers can act up quite suddenly. Usually temperature changes are the culprits. Changes in temperature can cause breaks in the pipeline of a lawn-irrigation system. If this happens there is a simple enough method to fix the issue.

- 🏠 Shut off the sprinkler system from the main valve
- 🏠 Start digging around the same area as the broken pipeline.
- 🏠 Cut the broken pipe into sections using a hacksaw. Choose one of the pieces which would fit an expansion coupling.
- 🏠 Clean out the pipe to get rid of dirt and water
- 🏠 Apply PVC blue glue to the outside of the cut pipeline and the inside of the expansion coupling
- 🏠 Set the pipe and the coupling in place while the glue is still wet
- 🏠 Wait 10 or 15 minutes for the glue to dry before turning the water back on.

Planting trees

If gardening is your thing, you may want to plant a tree this year and chalk it off as one of your major achievements. If you decide to do this, here are a few tips to achieve the task.

- 🏠 Dig a shallow but broad hole. The width of the hole should be three times the diameter of the root ball
- 🏠 Identify the trunk flare where the roots spread at the base of the tree
- 🏠 Place the tree at the proper height above the hole. Make sure the tree is upright and straight. View it from several angles before proceeding further.
- 🏠 Once the tree is placed in the hole, start filling the hole with dirt. Simultaneously pack the soil around the base of the root ball

- 🏠 Lastly don't forget to mulch the base of the tree. Mulch is the organic matter applied to the area at the base of the tree and serves as a blanket to hold moisture.

Tree stump removal

The worst thing after a tree has been cut is the remaining stump. If you are unable to get professional help to remove it, don't worry. The task is as easy as ABC.

- 🏠 If you are removing the stump manually, the best tool to use is a mattock. Using the mattock, dig and chop your way under the root ball to the taproot.
- 🏠 Another alternative to physical labor is using naturally provided chemicals to cause the stump to rot over. These chemicals are nitrogen and water. The process might be a slow one but the result will be satisfactory. Mix the two ingredients together and apply amply over the stump from time to time.
- 🏠 You can also drill holes in the stump with a drill, and fill it up with the water and nitrogen mixture. Nitrogen may be difficult to source in pure form. A good idea is to opt for a fertilizer high in nitrogen content.
- 🏠 Once this is done cover the stump or wrap it in plastic wrap and apply mulch over it.

Landscaping

Landscaping adds color and flavor to your outdoors. If you are planning to do this yourself, here are some tips and guides to help you.

- 🏠 Opt for layering and planting the flower beds in 3 rows: a back row which will have the tallest plants, a middle row and a front row which will have the shortest plants.
- 🏠 Trim frequently; many yard plants fill out with new growth after a season. It is a good idea to trim down growths regularly.

Swimming pool repair

Who does not love a good swim in the pool? And if the pool is in your backyard, life couldn't get any better. But sometimes the pool may need a quick repair like the drain getting clogged. In this case you can be the savior and repair or renovate it yourself. Here's how to do that.

- 🏠 Sometimes concrete, sod or top soil may get clogged within the interiors of the drain, causing the flow of water to stop.
- 🏠 To clean the drain, open one end of the channel.
- 🏠 Open water into this channel through a hose. You may want to ensure that the hose is turned on to about half-flow only
- 🏠 Once the channel gets cleared up off the debris, you can make this the permanent flow of the water replacing the hose with a PVC pipe. This PVC pipe then needs to be directed to a distant point and buried in the ground.

Driveway repair

Although the driveway is usually covered by cars, nonetheless regular repair and maintenance is required. Here a few tips to repair the cracks in the driveway

- 🏠 Clean and prep the area for repair. Sweep away any debris and use a cleaning solution to remove any spilt engine oil.
- 🏠 Apply a generous helping of crack filler into the cracks. You may want to use a putty knife to smooth out the filler. Make sure the filler is smoothed flat onto the driveway.
- 🏠 Apply a primer onto the repaired surface. Next apply a good quality sealant. This will make the repair more durable.

Awning and canopies

Awning and canopies are easy enough to repair. All you need are a few tools and these DIY tips.

- 🏠 If the awning stops retracting, test the batteries. If batteries are dead recharge or replace the batteries as necessary.
- 🏠 To retract your awning manually, undo the straps on the awning.
- 🏠 Next loosen the tension arm latch and lower it
- 🏠 Push the awning into the open position.

Ripped Canopy

- 🏠 If the canopy has developed small rips you can use industrial adhesive tape to repair it.
- 🏠 If the tears are too big to be taped together, you may need to replace the awning.
- 🏠 To do this unhook the canopy from its metal hooks and slide it off.
- 🏠 Buy a new canopy which is the same size as the old one.
- 🏠 If the new canopy is bigger than the old one, you can quickly resize it by tracing the old one onto the new one.
- 🏠 Then cut the new canopy to size it to the same size as the old one
- 🏠 Create holes in the same place as the old canopy, and hook it onto the canopy hooks.

Plasters

Plasters are a simple DIY task. Here are some hints and guides to help you get started.

- 🏠 For outdoors choose a cement based plaster, and for the interiors use a gypsum based plaster
- 🏠 Always mix the plaster in a non-reactive container. Add the water first and then add the plaster slowly. Mix these two ingredients well with a wooden mixer.

- 🏠 Always apply two coats of plaster instead of one and wait for the plaster to dry completely before you apply the second coat.
- 🏠 Next polish the plaster to achieve the perfect finish

Read more:

<http://tlc.howstuffworks.com/home/how-to-repair-a-wood-fence1.htm>

http://www.treesaregood.com/treecare/tree_planting.aspx

Appliances & durables

Indoor Heating

Heating up the indoors is definitely an expensive task; but it is a necessity nonetheless. There are though a couple of ways to heighten the temperature indoors without running up the energy bill. Here are some hints to achieve this.

Hint of the Day: Vent Dryer Heat Indoors

To achieve this, follow this simple procedure

- 🏠 First disconnect the dryer vent pipe from the outside vent opening
- 🏠 Next close the open end of the vent pipe with a vacuum cleaner bag. Secure the bag to the end of the pipe by undoing the top of the bag and attaching it to the vent pipe with a wire clamp
- 🏠 Now to warm up the indoors, use a fan to direct the warm air from the laundry area into the house. This is definitely one time of the year you won't hate to do the laundry.

No applause necessary; read on to find more helpful tips on heating up your interiors in a cost effective manner.

QUICK TIP:

You can warm up cold bathroom floors with electric in-floor heating mats. These mats are easily available and are comparatively less expensive than increasing the thermostat. Electric in-floor heating mats are installed under the tiles, and can easily warm up the entire bathroom.

Ventilation

Ventilating the interior of the house is extremely important both for hygiene and sanities sake. Some quick tips to remember when choosing and installing ventilation are as follows:

- 🏠 Install the fan as near or directly over the shower as possible to capture moisture immediately.
- 🏠 The exhaust fan should terminate outside. It should not be allowed to terminate in the crawlspace or attic.
- 🏠 The venting pipe which leads to the outside should be pointed downwards. This prevents rain or debris from entering the house through the pipe.

Air-conditioning

Just like heating is important in the cold weather, likewise air conditioning is also extremely important during the summer months. If the air-conditioning suddenly pulls a stop on you, don't worry. It could be a simple problem, which you can easily fix yourself.

- 🏠 First check to see if the compressor is running. If the compressor does not turn on within five minutes of switching on the AC, it could either be a bad fuse, a wiring problem, or the AC could be low on refrigerant (also known as AC gas).
- 🏠 If you suspect bad wiring, you will have to replace the wiring completely. It is important that you do this quickly, as there may be a chance that the wiring could cause a short circuit leading to a fire.

- 🏠 If you suspect that the AC has run out of refrigerant, all you need to do is to call in a supplier who will refill the AC gas at minimal cost.

Intercoms – the Home Mobiles

Intercoms provide a good way to remain connected within the house and the outside of the house. In case the intercom stops functioning properly here are a few tips to diagnose and repair it.

Get rid of dust on the intercom system with a cloth dipped in rubbing alcohol. You can also use lens cleaner for the same purpose.

Assess the Buzzer

If the buzzer won't ring, it could be that the button has lived its life and needs replacement.

- 🏠 If the button itself appears fine (no sign of excessive use), then check the wiring below the button. The wires must be attached properly to the button. You may want to take this opportunity to do a bit of spring cleaning and get rid of the dust.

Assess the Transformer

- 🏠 If the intercom is not ringing or the sound of the chime echoes faintly, then you may need to work on the transformer
- 🏠 It could be that the wires of the transformer have come loose. In this case you will need to tighten the wires by using a screwdriver.

Alarm & Security systems

Security systems are meant to provide security to the members of the house. In case the system turns faulty you may want to fix it on priority. Here are a few tips in case you decide to DIY:

- 🏠 Disconnect the main power from the control panel
- 🏠 Open the control panel and identify the global tamper terminal and the connector strip on the PCB

- 🏠 Disassemble the wires at the connector strip and identify the tamper pairs from each circuit.
- 🏠 Test each pair of tamper wires using a continuity tester until the pair at fault is found.
- 🏠 Once the faulty circuit is found, you can replace the circuit and repair the damage to the connector strip.

Lighting

Lighting should ideally light up your life at the flick of a switch. If the lights stop doing that you can fix them with some easy, breezy DIY tips:

- 🏠 If you need to replace the fixture first flip the breaker off and verify that there is no electricity running within it any more.
- 🏠 Unscrew the existing fixture.
- 🏠 To attach the new fixture, first attach any mounting bracket that came along with your new fixture. Attach this to the electrical unit.
- 🏠 Connect the wires from the old fixture to your new fixture. You may also want to inspect the wires to see if any are damaged and need replacement. If that is the case, replace the wire before attaching the new fixture or its mounting bracket.
- 🏠 Screw in the bulb and then turn on the circuit breaker, and Voila, you can see the light again!

A compact fluorescent bulb or a halogen bulb uses lower wattage and conserves energy

Grill and barbecue repairs

Barbecues and grills are most used in the summers. Therefore the winter months are a good opportunity to service the grill or repair the barbecue. To do this start with these hints and guides

- 🏠 Inspect the grill and all its various parts. Inspect the electrical cord. Chewed, strained or frayed wires can cause the grill to stop functioning. To repair the cord, unplug the grill and strip the insulation back just a little bit.
- 🏠 Trim or replace any unusable wire. Use electrical tape to join the wires together and clamp them onto the unit.
- 🏠 If you feel that the grill itself is not lighting up, it could be that a fuse has blown.
- 🏠 To fix this you will have to pull the grill apart bit by bit.
- 🏠 After you are done you will find a small thermal fuse on the brown live wire. This fuse will have to be replaced with a new one. You can buy a new fuse at the local hard ware store.
- 🏠 Replace the dead fuse with a new 240 degrees C fuse.

Read more:

<http://www.familyhandyman.com/DIY-Projects/Saving-Money/Energy->

http://www.icanfixupmyhome.com/How_To_Install_Pendant_Light.html#ixzz13v1UE3Bu

Bathrooms

Bathrooms are probably the last thing attended to in a house. Yet a clean bathroom keeps a lot of the germs at bay. If you are facing some plumbing or renovation issues in your washrooms, here are some guidelines to attend to them quickly.

Ceramics

- 🏠 Start with buying the replacement tiles and the replacement grout
- 🏠 Use a flat chisel and a hammer to break apart the tiles you need to replace.
- 🏠 Next clean out the place properly. Get rid of any dust or grime. This is important to ensure that the new tile adheres well to the floor.

- 🏠 Set the new tile in place of the old one. You may need to check that the new tile fits flush in place of the old one. If it is bigger, try another tile. If it is smaller, there's nothing that some grout cannot fix.
- 🏠 Mix the grout according to the instructions on the pack. Put some on the spot where the new tile will be placed.
- 🏠 Set the new tile on top of the grout. Add some more grout on the outer edges to set the tile properly.
- 🏠 Use this procedure to place all the new tiles. Let the grout and tiles dry. If there is some residue on the face of the tile, you can easily clean it with some soapy water after the new tile is set dry.



Fixtures – The Shower

Repairing the shower is definitely an achievement. So if you want something to flaunt about this weekend, here are some tips to assist you in repairing some fixtures in your bathroom.

- 🏠 First turn the water off from the source
- 🏠 Next drain the water from the pipes. You can do this by running the shower and tap full throttle simultaneously
- 🏠 To access the valve of the shower, pop off the valve cap
- 🏠 Hidden behind the valve will be the valve screw. Unscrew it and remove the cover plate of the shower
- 🏠 Next pull off the u-shaped retainer clip
- 🏠 You will now be able to see the cartridge below. Grasp the cartridge with locking pliers and pull straight out
- 🏠 Next open the water line to flush out any dirt in the valve
- 🏠 Clean the cartridge with a toothbrush, and place it back. Replace the screw and the valve with some new items.
- 🏠 Your shower should work like brand new now.

Plumbing

Plumbers are in hot demand. But unless you find a Mike lookalike (from Desperate Housewives) why not try to fix the issue yourself.

- 🏠 Check the flush mode or chain on the tank. If the chain is twisted simply straighten it.
- 🏠 Next open the lid of the tank and check the float mechanism. If the ball has water in it, you will need to replace it. You can do this by unscrewing it from the arm and putting a new one in its place.
- 🏠 If these do not solve the problem, check the valve seat and stopper. They may have gotten damaged or dirty. Gently scour the area. If this still does not solve the problem you may need to replace the stopper and valve seat.



Bathtub and sink

The bathtub and sink, better known as the wash-up areas should always be functioning properly. In case they start leaking, follow these simple guidelines to repair the leaks yourself.

- 🏠 Remove the accessories for hot and cold water from the fixture
- 🏠 These are usually screwed onto the wall in a clockwise direction. Just unscrew them in a counter clockwise direction
- 🏠 Once done you will see the pivot nut below. Tighten the pivot nut to stop any leakages.
- 🏠 If this does not solve the issue at hand, you may need to replace the stopper. In case you need to replace the stopper, go under the sink and loosen the pivot nut.

- 🏠 Next, pull out the pivot arm. The stopper will be free and you can replace it with another stopper.

Read more:

<http://www.naturalhandyman.com/iip/infplumb/infpopup.html>

http://www.ehow.com/how_4874160_repair-bathroom-floor-tiles.html

Living areas

Furniture repair

Frequently used spaces like living rooms and dining areas can often have broken furniture. Chairs tend to suffer a bit more than other furniture due to the variety of different weights that they bear on their legs. If that is the case with some chairs in your house too, here are a few quick repair tips for loose legs and spindles

- 🏠 Chairs on which no bracing is used, loose legs can be mended by forcing glue into the joints. This is not the most durable technique.
- 🏠 For more long term results, carefully separate the broken part from the frame.
- 🏠 Carefully remove any old adhesive. You may want to ensure that you don't resize the piece in any way otherwise it won't fit into the same space again. Apply strong industrial grade glue onto the two ends and clamp them together. Let the glue dry completely before use.

Wooden furniture and accessories

If wooden furniture and accessories need repair and are not attended to on time they are liable to fall apart sooner. Therefore it is essential that you attend to them earlier rather than later.

- 🏠 If you are faced with loose joints, quickly reinforcing them with glue may do the trick both in the short and the long term. This is because the strong glue will hold the currently loose pieces together firmly. And the structural strength of the wooden piece will not get affected.
Another efficient way to repair wooden pieces is to use a screw within the two broken parts. This method albeit a bit tedious can be used when there is a chance that the adhesive might not be invisible to the eye.
- 🏠 For this choose a long screw and align the joint. Next drill a pilot hole for the screw. Coat the screw with glue, and drive it into the joint so that it pulls the joint tightly together. Then tighten the screw firmly.

The Looking Glass

The biggest nightmare for the lady of the house is probably when the champagne glasses break. The thought itself is probably so horrible that you are cringing while reading this text. But don't worry. There are simple means to repair this horrific occurrence.

- 🏠 Hold the stem of the glass in place.
- 🏠 Carefully add transparent industrial grade adhesive between the two broken parts.
- 🏠 Then gently wrap strips of masking tape around the cup or glass.
- 🏠 Hold the glass in this repaired state for a while at least until the glue dries.
You and your spouse might want to take turns doing this

Cracked crockery

Similar to a broken glass is the incidence of broken crockery, especially if it threatens to ruin your otherwise complete dinner set. Here are a few tips to mend the broken crockery.

- 🏠 Fill a pan with sand.

- 🏠 Place the broken crockery piece into the sand in manner that the broken part is facing upwards against gravity.
- 🏠 Next add transparent industrial glue onto the two broken parts and place them together.
- 🏠 Hold them in place until the glue dries

Fabric cleaning

Dirty upholstery is never a pleasant sight. To clean fabric when you cannot remove it or use water can be a bit challenging. Use these next few hints and tips to clean fabric without using water.

- 🏠 Buy dry-cleaning cloths.
- 🏠 Gently rub the soiled upholstery. It is advisable to rub gently if the material is silk. If it's a tougher material you can rub more vigorously
- 🏠 The dry cloth will pick up dirt and stains.
- 🏠 You may need to replace the cloth from time to time in order to keep the fabric from staining

If you have the option of using water, here are some simple steps to follow

- 🏠 Get foaming upholstery cleaner
- 🏠 You can purchase it either from a supermarket or from the local automotive store. Follow the directions on the label. Simply spray the cleaner on the soiled areas.
- 🏠 It should foam up by itself.
- 🏠 Rub it in with a clean white rag.
- 🏠 Let it dry and vacuum the dirt away.

Stain removal

Stains are probably even worse than dirt. Stains have history. People can easily tell what you ate, what you dropped and whatever else happened. Follow these simple steps to ensure your private life remains private.

How to remove ink stains? Here is the easy solution

Although ink stains are the most stubborn to remove, it still cannot beat the power of three. That is salt, baking soda, and lemon juice. Mix in equal proportions and rub on the stain. You may need to add a bit of luke warm water and rub vigorously

Christmas, Gravy & Grease

If you just had a nice dinner and dropped some greasy gravy on your clothes don't let it spoil your mood. Simply cover the fresh stain with salt. Let the fabric absorb as much of the grease as possible. Wait for 5 minutes and then shake off the salt. If the stain is still visible, dab it with some vinegar dipped cotton wool.

Carpets

Oh the horror of dropping something on a carpet! Surely the stain will never come out. But wait, we have the solution.

- 🏠 Firstly don't rub the stain vigorously, which is what most people resort to doing. Rubbing will only make it worse and will ruin the quality of your carpet from that spot.
- 🏠 To get rid of the carpet stain, cover the it with a thick cloth and weigh down with something heavy. Allow this to rest overnight. The cloth will absorb most of the substance staining the carpet. This will work best if you apply this tactic immediately after the staining incidence.
- 🏠 One of the worst things to do is to try to dry the carpet with an iron or a hair dryer. These will cause the stain to become more permanent.
- 🏠 For fairly obstinate stains like mold and mildew, you can choose between non-chlorine bleach or a lemon juice and salt solution.
- 🏠 Another resourceful trick is to use a solution of hydrogen peroxide (one part of 3 percent hydrogen peroxide to five parts of water) on the stain. Rub gently and let air dry.

Wallpaper removal and cleaning

Wallpaper can be quite cumbersome to remove, especially if the residue is the stubborn kind. Here are a few tricks to save time on removing wall paper.

- 🏠 Soften the paste underneath the paper with hot water and a sponge
- 🏠 Scrape the paper off and clean the residue with 1 cup vinegar mixed with 1 gallon of water
- 🏠 If the residue still does not come off then use 3 gallons of very hot water added to 1 bottle of wallpaper remover with reactive enzymes. You can buy this from your local supermarket.



Figure 4:www.homeservicesengine.com

Window and shades cleaning

Drapes and windows require a thorough cleaning from time to time. The longer the time between cleanings the more the dust which tends to get lodged into the fabric.

To prevent this use a handheld vacuum with a soft brush attachment to clean the drapes weekly.

If the curtains are labeled washable then you can choose to wash them either in a washing machine or by hand. Keep these few tips in mind when you are washing drapes and curtains

- 🏠 Use a short, gentle cycle in the machine.
- 🏠 Always use cool water and mild detergent
- 🏠 Rinse thoroughly and gently. You can then line-dry them but never in direct sunlight. Or you can tumble-dry on a delicate setting.
- 🏠 When dry iron if needed, but always on the reverse side.

Laminate and wood flooring

Wood flooring tends to give a very luxurious and warm feeling to your living areas. But in case the floor gets damaged it can be a tad expensive to get it repaired. Explore if you can do a good job replacing laminate floor boards yourself with these easy DIY tips

- 🏠 First remove the molding near the floorboard. You can do this using a screwdriver or hammer.
- 🏠 Remove the boards adjacent to the damaged board.
- 🏠 Place a new board into the same place as the damaged one. Place all the boards back into place one by one
- 🏠 Replace the molding by pounding it into place with a hammer. Easy as ABC

Door repairs

Doors too can get damaged due to frequent use or weather conditions. Some simple ways to renovate doors at a fraction of the professional repair cost are as follows.

Splits in Doors

Visible splits in the door or the panels of the door should be repaired with glue as soon as the splits appear.

Sagging or Binding Doors

If the door starts to sag or hang, it usually means the hinges have come loose. In this case inspect the hinges. If they need oiling a quick tap from an oil gun should do the trick. If one of the hinges has come loose, use a relevant screwdriver to tighten the screw back into the hinge. While doing this simple task, you may also

want to check the condition of the hinges to make sure they don't need to be replaced.

Read more:

<http://tlc.howstuffworks.com/home/how-to-repair-wooden-furniture1.htm>

<http://www.catalogs.com/info/home-improvements/how-to-remove-wallpaper.html>

The Garage

Garage Door Acting Funny?

Garage doors function on spring tension. If the door stops working properly it is relatively easy to fix. Here are some helpful repair tips:

First the diagnosis; there could be one of these few things wrong with the garage door

- 🏠 The metal tracks inside the door may not be functioning smoothly. This could be because the mountings which hold the tracks to the walls could be loose. If this is the case tighten these immediately by bolting the screws tightly.
- 🏠 The tracks could be misaligned. If this is the case, loosen the screws holding the mounting brackets. Next tap the tracks carefully into position and tighten the screws of the mounting brackets.
- 🏠 The tracks could be excessively dirty. If that is the case, clean the tracks with household cleaner to remove dirt and hardened grease. You may also want to lubricate the tracks with a good quality

If the door is not opening at all you may want to check the sensors. The sensors of the door may be out of alignment or there may be an obstruction.

lubricant spray.

QUICK TIP

If you get stuck inside the garage and the door won't open, check the emergency release mechanism. All electric garage door openers have this emergency release mechanism. This enables you to manually open your garage door if your electricity goes out.

Read more:

concretesealers.com

<http://www.wikihow.com/>

Basement

Basement repair

Basements form the foundation of any house. A weak basement therefore is never the ideal situation. Cracks and leaks coming out of the basement floor may result in weakening the structure of the house further. Fortunately repairing the basement is not a very difficult task and with some handy tips and tools, you can even opt to do it yourself.

Repairing Cracks

- ✚ Before repairing the cracks it is a good idea to clean out any debris that is lodged in the cracks. You can use any screw driver for this purpose. To finish off the cleaning process, use an air compressor to blow out and thoroughly clean the cracks.
- ✚ To fill out the cracks use a pre-caulking spray. Spray it generously over the cracks. You will need to leave a thick layer on the cracks.
- ✚ Next use a metal spreader to spread cement caulking over and inside the cracks.
- ✚ You may want to ensure a smooth finish between the previous floor and the caulking. To achieve this, scrape off as much of the caulking as possible with the metal spreader.
- ✚ Let the caulking dry for an hour.
- ✚ If the result is not as smooth as you would have liked, use sandpaper to grate the excess caulking down.
- ✚ Next coat the entire cracked portion of the floor with a good quality concrete sealant.

Pool tables

Pool tables are great for a fun night with the boys. Occasionally the lady of the house and her friends might make use of it too. But if the fabric tears, you have got a slight problem on your hands. Fortunately you can easily replace the felt yourself. Here are a few tips to help you do that.

- ✚ To start off unscrew the bolts holding the bumpers of the table. Remove all bumpers, screws and bolts one by one and put them aside. You may also want to label them so that you know which goes where when you are finished putting in the new fabric.
- ✚ You will see some staples holding the old felt in place. Carefully pry these open, so as not to damage any part of the table.

- 🏠 Buy some new fabric, and trace the ends of the bumpers onto it. Cut out the fabric within this shape. Glue the fabric in place and allow the glue to dry.
- 🏠 Replace the bumpers with the same bolts and screws.

Read more:

<http://www.housecleaning-tips.com>

<http://www.diynetwork.com/how-to/>

Others

Painting

DIY painting is definitely more cost effective than hiring a professional and it is easy enough to do. Before you proceed to painting, here are a few simple things to keep in mind

- 🏠 First wash down the wall with a suitable detergent to remove any dust and debris. If there are any cracks or holes in the plaster, you may want to repair them first. If the wall has holes or cracks the new paint job will not be able to achieve as smooth a finish as required.
- 🏠
- 🏠 You can use plaster to fill in any cracks. Just make sure to fill in excess plaster and then sand it down after it dries. This achieves a smoother finish.
- 🏠
- 🏠 To start painting, mix the paint in a non-reactive bucket. If you are using a brush to paint the wall, start by painting along the top of the wall. Keep the edge of the brush tight to the ceiling and use firm steady strokes.
- 🏠 You will need to apply a second coat to achieve a smooth finish

Locks

Locks have a funny tendency to get stuck sometimes. Or in other circumstances you may lose the key and may have forgotten to put an extra one under the mat after you gave the previous one to your ex-girlfriend. Well if that's case, here is a free license to pick locks (it's all right, we checked. It's ok to pick your own locks)

- 🏠 First you need a sharp substance like a hairpin or a paper clip. You will also need a small screwdriver.
- 🏠 Use the screw driver to put pressure on the lock cylinder.
- 🏠 Simultaneously, move the paper clip in and out of the lock slowly. Gently press the base pins, until you can see the pins reaching the shear line. Once this is done you will hear a click sound and viola, the lock will fall open.
- 🏠 It can be difficult in the beginning, but with practice you can become an excellent picklock. Now if only that was a legal occupation, right?

Odor control and elimination

Odor control is a very important issue. I don't think neighbors and people walking into your home would like to be welcomed by the smell of stewing cabbage or the likes. Therefore controlling and eliminating odor should be a top priority. Here are some tips to do that.

- 🏠 Start with emptying out the kitchen cabinets and closets. As each item is brought out, check to see if the lids are capped tightly or if any container is leaking. You may also want to check if any item has expired or has gone rotten.
- 🏠 Throw out all of the items which fall under this category

- 🏠 Then use dish soap to wash all the containers including the bottles and canned food items. You can place the tightly capped items into a bucket filled with soapy water.
- 🏠 For the items which you cannot place into a bucket, wipe them down with a damp rag.
- 🏠 Replace all the shelf liners with fresh ones. Before you place the new liners wipe down the shelves with a damp cloth and spray some disinfectant.
- 🏠 You can also spray the inside of the cabinets with an antibacterial surface cleaner, and use a scrub brush to remove dust, dirt and other residue.
- 🏠 It would be advisable to keep the cabinet doors open for some time to allow the cupboards to dry and air out.

QUICK TIP

You can place a small box of baking soda in the corner of a cabinet or closet. It will absorb odors, but don't forget to replace it every month with a new one.

Pest control

A crucial task! Pests are unhygienic, smelly and well much like pests should be. Here are a few tips to get rid of the parasites from your beautiful home.

Mosquitoes

Mosquitoes are the number one pests in this world. They are annoying and can bite you leaving you with itchy welts. Some household tips to get rid of them are

- 🏠 Use rosemary to drive them away. Rosemary has a scent that repels mosquitoes.
- 🏠 Marigolds also repel bugs, so you may want to plant a shrub of rosemary in your garden.

- 🏠 Lastly make sure there is no water standing outside your home. Standing water is the number one attraction for mosquitoes.

Cockroaches

Cockroaches are deemed to be the only creature which can survive a nuclear explosion. Therefore getting rid of them may not be an easy task. But here are some handy solutions to keep them at bay

- 🏠 Use boric acid wherever you feel they can house. Sprinkle it generously in dark places like bathroom corners, closets and over gutters.
- 🏠 Catnip is also an excellent cockroach repeller. They hate the smell of catnip, therefore spread it generously in places which you feel are safe havens for these creepy crawlies.
- 🏠 And despite all of these measures, if you do see a cockroach in the house, spray it with some soapy water. It will die instantly.

If you suddenly find ants in your house, pour some cayenne pepper in front of where they are entering from. Ants are scared to cross cayenne pepper, garlic or lemon juice.

Read more:

http://www.essortment.com/home/papercliplock_sdfc.htm

http://www.helpwithdiy.com/painting/painting_interior_walls.html

Precautions

So you are all prepped for your DIY tasks around your home. Glad we could help!

Here are just a few tips to keep things safer and simpler for you.

- 🏠 Keep all tools in good condition with regular maintenance.
- 🏠 Use the right tool for the job.
- 🏠 Examine each tool for damage before use.
- 🏠 Operate tools according to the manufacturers' instructions.
- 🏠 Provide and properly use the right personal protective equipment like goggles, ear protection, proper footwear, and gloves
- 🏠 Perform regular maintenance to ensure your tools are working properly
- 🏠 Be sure to clean all your tools after each job and inspect them for wear and/or damage

DIY tool kit

Here a list of some essential and some nice-to-have tools for your own DIY home repair tool kit.

- 🏠 Hammer
- 🏠 Pry bar
- 🏠 Vise grips
- 🏠 Needle-nose pliers
- 🏠 Screwdrivers
- 🏠 Wire cutter/stripper
- 🏠 Tape measure (16-foot)
- 🏠 Electrical tester
- 🏠 Reversible drill with bit set
- 🏠 1/2-inch steel chisels
- 🏠 Utility knife
- 🏠 Handsaw
- 🏠 Safety glasses
- 🏠 Staple gun
- 🏠 Clamps
- 🏠 Paint brush
- 🏠 Putty knife

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