



Home Fix Up Tips

How To Make Sure You Get Top Dollar

On the pages that follow, are solutions to small problems that plague every household. The solutions are simple and easy to accomplish. And the tools and supplies they require, for the most part, are ones that you have on hand. Also included is a segment for the more ambitious on painting both the interior and exterior of a house. On the other hand, if you would like us to have a professional contact you, please leave us your name, e-mail address, and phone number, and we will have one call you.

How To...

Handle Problems With Carpets

Soiled - Rent a heavy duty electric shampooer from your supermarket or hardware store to shampoo wall-to-wall carpet. These machines have special devices that control and prevent the soaking of the surface of your carpet, eliminating the possibility of shrinkage, and they do an effective job. Use the cleaner indicated and mix according to instructions. Make overlapping strokes with the machine over all of the carpet. The foam cleaning action that this produces will ensure even coverage. When the carpet dries, vacuum the carpet. Do not put the furniture back in place until the carpet fibers have fully dried.

Animal Stains - Mix one cup of water with a teaspoon of white vinegar. Apply the solution to the stain. Allow it to remain on the stain for fifteen minutes. Blot the excess moisture. Then wash the stain with mild warm soapy water - sponge with cold water - blot dry using paper towels or an absorbent terry cloth.

Grease - First try warm soapy water, but if the stain is stubborn, an all purpose liquid cleaner will remove it. Follow the instructions on

the label.

Nail Polish - If you catch the spill immediately nail polish can be wiped away using a mild detergent and water. Don't use nail polish remover; it will dissolve polyester fibers. A professional rug cleaner is required if the spill has set.

Burn Marks - If it is a small surface with only the tips of the fiber scorched, rub the surface with a clean, fine steel wool pad carefully removing the scorched portion. You'll need a vacuum to pick up the dust that accumulates.

If the burn is deep and you have a matching leftover carpet remnant, an almost invisible patch is possible on a shag or sculptured carpet. It will not work as well on velvet cut or smooth cut carpet. With a sharp cutting tool, cut a clean square around the burn mark. Remove the square with the burn. Cut a patch the same size from the carpet remnant. Using a carpet adhesive, apply a thin coat to the underside and the raw edges of the carpet on the floor. Press the patch in place. The weight of a few books placed on the patch will ensure a strong bond. Make certain that you do not use too much adhesive on the edges of the patch - you won't want it to ooze on to the adjacent carpet fibers.

How To...

Handle Problems With Ceramic Tile

A typewriter eraser will clean dull or stained grouting between ceramic tiles - just rub and erase the dirt.

Loose Wall or Counter Tile - Carefully remove the loose tile. Scrape the adhesive from the back of the tile or scrub with steel wool. Remove the adhesive left in the space on the wall or the counter top. Use a tile adhesive (available at the hardware store) to re-glue the tile. Apply a thin even coat to the back of the tile and to the wall or counter surface. For a strong long lasting bond, score the glue covered surfaces of the tile and the wall or counter surface, using a fork. The roughened surface will ensure a firm hold. Put the tile in place and hold in place for a few minutes exerting light pressure on the wall, or weighing it down with books on a counter top. When dry, trim any excess adhesive. Use tile grout or mildew resistant grout to fill the joint

How To...

Handle Problems With Floors

For squeaky floor boards, buy some powdered graphite in a squeeze tube and force the powder between the two floor boards - use a putty knife if necessary. Squeaks can be temporarily quieted with liquid soap - pour some between the floor boards and when it dries the squeak will be gone.

How To...

Handle Painting, Both Interior And Exterior

Touch-Ups

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INTERIOR PAINTING TIPS

With A Brush

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EXTERIOR PAINTING TIPS

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GENERIC PAINTING TIPS & OTHER POINTERS

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Touch-ups - Your walls are in good clean conditions, but frequently washed areas around light switches, on doors, etc., are rubbed bare. Here's a quick easy solutions, if like most of us, you originally saved some of the leftover paint and it was water-based. You'll need a new sponge - an old one may contain soap file or other residue - and rubber gloves. Make certain that the area to be touched-up is free of soil. Then soften the new sponge by dipping it in water. Wring it out well, then dip it in the leftover matching paint. Start in the center of the base spot using a circular motion as if you were washing the area. Use just enough paint to cover the spot. Continue the circling motion spreading the paint and feathering it out until it meets and

thins sufficiently to blend with the surrounding area.

Patching - Mix spackling compound with matching leftover paint instead of water. For small and inconspicuous jobs this works well and eliminates the need to paint after the patching is done.

Toothpaste (white) can be used instead of spackle to fill small holes. Make certain that it is completely dry before you paint over it.

Odor - Can't stand the smell of paint? Add a little vanilla flavoring - it will eliminate the odor.

Baseboard Moldings - This will save you time and grief in a room that is carpeted wall-to-wall. You'll need old newspapers and masking tape. Spread the newspaper on the rug about an inch from the wall - around the room. Use workable lengths of masking tape. Tuck it down over the carpet pile, where the edge of the carpet and the molding meet. Attach the other edge of the tape to the newspaper and continue around the room. Now, paint the molding. When it's completely dry remove the tape and the newspaper. This tip has an added bonus, you'll find that the tape has picked up the dust missed by your vacuum where your carpet meets the walls.

Fences - Painting a picket fence? Use a roller. It covers completely and speeds up the job.

Painting - Interior

1. Select the right paint for the job you are doing. Use your hardware dealer as a source for information. He can advise you of the advantages or disadvantages of various types of paint available and suitable for your job - whether a primer or sealer coat is necessary - if one or two coats will do and the amount of paint you will need.
2. Before choosing your paint, study the colors in natural as well as artificial light. Store lighting may be tinted to enhance colors.
3. Select neutral color paints - they harmonize with almost any decor.
4. It may be necessary to prep your walls to remove the natural household film that can accumulate mainly in kitchens and adjacent rooms. Use a household detergent and warm water. Rinse well. Caution - when sponging plaster board walls do not use too much water - wring your sponge out well.
5. Patch cracks with spackle, let dry, sand.
6. Remove all curtains and drapes.
7. Remove hardware from doors, windows, cupboards, etc., or carefully cover all hardware with masking tape.
8. Move furniture to the center of the room and cover with drop cloths.
9. Protect the floor area you are working in - cover it with a drop cloth and move it along as the work progresses.
10. Rub some creamy hand lotion on your hands before you start -

it will make your personal clean up much easier after the job is done. Or wear painters or rubber gloves.

11. Paint ceiling first, then the walls and finally the trim.

With a Brush - Experts agree best results are achieved using a high quality brush - one that has both long and short bristles tapered to a serviceable edge. The best brush bristles have natural split ends or may have commercially split tips that grab and hold the paint.

Natural bristle brushes can be used on any surface with any type of paint.

Nylon bristles are superior to natural bristles only when applying latex or waterbase paints. They cannot be used to apply shellac.

You will need several brushes - a wide brush for large flat surfaces, a 2" trim brush and a 1 1/2 " sash brush. A small round brush is often useful for hard to reach spots.

Do the ceiling first. Applying the paint with a roller is recommended. See instructions that follow under Painting - With a Roller.

Use your wide brush for the flat wall surfaces. Dip the brush into the paint - just cover 1/3 of the bristles' length. To rid the brush of excess paint, tap it lightly, do not draw the brush over the rim of the can. Light long strokes will provide the best finish. To cover all bristle marks, first brush up, then down, then across, then up and down once more. Work from the ceiling down.

To paint window trim, use a 1 1/2 " tapered sash brush. Paint crossbars first, then frames and finally the sills.

With a Roller - Rollers are made of synthetic fibers or wool. Short pile rollers are for smooth surfaces. Deep or heavy pile rollers are for rougher uneven surfaces.

You will need a 9" roller, a pan and a 2" brush. An extension handle for your roller is a good investment if you intend to paint ceilings.

Before you start, make certain that walls are free of soil and that all cracks are patched and fully dry.

Paint ceilings first. Using the 2" brush, paint a border on ceiling when it meets the walls - all around the room. Next cover your roller evenly with paint. Remove the excess by rolling it back and forth in the tray. Roll the paint on the ceiling in 2' x 3' sections. To avoid splatters roll slowly - do not roll rapidly. For the best results, form an "x" in each section using two straight diagonal strokes with the roller. Spread the paint using long light strokes blending each stroke into the wet area of the previous sections. Continue in this manner until the ceiling is complete.

Now for the walls, use your 2" brush again. Paint a border on the walls, where they meet the ceiling - all around the room. Do likewise above the baseboard trim and around windows and doors. Roll the paint on the walls in sections as you did the ceiling. Finish up with light vertical strokes. Do not spread the paint too thin.

Paint windows and trim using a 1 1/2" tapered brush - crossbars first, then the frames and finally the sills.

Painting - Exterior

Check the exterior surfaces of the house carefully before you buy paint or do anything else. If any of the following problems exist they will reoccur if not corrected first.

Peeling - This usually occurs on protected surfaces such as overhangs and porch ceilings. Chemical salts that were not washed off the old surface before it was repainted are usually the cause of peeling, or it may be the result of painting over a glossy surface.

Solution: Old paint must be scraped off and the surface sanded thoroughly. Wash surface with a phosphate-based detergent. Rinse thoroughly. Let dry. A primer may be necessary - this depends on the type of paint you select - check the label.

Mildew - is a fungus growth caused by high humidity and temperature. If it

is not removed prior to painting, it will grow through the new paint.

Solution: Mix a solution of one part bleach and four parts water. Scrub the surface thoroughly to remove all mildew. Be sure to wear rubber gloves to protect your hands. Hose surface down. Let dry.

Blistering - is usually a twofold problem caused by moisture trapped in the siding which pushes the paint away from the surface. It may be a sign that there is a leak in the roof, eaves or the plumbing. Lack of ventilation in the kitchen and/or bathrooms could also be a cause.

Solution: Find the source of the moisture and correct that problem first. Then scrape the blistered area down to stable paint or wood. Sand the surface. A primer may be necessary before you paint - this depends on the paint you select - check the label.

Flaking - usually occurs after peeling or blistering, with the paint breaking completely away from the siding.

Solution: Follow the steps given for Blistering.

Alligator Cracking - If the siding is plywood or masonry, the problem may be caused by cracks in the siding. If not, it indicates that the top coat of paint has shrunk and pulled away from the undercoat. This condition usually occurs only on very old painted surfaces.

Solution: Scrape or sand the surface until you reach stable paint or wood. Hose down well. A primer may be necessary before you paint - this depends on the paint you select - check the label.

Wood Staining - is due to rust from (a) nailheads or (b) sap bleeding from a knot hole.

Solution: (a) Remove rust from nailheads by sanding. Countersink nailheads and prime with a metal primer. Cover with wood putty - sand. (b) Prime knot holes and sap streaks with shellac. In either case cover with two coats of paint.

Painting Tips

Buy enough paint to complete the job - see Estimating.
If you are changing colors, plan on two coats.

Painting on hot moist surfaces creates and causes most paint failures. The best rule when painting outdoors is to follow the sun. Paint the shady side of the house first. Then, as the sun moves away from each side, paint it. Don't paint in the sun.

Before you move to the next side, check for "skips" (areas you may have missed) and go over them.

Moisture will affect an oil-base paint. If you are using one, wait until the morning dew has evaporated before you start. Moisture from dew will not affect latex paint, so get started early. Wait 24 hours after a rainfall before you paint with an oil-base paint.

To prevent future rusting and rust stains when using latex, touch up all exposed nailheads and metal with a primer.

Paint should be thoroughly mixed. Even if your dealer has mechanically mixed it, check it again by pouring half into another can. Mix both halves with a wooden stirrer until all pigment is blended, then check it again by pouring back and forth.

Protect your grass, shrubs and plants - cover with a drop cloth.

Start at the top of the house using a 3 1/2" to 4" brush with 4" bristles. Immerse the brush bristles in the paint to cover 1/3 of the bristle length. To prevent dripping, tap the brush before removing from the can.

If you have to stop before the job is completed, paint across to the corner of one board. This will ensure more even results.

For a neat professional look, use house paint on the edge of the trim where it meets the siding.

Other Pointers

Porch Floor - Concrete surfaces absorb a lot of paint. Make the job easier by using a roller with an extension handle. First, use a 4" brush and paint a border around the floor where it meets the walls. Then use your roller spreading the paint to meet the border. Do a small section at a time (about 2' x 3') and don't try to stretch the paint too far.

Porch Steps - Make this a two day job. Paint alternate steps - both treads and risers, so that you can walk on the dry ones. When they are dry - complete the job. Paint railings last.

Trim - Do window crossbars first with a 1 1/2" tapered sash brush - then paint the flat surfaces. A neat professional job is achieved if the edges of the trim (where it meets the siding) are painted with the house paint.

Areas to investigate and repair if necessary

1. Check downspouts and gutters for cracks or other defects that may cause water to overflow and ruin a new paint job.
2. Check windows, door frames and other structural joints. Caulking flashing should be in good condition.
3. Nail loose boards or shingles in place.
4. Fill nail holes or cracks with wood putty.

Estimating - how much paint is needed for house exterior? Follow these easy steps.

1. Determine the average height of the house. For flat roof types, measure the distance from the foundation to the eaves. For pitch roofs, add two feet.
2. Measure the distance around the house - measure around the foundation.
3. Multiply the average height by the distance around the foundation. This total equals the surface area.
4. Divide the surface area by 500 (because most house paint covers 500 square feet per American gallon). Your result equals the number of gallons required for each coat.
5. For the trim - the average six to eight room house requires about one gallon of paint.

Handle Problems With Doors Of All Types

When They Stick Swinging Doors

Sliding Doors

When They Stick - Check the hinge screws on the door first, then the hinge screws on the jamb (frame). If they are loose, the door will sag just enough to rub against the frame causing it to bind and stick when closed. If the hinge screws are loose - open the door as far as it can be opened - then tighten all of the screws. If you can't tighten the screws because the holes have become enlarged - remove the screws - then pack the enlarged holes with wooden toothpicks or match sticks that have been dipped in glue - so that together they form a flush surface. Before you replace the screws, be certain that the glue has set thoroughly. Tighten the screws securely.

If the door still sticks after the screws are tightened then the problem can be corrected by adjusting one of the hinges. To determine which one, first determine where the door binds. Close the door and slip a piece of paper between the door and the jamb - slip the paper around the edge. If it binds at the top corner, the bottom hinge needs adjustment; if it binds near the bottom corner, the top hinge requires the adjustment. To do this open the door to a 90 degree angle. Prop the door open, placing magazines and/or books under and around it. Next remove the screws that hold the hinge

in place. Cut a piece of cardboard, the same size as the hinge leaf and place it behind the hinge leaf. Reposition the hinge leaf with the cardboard shim in place - replace and tighten the screws. Try the door again. If the problem is only partially corrected, try another thickness of cardboard behind the first shim.

Sliding Doors - If it sticks in the track, open the door fully, clean the track along the floor, lubricate the sides and the bottom of the track with a silicone lubricating compound.

Swinging Doors - Dust is the culprit if your swinging door sticks. The spring device in the floor is jammed. Unscrew the plates under the bottom hinge - vacuum carefully. If you find any rust, scrape it off, vacuum again. Then spray the spring and the pivot with a silicone lubricating compound. Re-screw the plates.

How To...

Handle Problems With Wallpaper

Holes or Tears - This works well if you have matching leftover wallpaper and the design is an overall or large pattern. Remove the torn area and surrounding paper following the design - the more uneven the design the less the patch will be noticed. Use a sharp single edge razor blade to do it. Cut a matching design patch from the leftover paper - cover the back with a thin coat of wallpaper paste - apply patch to wall fitting it carefully. Use a damp cloth to smooth the area down.

Seams Openings - Fill a plastic squeeze bottle with wallpaper paste. The spout on the bottle will fit under the edge of the wallpaper seam. One squirt and a little pressure on the spot will eliminate the problem. Wipe any excess with a damp cloth if it oozes out when pressure is applied.

Cleaning - Most wallpapers are washable, but if yours is not, lightly soiled areas can be cleaned using a borax powder. Wipe it on with a clean cloth (a dry one) then remove the powder with another clean dry cloth.

A slice of rye bread will work as well. Just rub it on the lightly soiled spot. Other breads won't do - it's the gluten in the rye that does the trick.



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