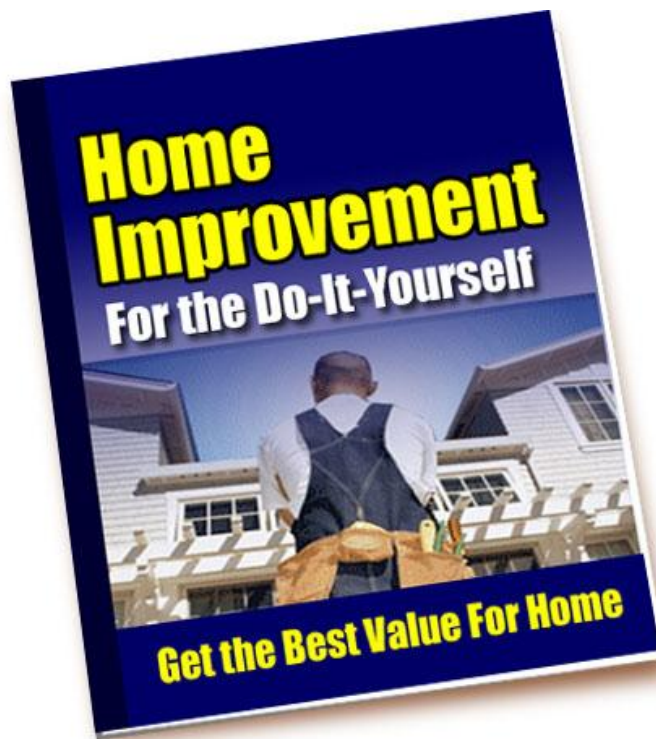


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Home Improvement Tips for the Do-It-Yourselfers



Planning for a home remodeling? Want to do the project by yourself? Well, many of the home owners these days think or plan for a home improvement project by themselves, knowing that they can eliminate the labor expense and chop a project's cost in half than hiring a contractor. In the first place, do-it-yourself activities are interesting and gratifying. When you do something from start to finish it is immensely satisfying to see the end product. However, engaging in a do-it-yourself task is sometimes tricky; especially if you are not a well-experienced do-it-yourselfer. As what most of the experts often say, there are some precautions that you must follow while undertaking home projects by yourself.

Here are few of the common safety tips for the do-it-yourselfers:

- When working with some hazardous materials, it is best for you to wear protective clothing. There are some safety goggles and gloves that you can wear while doing the home improvement task.
- Use a mask while working in dusty conditions, especially if you are sawing wood.
- If you are considering house painting, keep the room well ventilated and never smoke.
- If you are working with materials that provide off toxic fumes, it is always important to make sure that the room is airy and well-ventilated.
- Employ good quality equipments while working. One thing to note here is to use the right tools for the job.
- Speaking of tools, keep the tools in such a place that they are safe and that children and pets cannot reach.
- If you are using knives, cut away from you. Using after them, keep them locked.
- When fixing or checking electrical connections, it is much advisable to switch off the power and remove the fuse. And, since we are somehow dealing with electricity here, wear rubber shoes while working with electricity.
- While fixing or examining electrical appliances, I think it is best to disconnect the appliance from the socket.
- Every homeowner must keep a chemical fire extinguisher at home. Most of the experts often advice to avoid using water to put out a fire caused by electricity. For them, it is best to use a professional for electrical and gas work.
- Employ a drill that has a plastic body, as it will not conduct electricity. Also, remove the plug from the socket while fitting parts. And, avoid wearing loose clothes or jewelry as they might entangled in the drill.
- Check the ladders you are using. Note that ladders often cause a number of do-it-yourself accidents. So, before assembling a ladder, read the instructions carefully and assemble according to the manufacturer's guidelines. It is always advised not to lean on one side as you may lose your balance while working.
- Whatever the job on hand, it is critical that you plan out your work carefully. Make sure that you can do-it-yourself, otherwise hire a professional to do the tasks. Just consider your skills. Ask yourself if you really can take the job or not. Do not be in a hurry to complete the job. After all, this is not a race. It is then perhaps best to ask someone in your family or friends to help you out.

- If the job you are about to perform involves the disposal of dangerous material, it is best to contact your local environmental health department for advice.

Now, after reading those tips, are you ready to start working with your home improvement plan by yourself? Why don't you start working on your bathroom?

The Bathroom Revolution

A lot of homeowners start working on their home improvement projects in the bathroom to give their home a new look. Do-it-yourself improvements for a bath, in the first place, not only provide you your money's worth. It helps you to make your bathroom terrific at the end of the effort.

How to spruce out your bathroom? Here are a few quick tips for you, do-it-yourselfer:

- Remove the white crust layer that has formed on your shower doors. To do this, you can use kitchen cleaner and CLR or calcium, lime and rust remover. Given these materials, spray them on the shower doors and wipe off. This will remove the crust layer immediately.
- Clean fixtures in the bathroom. Use a CLR bathroom and kitchen cleaner to any remove any soap and mineral deposits. By doing this, you are giving those fixtures a new lease of life.
- Clean the showerhead. Note that over a period of time, the showerhead loses most of its showering ability as it gets clogged with scale deposits. So, instead of replacing it, just clean it using a mixture of CLR bathroom and warm water. All you need to do in the preparation is to blend equal amount of CLR and warm water in a cup and immerse the showerhead in it for a few minutes. After that, wash it thoroughly. The CLR is often recommended for such use as it has the power to remove clogs and the showerhead in the end will work like a new one.
- Do some changes on the bathroom decors. If possible, replace or add things to the bathroom. You can use add a potted plant, change the artwork hanging on the walls, use a new soap dish, or change the color and prints of towels.
- Finally, paint the walls of the bathroom in a new color. When you do this, you are renewing the bathroom.

That's simply it!

Now, let's take a look at the other do-it-yourself home improvement tips, starting with sanding, to staining, to home refinishing, and to some DIY ideas for lighting and window treatment.

DIY Sanding

Many homeowners plan their do-it-yourself home improvement projects with some sanding processes. But, what is sanding? Basically, sanding has to be prepared to receive the stain, which is the last stage that gives the furniture its new look. According to some resources, staining wood can bring out the natural color, feel, and grain of the wood. It can improve the beauty of old furniture in the house and give the entire room a new lease of life. However, to see such effects, sanding must be considered. Though time consuming, it is an essential step in staining.

Here are few pointers to help you through the sanding process:

For delicate furniture and a fine finish, experts recommend the use of hand sanding. Here, you need to make sandpaper pieces that are large enough to hold with three fingers. If in case you find it more comfortable, wrap a piece of sandpaper around a block of wood that you can grasp with ease. You could also employ a contoured sanding block which is easily available in most of the hardware stores these days. Perhaps it is worth noting that the block has grooves at the end of the block, and it is on those grooves where you can insert the sandpaper.

Inspect the surface of the wood to be sanded. That's one of the most important rules to be considered. By doing it, you can see pores in the wood that form a pattern. Note that these pores are the grain of the wood. So, sand in the direction of the grain, but never against it. As commonly noted, sanding against the grain will cause scratches that will show up on finished wood especially after the process of staining.

The next move to take is to place the sanding block horizontally on the surface with the grain of wood. Hold the block firmly and apply pressure equally as you move the block too and froe. Note that if you apply more pressure than needed the block, it will unfortunately cause depressions on the surface. And, even while employing the mechanical palm sander, it is important that you hold the block flat against the surface and start exerting pressure on it evenly.

So, you're done with sanding? Well, before going to the next process, which is staining, the dust must be taken off the surface of the wood. You can use tack cloth or cheesecloth made for removing dust. Once one side of the cloth gets dusty, refold it and use the fresh side of the cloth. And, since you will be working with wood dust, remember to use a sanding particle mask in order to prevent inhalation of dust, which may cause certain harm to yourself.

DIY Wood Staining

As mentioned earlier, staining adds color to wood. It is typically in some minor home improvement projects to accentuate wood, to improve the grain pattern, to change the appearance of the wood, to emphasize the finer points of the furniture, or to make it look like another type of wood. Given this fact, it is then very necessary to do a spot test of

the stain prior to applying it on the furniture. However, if you cannot obtain a scrap of wood that your furniture is made of, apply stain on a spot of the furniture that is not visible to the eye.

Note that there are three components that make up stain: pigment, dyes and a carrier. The carrier in the first place is the one that decides whether the stain is oil based or water based. If you find out that the test patch of stain looks blotchy, then you will have to use a conditioner to the wood. You can apply generous amounts of the required type of wood conditioner, either water based or oil based. This must be similar to the stain you are using. Then, apply the conditioner about a quarter hour before staining. What you can use to strokes that are alike is a staining pad, brush or rag. Simply remove extra stain with a cloth. If you have completed the staining, let the wood dry overnight. And, if you want a darker shade, simply apply more stain. Note that once the stain dries up, it may look dull, but once the finish is applied it will look bright again.

DIY Home Refinishing

Perhaps one of the quickest and easiest ways to liven your bathroom or kitchen is to paint. In fact, just one single coat will make a world of difference. You can consider and use painting not only to provide a sense of life to your cabinets and countertops, but you can also use it to refinish bathtubs, fiberglass fixtures, and bathroom tiles.

Obviously, considering a do-it-yourself refinishing is favorable that using a professional which can be very expensive. It will not only help you save money, but the fact that you can have the satisfaction of doing something great.

For those who are interested to some DIY refinishing, here are some tips that could help you on how to go about refinishing your bath and cabinets. First, you may need the following tools and materials:

- Palm sander
- Spray gun with high volume and low pressure
- Sandpaper and masking tape paper
- Respirator to protect you from paint fumes
- EP-acrylic top coat and refinishing coatings primer
- Fixing agent for tiles and porcelain, reducers and caulk
- Chemical cleaners

The Preparation

Preparing the surface to be refinished well is the most important move to take in order to obtain best results from refinishing. You have the option to apply the chemical cleaners on all the surfaces that have to be refinished. And, speaking of chemical cleaners, there are basically two functions that these cleaners perform. First is, they clean and eliminate the grease from your countertops, tiles, cabinets, and tubs. And, second, they ready the

refinishing surface for a chemical bonding agent, which will react with paint as well as with touch, durable finish for tile and porcelain.

When you're done cleaning the refinishing surfaces, wash them off thoroughly and dry. Then, you need to sand the surface before you can paint it. Many experts commonly note that sanding roughens the surface a little that helps bonding of the coats. This can be discussed later in this article.

For roughening the surface, however, you need to use the palm sander as it will assist you in preparing an even surface, which is perfect for painting. Then, you can employ paper or masking tape to cover the spots you do not want to paint. For example, the ceiling edges.

Also, while refurbishing tiled surfaces or those that are made of porcelain, it is often recommend that you apply chemical bonding agent Adhesor. You can apply this with paper towels or cheesecloth. Then, after applying, let it dry for five minutes and apply primer and topcoat.

Painting

One particular thing to note when it comes to painting is that the EP-acrylic paint that is commonly recommended is acrylic polymer coating. Accordingly, this double component-refinishing product offers a beautiful and durable finish that will last over the years. Many homeowners apply this in their kitchens, tiles and bathtubs.

Such kind of paint offers a lot of color options for you to pick. You can even pick a finish of your choice such as the semi-gloss, gloss or satin. Speaking of satin, it has been noted that this kind of finish is particularly best for countertops as well as cabinets, while a gloss finish is appropriate for tubs and tiles.

For primer mixing, it is just important to carefully follow certain directions. Then, you can put it into the paint and fix the spray gun. However, test the spray gun first on a piece of scrap wood for you to ensure that the flow and air pressure are right. After doing the testing, you can start painting from the top of the surface that you are working on. One simple tip here is to move the spray gun backwards and forwards. And, if you want a smooth finish, make sure that every new stroke you've made overlaps about a quarter of the previous stroke. And, always note that the paint is toxic, so wear rubber gloves and protective glasses at all times, while working.

Lighting and Window Treatment DIY Ideas

While decorating the interior of the room, don't forget to give enough time and effort treating your windows and the lighting. Both elegant lighting and nicely done up windows can enhance the beauty of a room.

For a few tips on how to select lighting and do up windows to add to the character of the room, read the following:

Lighting

When it comes to lighting, the first thing you can do is to make sure that the lighting in the bedroom is softer than that in the kitchen and dining room. If in case you need light to read in the bedroom, you have the option to use bedside lamps.

Also, you can install a small chandelier above your bed. According to some experts this will add to the style and elegance of the room. In relation to this, it is often recommended that you use chandeliers that are modern in style. Try to use ones with burned gold finish made with round crystals for example. Small chandeliers can also be used to add character to any room.

When it comes to installation, it is best that you read the instructions carefully before installing. And, if you have any doubt about it, then there's nothing with asking an electrician to it for you.

Choose candle-bulbs made of translucent glass when considering lighting. This will make the light look like real candlelight. Now, isn't it interesting?

Seating Area Lighting

To add character to the seating area in your house, here is what you can do:

- Use a ceiling fan with a light if your seating room needs light. According to some, this is one of the best options to take.
- Since light ceiling fans come in different styles, it is best that you can find one that suits the décor you have in your seating room.
- Note that the light from the fan will provide enough light needed for reading. Aside from that, the air provided by the fan will make the room pleasant.
- Simply add a dimmer to the ceiling fan light.

Window Treatment

To add a glimmer of elegance to your windows, consider these tips:

- Before buying any materials for your window, try first to measure each window. Always note that though windows look alike from far, they may measure differently.

- Take ideas from magazines, paintings, and other resources, and adapt it to fit your home.
- Consider the colors. Coordinate them to match the rest of the room, as well as the decors you have in the room.
- Use easy-care polyester. According to many experts, this fabric has a fine finish that makes it look like silk.
- Finally, select your window drapes with care, as they may make a strong impact on the way the room finally looks.

I think I have done my part – to give you some ideas on how to improve the appearance of your home. Note, however, that even though you are considering those tasks by yourself, you don't need to work BY yourself. Ask for some help from your friends perhaps or from your family. Home improvement after all is not an easy task.