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DIY tips every woman should know



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Who needs a man: DIY tips every woman should know

For some of us, the idea of [home](#) improvement and DIY fills us with complete and utter dread.

So when something goes wrong, you don't even attempt to give it a go yourself, but instead look for a professional as your first port of call.

But what if you could [repair](#) it yourself? Some jobs are easier than you'd think and not only do you get the satisfaction of knowing that your capable hands solved it, you also have extra cash in your purse because you haven't had to shell out for someone else to mend it.

Tradesmen comparison website

[RatedPeople.com](#) have calculated that we waste up to £140 million each year on needless tradesmen jobs. Instead of giving it a go ourselves, we pay to call out costly electricians and plumbers to do simple tasks such as changing a light bulb or retrieving lost rings and watches out of drains.

But help is at hand - [Rebecca Rowlands from Oakfield Home Improvements Ltd](#) talks us through the top jobs homeowners can do for themselves, so you can [feel confident](#) the next time something needs doing around the house.

So come on [ladies](#) – it's time to roll up those sleeves and get DIY sawy!



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Putting up wallpaper

Knowing how to wallpaper like a pro is definitely a skill you want in your [DIY](#)  roster.

Make sure your walls are prepared and primed beforehand by removing any remaining old wallpaper that's still stuck on.


Cut enough lengths of paper to complete the first wall, allowing a minimum border of 100mm for trimming.

Spread some paste into the centre of the first [sheet](#)  and work it outwards to the edges.

Lightly press the top of the first [length](#)  against the wall, with a 50mm overlap at the top and use a smoothing brush to get rid of air bubbles.

Trim the top and bottom of the length by creasing the paper into the skirting/ceiling with the back of the scissors, then cut along the crease.

Hang the next length in the same way, butting the edge neatly against the first piece. Repeat the process for each length, ensuring that the edges meet exactly and the pattern is matched.

[Rebecca](#)  advises: "Putting up wallpaper is a skill, but it's one that anyone can master. Try it yourself first and only call in the experts if you're struggling."



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Sanding and painting woodwork

Once you know what needs to be done, restoring woodwork couldn't be easier.

First wash 🗑️ the old paintwork with soapy water to clean away any grease or dirt. Invest in some wood filler and brush it over the surface to repair any cracks and holes in the wood.

It's easier to use an electric sander, but sanding belts and sheets 🗑️ work just as well.

Once all flaking paint has been removed and the surface is smooth 🗑️, clean off any sanding dust with a cloth dipped in white spirit.

Although it's not essential, it's advisable to seal the wood with a quick-drying wood primer.

Once its dry you can start painting – its better to do two thin coats 🗑️, rather than risk drips or brush marks because its been applied it too thickly.

Rebecca 🗑️ says: "Sanding is a hugely therapeutic 🗑️ practice and a great work out. Make sure you lay out some plastic sheeting to collect the shavings and to ensure you don't mess the surrounding area with paint."



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Re-grout bathroom or kitchen tiles

Grouting kitchen and [bathroom](#) ↗ tiles may sound difficult, but it's actually incredibly easy.

Take a golf ball-sized scoop of grout and spread it over the surface with a grouter spreader or squeegee.

Smear in all directions to really force it into the tile gaps, then wipe off any excess with a [damp sponge](#) ↗.

Make sure the sponge is [rinsed](#) ↗ out regularly in clean water so you don't spread a thin layer of grout over the surface of the tiles, because this will be hard to get off.

Once [dry](#) ↗, all that's left to do is give the area a wipe with dry cloth. Simple!

[Rebecca](#) ↗ says: "Re-grouting tiles is a simple task that can be done in a small amount of time. The only part that takes time is the curing of the grout. All you need is some grout mix and a couple easy to use tools."



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Hanging a picture

It sounds simple, but there's actually a lot to consider when putting up a picture.

You need to make sure that it hangs straight ✓, that it won't fall down a week later and that you don't damage the wall.

Firstly, check that there are no electric cables or pipes running underneath; so don't drill above or below light switches or sockets.

Grab a ruler and some masking tape and mark ✓ where you want the picture to hang. With a pencil lightly indicate slightly above the top centre of the picture where you want the nail to go in.

Drill a hole and screw in the screw/screws, although a trusty hammer and nail will do the job just as well.

Rebecca ✓ says: "The only difficulty with hanging a picture is if you're drilling a hole for a new hook. Unless you're worried about electrocuting yourself, there's really no need to hire anyone to do this."



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Unblocking drains

One day you might suddenly notice that the water in your shower or [bath](#) isn't draining away properly or as quickly as it used to, which is an indication that you've got a blocked drain.

First of all, don't let any more water into the drain, as this will only make the problem worse.

Try to unblock the drain by hand – check if there's any trapped accumulated waste such as [hair](#) clogging it up. A wire coat hanger is effective, as once opened it can be stuck down the drain and wiggled around to dislodge any detritus.

A plunger can also be used to bring [dirt](#) up to the surface. If that doesn't work, supermarkets sell a variety of effective chemical drain unblockers, so it's worth buying a bottle and trying that.

[Rebecca](#) says: "A simple unblocking task that is vital to [maintaining](#) your drains. Clean if necessary but all you really need is your hands."



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Build self-assembly furniture

Just one bad encounter with self-assembly [furniture](#) 🚩 can put you off for life, but don't give up just yet.

First of all, don't rely on the small and sometimes unreliable little tools that come in the pack, instead use a power or manual screwdriver with multiple bit heads, a hammer and pliers.

Give yourself plenty of time – it always takes [longer](#) 🚩 than the instructions – and be as patient as possible.

Read through the instructions before you [touch](#) 🚩 anything and one nifty trick is to use labelled or colour-coded Post-It notes to identify each part before you start.

Enlist a friend or partner to help hold the pieces and support the structure as you build it – that way you can concentrate on screwing all the various pieces together.

[Rebecca](#) 🚩 advises: "Just follow the instructions and be patient. It's not rocket science and they are designed to be built by anyone."



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Change a door handle

Fitting a door handle is pretty essential if you want to get in and out of rooms, so it's worth learning how to do it properly.

Firstly remove the old handle. Size up the new strike plates (the plates that go on the doorframe and door) and pawl mechanism (which is the piece that moves to join the door to the doorframe). If necessary make adjustments using a hammer and chisel.

Push the new pawl mechanism and face plate through the door – the pawl needs to face the way the door will close, so the slanted side will meet the strike plate on the doorframe.

Screw everything in place, making sure that it's level. Insert the handles into the door and check that the levers and locks face in the right directions.

Then screw that in too and check that everything fits and closes properly.

Rebecca says: "Invest in an electric drill, make sure you have all the right screws and fittings and have a blast."



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Putting up a shelf

Choose where you want your shelf to go and make sure it won't come into contact with doors – this is an easy thing to overlook!

Make a mark where you want the shelf to start, then measure to the floor ↗.

Draw a faint pencil line the same length ↗ as the shelf, then at the other end measure to the floor again to make sure the heights match.

Sometimes its useful to use a level to make sure your line is straight ↗.

Hold the first bracket in place and mark ↗ through the holes with a pencil. Drill holes and screw the bracket in, then the repeat steps for the other side.

Depending on your bracket design, the shelf may need to be fixed on to the bracket or it may just balance on top.

Rebecca ↗ explains: "Hanging a shelf shouldn't take you more than an hour and if you're buying from a DIY ↗ store, your materials purchase will come with a set of simple instructions."



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Clean paths or driveways with a power washer

Regular cleaning of paths and driveways is essential to keep your property looking nice and clearing away any stubborn moss or weeds.

A pressure cleaner is the ideal tool and it's not tricky to use. Either invest in one or rent from your local hardware store.

Before getting to work, clear the space and check there are no exposed outlets or electrical wires – cover these and any fragile plants with tarpaulin or plastic tablecloths.

Test the spray on a small area to get an idea of its power, this can be adjusted either by the nozzle setting or the distance at which you hold the wand from the concrete.

Rebecca advises: "The only difficulty this presents is the time it takes to get done. Anyone can do it. It's just a matter of having the right equipment, which you can easily hire for a much lower cost."



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Cleaning out gutters

It's important to clean out your gutters, before they clean out your wallet.

A serious blockage could cause water damage on the inside and outside of your walls and ceilings, which would be costly and require a professional to fix.

But regular maintenance and upkeep twice a year will ensure you avoid a build up of debris and any future gutter problems.

It's mucky work and it's not particularly fun, but it's relatively simple to clear the area of debris by hand or with a garden trowel.

Afterwards flush the pipes clean with a quick spray from your garden hose to get rid of any lingering material.

Rebecca explains: "All you need is a pair of gloves and some bin bags. As simple tasks go, this couldn't be simpler."

