

Tips From

www.Handi-Women.com

Hands-On Home Repair Classes For Women Only

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Imagine...What you can do!



These tips from **Handi-Women** are sorted by topic alphabetically for easy reference. Use this booklet as a guide to help you perform basic repairs around the home. Please make sure you fully understand each tip before beginning any repair. By accepting this helpful booklet you agree to hold **Handi-Women LLC** harmless from any damage, injury or death incurred while attempting to perform any of the included tips. If you are not sure how to perform a repair safely, please contact **Handi-Women LLC** for further assistance, before proceeding.

Cars:

Sometimes even our most faithful companion lets us down. Do you know what to do when your car won't start? If you turn the key and the engine makes no sound or a clicking sound, you probably need a battery boost from another car.

Caution: Hooking the cables up incorrectly or allowing the positive cable to touch any part of the car other than the intended terminal could cause batteries to explode, resulting in injury or death. Identify the positive (+) and negative (-) posts on both batteries. Now, attach each end of the red jumper cable to the positive battery terminal, (+) on each battery. Connect one end of the black cable to the negative (-) terminal of the good battery. Start the jumper car and connect the remaining end of the black cable to the negative (-) terminal of the dead battery. Let the good battery charge the dead battery for a few minutes before attempting to start the second car. When the second car is started, carefully remove the cables in the reverse order. **Remember to keep your hands clear of fans and moving parts at all times. Fans can start rotating at any time without warning.**

Caulking:

Choosing the correct caulk for a particular job can seem like a daunting task. Here we will sort it all out. If you are working in the bathroom choose a silicone tub and tile caulk. The tub and tile caulk will resist the growth of mold and mildew. **Do not use this type of caulk around food handling areas unless the manufacturer specifically allows it.** For windows and doors that do not need to be painted use a regular silicone caulk. For areas that will be painted use a siliconized latex caulk, but be sure to check the label for paintability. Always check the expiration date on the tube of caulk before using. Silicone caulk that is too old will never cure, leaving you with a gooey mess to remove and replace. Old latex caulk will be hard to apply.



Caulking, especially along the tub can become old, moldy or mildewed with time. You can replace this caulking in a couple of hours. Start by cutting away as much old caulking as possible with a razor knife. Next clean the remaining caulking from hard surfaces with a painter's razor scraper. Clean the remaining residue with denatured alcohol and allow to dry. **Caution: Provide adequate ventilation and follow the manufacturer's directions when using any solvent including alcohol.** Now apply painters tape to the wall as close as possible to the tub. Tape the tub to create an even caulk line. Use a fresh tube

of Tub and Tile Caulk. Tub and tile caulk resists mold and mildew better than other kinds. Cut the tip of the caulk tube at an angle. Apply a thin bead of caulk between the lines of tape. Wearing disposable gloves, smooth the caulk bead with a finger and immediately remove the tape. Re-smooth the bead of caulk with your finger and allow to dry as directed by the instructions on the tube. Smooth caulk joints will not hold water and will add to the mold resistance.

Cleaning:

Do you want to remove soap scum from the shower? Do you hate to use strong chemicals? Try sponging white vinegar onto the surface of the tub, the tub surround glass doors etc. Let the vinegar soak into the white soap film, until it appears dry. Dip a stiff bristle brush in a dish of vinegar and scrub the affected areas briskly. Rinse the entire area with very warm water. Repeat the entire process until the soap scum has been entirely removed. The more often you remove the soap film, the less effort it will require each time.



If your shower is not working as well as it used to, try cleaning the shower head. Use an adjustable wrench to remove the shower head from the extension pipe coming from the wall. Wrap the extension pipe with a rag to prevent marring and use slip joint pliers to prevent it from unscrewing while removing the shower head. Once you have removed the shower head, place it in a glass or plastic bowl and cover it in white vinegar and soak overnight. Then, clean the showerhead with an old toothbrush. Repeat if required. Wrap the threads of the extension pipe with Teflon tape, available at the hardware or home center store. Reinstall the shower head and tighten with your adjustable wrench.



We all hate to see mildew buildup in the toilet bowl. One way to prevent it is by placing commercial chlorine based toilet cleaners in the tank. The drawback is that chlorine based cleaners are corrosive; they may shorten the life of metallic parts and the flapper in the toilet tank. If you use these products and find that you have to replace the flapper or other parts a little too often, consider removing them even if it means cleaning the bowl more often.

Energy Efficiency:

Energy efficiency not only helps the environment, it saves us money as well. Many electronic appliances use transformers in line with the power cord to reduce the operating voltage. These transformers can be little black-boxes in line with the power cord or they may have a box shaped plug that plugs into the wall outlet. Transformers are commonly used to charge cell phones and to power computers accessories such as speakers and printers. Transformers use a considerable amount of electricity whenever they are plugged in. A charger that stays plugged in all the time is using electricity all the time. By unplugging you cell phone charger, when not in use, you can save money while helping to reduce global warming. By plugging computer accessories into a switched

power strip, you can turn off the power strip when the computer is not in use effectively unplugging several power wasting transformers at one time.



Insulating exposed hot water pipes coming from the heating system and hot water tank is an easy and inexpensive way to reduce your energy bills, and improve comfort. Preformed foam insulating sleeves come various sizes at hardware and home center stores. They can easily be cut with scissors or a utility knife. For elbows, cut the sleeve at a 45 degree angle and rotate the insulation for the best fit. Duct tape can be added to ensure tight seams if desired. As a rule, copper pipes found in the home are usually 1/2" copper pipe from the water heater and 3/4" pipe from the heating system. If you are not certain try a piece of insulation for best fit. **Caution: Keep insulation at least 12" from any furnace or water heater flue pipe.**



High efficiency furnace and air conditioner filters can significantly reduce the amount of dust in your home. In addition using a high efficiency filter can reduce the need to clean the ducts in your home. When changing the filter, match the direction of flow arrow on the filter with the arrow on the filter housing. If the housing is not marked, notice arrow on the old filter and install the new filter facing the same direction. As a double check, look at the old filter. The arrow should be facing the cleaner side of the filter since the air-flow will be to the back of the arrow. Orient the new filter so that the arrow points in the direction of air-flow. Make sure to keep the filters clean. A dirty filter that creates additional air flow restriction could cause performance problems



When the weather is hot or cold or rainy, we want get into our cars and back into the house as quickly as possible. It is easy to forget about the tires on our car. All tires lose air over time. As the outside temperature drops, the pressure inside the tires decreases further. So, if the last time you checked the tire pressure it was 75 degrees outside and a couple of months have passed, your tires could be quite low. Low tire pressure will cause the tires to lose traction when you need it most such as on wet roads. Stopping distances will increase and braking can become erratic on wet roads. Low tire pressure will also cause the tires to wear out prematurely. So, when it is cold outside, don't forget your tires. You have a lot riding on them.

Fresh look:

You can give your old ceiling fan a new look, with just a screw driver and a little imagination. Remove the two screws holding each fan blade and bracket from the fan motor, and remove the blades. Now remove the three screws holding each blade to its bracket. This is where imagination comes in. You can simply flip the blades over for a new look, spray paint or stencil them or simply buy new blades at the local home center. If you opt for new blades, take one of the old blades with you to match up with the same size blade, as they come in various

sizes. While you are at it, try replacing the globes for a new look or simply wash the old ones and wipe off the light bulbs.



You can re-cover your padded kitchen chairs easily at home with any fabric you choose. Start by turning the chair upside down on the table and removing the four screws that hold the seat to the frame. Set the chair frame aside while we focus on the seat. Using a screwdriver and pliers, remove all of the staples holding the existing fabric to the seat. Use the old fabric as pattern to cut the new fabric to size. Place the fabric face down and lay the seat on top of it face down as well. Using short (1/4" or 5/16") staples, staple the front edge of the fabric to the underside of the seat starting from the center and working out to the ends. Pull the fabric tightly and staple the opposite end in the same manner. Repeat the process on the two sides, folding the corners over to give a nice finished look. Set your chair frame back up on the seat and re-install the four screws. Repeat this process 3 more times, sit down with your favorite beverage, and admire your work.

General:

Need a pair of disposable gloves in a hurry? Try this in a pinch! Use a couple of long plastic bags, like the ones that bread or newspapers come in. (The bread bags are heavier and therefore offer more protection.) Slip them over your hands and arms before tackling those nasty jobs. When you are finished just roll them down your arm and they will end up with the yucky stuff inside, while your hands remain clean.

Household Repairs:

Loose door hinges can sometimes be repaired simply by tightening the screws. When screws on a wooden door, will no longer tighten up, try this little tip. Remove the screws one at a time and fill the holes with toothpicks covered in glue. White household glue will work, but wood glue is stronger and dries faster. Break the toothpicks flush with the wood surface. Re-install the screws, right through the toothpicks, and tighten. The screws will now stay put and the hinges will stay in place.



You can save money by changing locks yourself. But doing the work yourself is only a bargain if you install a lock that meets your needs. Locks are rated according to operation, security, material and finish by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). ANSI Grade 1 is the strongest residential lock available. Grade 2 is rated for intermediate residential security and Grade 3 is rated for basic residential security. When shopping for locks, be sure to compare locks with the same ANSI Grade.



Drilling into ceramic tile to hang a towel rack or other bathroom accessory can seem like a daunting task. But you can do it. All you need is a drill with a

good quality masonry drill bit and some plastic wall anchors. Ask a hardware sales person to show you the right drill bit for the wall anchors you will be using. The first step is to cover the area to be drilled with masking tape and mark the location of the holes. Start drilling slowly until the bit penetrates the glazed surface of the tile. When you have drilled to the proper depth, tap a plastic wall anchor in place and attach the towel holder with screws into the wall anchors.



When you are trying to drive a small nail, such as a finish nail or a brad, it is often difficult to start the nail without hitting our fingers at the same time. Try this trick. Cut a three inch by six inch strip from a discarded cardboard box. At one end of the strip, cut a deep V shaped notch. Wedge your small nail in the notch to hold it until you strike the nail. Once the nail is started, you can slide the cardboard out of the way and finish driving the nail the rest of the way down.




Is your ceiling fan just a little bit louder than it should be? With time, the fan blades tend to loosen. There are two sets of screws holding most fan blades in place. The blades are attached to the blade brackets and the brackets are attached to the motor with screws. Use a sturdy ladder and gently try to wiggle each blade to check for looseness. Tighten the downward facing blade screws if required. Then tighten the larger, upward facing bracket-to-motor screws. These screws are more likely to be loose than the blade screws, and will generally require more frequent attention. While you are on the ladder it is a good time to do a little spring cleaning. If the blades are dusty, simply wipe them with a damp cloth.

Lawn and Garden:

Damaged garden hoses can often be repaired. If the male or female end fitting is damaged, cut off the end of the hose with a razor knife or a garden shear. Take the fitting to the hardware store to match up the hose size. If the hose is damaged in the middle, cut out the damaged section and take it to the hardware store and ask for a repair coupling. Prepare the hose for the new fitting by soaking it in hot soapy water to make the fitting slide on more easily. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for attaching the fitting to the hose.





When winter comes we tend to forget about the lawn equipment. But, how we store the lawn mower will have a big impact on whether it starts up again in the spring. When gasoline sits over the winter it tends to decompose, forming a gummy film in the engine, called varnish. Before retiring the mower for the winter, simply run the gas tank dry. If you can not run it dry, purchase a bottle of fuel stabilizer, sold wherever lawn equipment is sold. Add the fuel stabilizer to the gas tank and run the engine for 5 minutes. The engine will start much easier when the grass starts growing again.


 Choosing the proper glues for any job can be a sticky task. A popular glue for wood repair is yellow carpenter's glue. White glue can also be used on wood, but drying times may be longer. Polyurethane glue sold as Gorilla Glue and Excel is popular, where water resistance is desirable, but it expands as it cures. Adhesives such as Crazy-Glue and Superglue set up instantly. Contact cement is used to hold veneers and laminates. All of these adhesives have a place in the tool box, but my all time favorite is two part epoxy. Mix as much as you need, it sets up quickly, adheres to almost anything and is very strong when cured. It comes in tubes or putty. For most household jobs, 5-minute epoxy in tubes will do a fine job. It is very versatile and the tubes can be resealed and re-used almost indefinitely.

Painting and Wallpapering:

When walls start to look dingy, we often think about repainting. But before you paint, it is a good idea to clean the walls and let them dry thoroughly. The best cleaner to use is TSP (Tri-sodium Phosphate) or the more environmentally friendly TSP substitute. Both products can be found wherever paint is sold. Not only will they remove residual grime from painted surfaces, but they will also dull the gloss, allowing better adhesion of the new paint. A little extra prep will not only make your paint job look better, but will reduce the chance of chipping and peeling later.

 You can accurately determine how much paint you need for a given space in just a few minutes. First, measure the length and width of the room, to the nearest foot. Ignore windows and doors for this task. Find the area of the ceiling by multiplying the length of the room times the width. For example a 10' X 12" room will have 120 square feet of ceiling space. Each wall is figured by length or width times the ceiling height. The typical ceiling height is 8" Two of the walls are 10" long so they would each have an area of 80 square feet. ($8 \times 10 = 80$). The 12 foot walls are each 96 square feet ($12 \times 8 = 96$). Now add them all up $80 + 80 + 96 + 96 = 352$ Square feet. Latex paint will generally cover 400 square feet per coat, so you would need 1 gallon of ceiling paint and 2 gallons of wall paint for this room to paint 2 coats.

 Painting can be a time consuming Job. But here is a tip that can save you a little time cleaning up between coats. Keep paint brushes and rollers fresh between coats without cleaning by wrapping the brush or roller tightly with plastic food wrap or aluminum foil. When you are ready to apply the second coat simply unwrap the brush or roller and it will be just like you left it.

 When you save the last bit of paint in a metal paint can you may find that when you open the can later for touch ups the rust on the lip, falls into the

remaining paint if it hasn't dried up by the time you need it. Clean out a plastic jar like the ones peanut butter comes in. Fill the jar with paint as full as possible to allow as little air as possible to enter. Mark the jar with all the paint information as well as the room it was used in and the date. The paint will remain fresh and clean much longer, increasing the odds that you will be able to use it when you need it.



Would you like to remove old wallpaper without using steam or dangerous chemicals? Start by scratching the surface of the wall paper with sand paper or a wallpaper paper scoring tool. Soak the scored wallpaper with 2 parts hot water with 1 part white vinegar. Apply with a clean sprayer or a sponge. Let the paper soak until it is thoroughly wet. Carefully scrape off the paper with a 6" putty knife, being careful not to gouge the wall. Scrub off the remaining glue with a nylon scrubbing pad and a sponge. Don't forget to cover the floors before you start.

Plumbing:

Does your toilet sometimes make a brief flushing sound when no one is near it? This is caused by water leaking down the drain, wasting water and costing you money. This is often because of a worn or damaged flapper. First, remove the chain from the flush handle arm inside the tank. Next twist the ears of the flapper to remove them from the overflow tube. Replace the flapper with a new one and adjust the chain to allow just enough slack to keep it from staying open. Cut off any excess chain with wire cutters, to prevent it from hanging up and causing trouble later. The old flapper may be pretty yucky. Wear disposable gloves when removing the old flapper to help keep your hands clean.



If your house does not have frost proof faucets outside, turn off the valve in the basement that leads to the outside faucet before freezing temperatures arrive. Then, open the outside faucet slightly. Return to the basement and remove the little brass cap on the bottom of the valve to drain any remaining water from the pipe. Don't forget to replace the cap when you are done.



You don't have to continue jiggling the handle on the toilet to stop it from running. You can usually fix the problem by adjusting the chain on the flapper. Make sure the chain has just a slight amount of slack when the flapper is closed. If the chain has no slack the flapper is likely to leak. If it has excessive slack it will not open fully and the excess chain can prevent the flapper from closing. After the chain is adjusted properly, cut off any excess chain, to prevent it from hanging up on the flapper and holding it open. Now apply some silicone spray to the shaft of the flush handle from the inside of the tank. The spray will work its way in and prevent the handle from sticking.



When water valves, drip from the handle area the fix is often easier than you might imagine. Look carefully at the valve. If water is leaking from the valve

stem directly behind the shutoff handle, try adjusting it as follows. Use an adjustable wrench to tighten the packing nut (this is the nut behind the handle). Tighten the nut no more than 1/8 of a turn at a time. Try turning the handle and look for drips. If the nut is too loose it will drip. If it is too tight the valve handle will not turn freely.



Do you sometimes smell a foul odor in seldom used bathrooms or in the basement? Seldom used shower, sink and floor drains can dry up and allow foul smelling sewer gases to vent into the room. Every drain has a trap that holds water to prevent sewer gases from escaping into living areas. When the water in drain trap evaporates, it can no longer do its job. To prevent this from happening, pour a quart of water down each unused drain once a week. Your bathrooms and basement might smell just a little bit fresher.



When you are trying to locate a leak under a sink cabinet or from the back of a toilet, your best friend can be a good flashlight. A flashlight with fresh batteries can help you see clearly in those cramped and dark areas where leaks often lurk. But sometimes to find particularly well hidden leaks we need to go high-tech. That's right, we have to break out the gadgets. If you have a digital camera, you can reach your arm into the depths of the sink base cabinet and snap away. The pictures can be viewed in the camera, or if need be, on a computer screen to really bring out the detail. Now all that is left is to figure out how to get in there and fix the leak.

Safety:

To maintain efficiency and reduce the risk of fire, clean the lint trap in your dryer every time you run it. Periodically remove as much trapped lint as possible from the chamber below the lint trap using the crevice tool on your vacuum cleaner. Remove the duct from the back of the dryer once a year and clean out as much lint as possible. If you can not get to the back of the dryer easily, it may be wise to have someone move the dryer out for cleaning.



We pay little attention to our washing machine. We pay even less attention to the rubber hoses that bring the hot and cold water into it... until one of them breaks, leaving us with a messy situation at best. You can greatly reduce the risk of a broken washing machine hose by replacing the original rubber hoses with braided stainless steel hoses. These durable hoses are available at your local plumbing supply store for under \$30 a pair. Sound like a lot of money to spend on something you never see? I thought so too, until the hot water hose on my washing machine failed. Turn off the water and use a pair of slip joint pliers to loosen the hose fitting at each end. Replace the hoses, turn on the water and check for leaks.

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