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# Home Repair

*Niche Booklets Series*

**Niche Content Kit**

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## **Keeping Your Tools in Order: Using a Shoe Bag as a Handy Tool Organizer**

If you are like most people, you likely have tools lying about your garage and house in no particular order at all. Unless you are a tradesperson of one kind or another who relies on his or her tools to make a living, chances are those tools that you do own are generally arranged in what really is a chaotic state.

You may have spent a good deal of time trying to come up with ways in which you can keep your tools arranged and well organized. You may have tried a number of different alternatives, always ending up with your tools and related items in a state of disarray.

When it comes to organizing your tools, there are actually a number of useful, practical and effective solutions that you might want to consider. For example, a simple shoe bag is a handy tool organizer. Hang it in the garage and another where you can easily get the tools in an emergency.

A shoe bag makes an excellent choice for keeping your tools in order on a number of different levels. A shoe bag is a very inexpensive way in which you can organize your tools. Many people spend a great deal of money on expensive toolboxes and the like. For only a couple dollars you can have a durable, easy-to-use shoe bag to store your tools.

A shoe bag is also convenient. You can hang a shoe bag in your garage to store tools you need but do not use with regularity. Additionally, you can neatly keep another shoe bag in your house in a convenient location for those tools that you use more frequently or for those tools that you might need in an emergency situation.

Finally, a shoe bag is surprisingly durable. These pieces are designed to withstand a significant amount of wear and tear and to withstand the tugging and pulling of everyday use. In short, in so many ways, a simple shoe bag is the perfect place to store the tools necessary to help you with simple home repair jobs.

## **Home Repair and Plumbing Maintenance: Map Out the Course of Your Pipes and Drains**

One of the worst things that can happen to a homeowner is a water pipe breaking. A broken or busted water pipe can cause significant damage to and in a person's home. What tends to aggravate the problems associated with a busted pipe is the fact that most people really have no idea where their pipes actually run under and through their homes. In other words, these people have to spend a great deal of time tracking down the location of pipes before repair work can begin. Because of the amount of time that it takes to locate pipes, more damage ends up occurring to their homes because of the busted pipes and the delay that occurs in finding the break.

There are proactive steps that you can take in order to work to limit the amount of damage that your home sustains due to a broken pipe. Have a diagram of the plumbing layout of your house. Indicate where the openings are so it will be easy to trace and replace busted pipes and clogged drains.

If you have built a new home, the process of mapping pipes can be easy and can actually be provided to you by your general contractor or your plumbing contractor. On the other hand, if you have purchased or live in an older home, you may want to spend the money necessary to have a professional actually map out your pipes and drains associated with your home. While such a step will cost you some money at the outset, over the long run you will save yourself a great deal of grief and expense by knowing where pipes and drains are located in advance of any break that might occur at some point in the future.

## **Home Repair Tips and Solutions: Keep Pamphlets and Manuals Handy**

In this day and age, a good number of men and women purchase equipment and various other household items that come with instructional pamphlets or manuals. Nine times out of ten, these people toss away the pamphlets or manuals or hide these materials away somewhere, never to be found again.

As a homeowner, these pamphlets and manuals can be very important and beneficial to you. Keep and arrange pamphlets and manuals of newly purchased mechanical items. It is easier to repair an item if you know the specifications, the possible problems and probable causes/remedies.

When it comes to keeping track of pamphlets and manuals relating to items that you have purchased, there are a number of different options that you might want to consider. First of all, depending on the type of equipment or appliance a given pamphlet or manual has been prepared in regard to, you might want to keep that pamphlet or manual with the equipment or appliance itself. By keeping these items together, you will have fast access to the informational material should it ever become necessary to access.

Another technique that you might want to use when it comes to keeping track of pamphlets and manuals associated with equipment and appliances is to develop a filing system through which all of these informational materials are kept together. By having a centralized filing system for pamphlets and manuals related to equipment and appliances, you will be able to access these materials with ease.

In the end, keeping and organizing your pamphlets and manuals will help you. You will not run the risk of being unable to find vital information when it is necessary for you to do simple home repair jobs.

## **Dealing with Clutter as a Family**

Solutions for clutter are in greater demand than ever before thanks to a variety of reasons. Though most families are smaller in size than just one hundred years ago, nearly all people own more possessions than ever before. Families live at a faster pace as well and increased work and school responsibilities can mean that everyday household duties can be neglected. Regardless of situation, people simply need clever solutions to the problem of “Too Much Stuff.”

Aside from extreme solutions like renting a dumpster and hauling away roomfuls of junk, many people are at a loss as to dealing with clutter. There are simpler (and cheaper!) solutions, however, that can set your house back in order without putting your family in an uproar.

Start with one room at a time – the living room is a good choice – and simply throw out all the junk. This means newspapers, magazines, etc. Assign age-appropriate tasks to your family members: give a younger child the responsibility of dusting. Ask your teenage technophile son to check over all the electronic equipment and run all the cords through an empty paper towel tube to prevent tangling. Involve the entire family in the task – after all, the living room is a family area and since the whole family uses it, everyone should participate in cleaning up. A clean and welcoming family area will encourage the family to keep up other areas as well.

Getting started in cutting back clutter can be the most difficult part but once you’ve taken that first step and involved your family, it becomes much easier. It may take some time to get the rest of your house in order but when you show a commitment to having a clean, inviting home, your family will follow suit almost unconsciously. Remember, it’s not about having a spotless, germ-free house, but rather about creating a friendly, welcoming haven for you and your family to enjoy.

## **Steps to Beginning Home Repair!**

To a beginner, home repair may seem overwhelming and best left to professionals. The good news is that with just a little time and effort anyone can understand the basics of home repair and the best methods.

If you are fortunate enough to know a handyman (or handywoman), then ask him or her to give you a brief orientation on tools and common problems. Even home improvement shows on television can provide you with some kind of basic knowledge and useful hints. The staff at your local hardware store can usually give you minimal direction as well.

Every home should be equipped with a set of basic tools. These include a hammer, tape measure, screwdrivers (flat and Phillips head), and pliers. You should also keep one or two boxes of nails and screws for the inevitable times when pictures fall off the wall or something needs a new screw. With just these four or five tools, you can complete a variety of simple repairs around the house without spending a fortune on a repairman.

If you choose to use power tools or machines, it is important to read the operation manual and understand the right way to use it. Machines can be fantastic in terms of shortening your work time and making a job easier, but they also require a certain level of caution. If you notice one of your machines or power tools running incorrectly, turn it off and consult the manual or call the manufacturer.

While most home repairs can safely be attempted by amateurs, electrical problems and some plumbing issues should be dealt with by professionals only. Electricity can be highly dangerous and should be managed by a certified electrician who is up to date on all safety regulations in order to protect him and your home. Major plumbing issues must be addressed by licensed plumbers who are familiar with the situation and have the equipment necessary to handle it. While you can take apart and replace your U-bend, severely clogged drains and sewage hook-ups should be left to professional plumbers.



## **Simple Painting Preparation**

Painting is one of the fastest and simplest changes for a home but it can have a powerful impact on the presence of a room. Light pastel colors can make a room seem larger and cleaner, while darker tones create a more intimate atmosphere. Regardless of color, a fresh coat of paint can liven up even the oldest and dullest of rooms in a matter of a few hours for typically less than ten dollars.

If your rooms need brightening but your wallet is thin, grab some cans of paint and watch a transformation happen in front of your eyes!

There are a few key points to keep in mind before you begin. You should start with clean walls and a relatively empty room. Go over the walls with an eye open for any holes or flaws that should be puttied over. There is absolutely no sense in painting over blemishes because they will only become more noticeable, so take the time beforehand to properly repair and cover all imperfections. Apply at least one coat of primer to the entire room before the actual paint – primer ensures that the final product will be smooth and perfect. Depending on the condition of the walls, you may need to apply a second coat of primer before painting.

When the room is finally ready to paint, open your first can of paint and use a wooden popsicle stick to stir it up. Do not use screwdrivers or other metal tools! Once the paint is thoroughly mixed and ready for use, pour some into a painting tray and get to work! Depending on the size of the room, you should expect to spend anywhere from four hours to an entire day painting. Larger rooms will require two or more days to finish.

The time invested is absolutely worth the final result, though, and your freshly painted room will be a delight for many months to come!

## **21 Home Repair Tips**

1. When fixing a backed up toilet, remember that oval plungers or augers are generally better than the bell shaped ones.
2. Always plan ahead before you replace or buy light fixtures. Location and cleaning are factors that you should always consider. Complicatedly shaped lights placed high up are very hard to clean.
3. If repaired cracks are an eyesore for you, use brush-on resurfacers, which sort of refinishes the repaired parts, making them look brand new.
4. Driving the nails into a bar of soap or candle lubricates the tips of the nails making it easier to drive them into wood.
5. Use a thin-bladed utility knife instead of a pencil to draw a saw line. Scoring the surface of the wood makes sawing easier and yields a more precise measurement.
6. To minimize the need for repairing the toilet, flush a cup of baking soda into the bowl once a week. Baking soda controls the pH level in the septic tank that aids the flushing process.
7. Consider a tool that can do more tasks when deciding what power tool/s to buy. Consider cordless tools if you move around a lot.
8. If there is no penetrating oil available for emergency repairs, use soda or vinegar to loosen a stuck screw. Let the soda or vinegar seep in for a while before attempting to turn the screw.
9. It's good practice, not to mention common sense, to close the sink stopper when repairing the faucet. This prevents the small parts from falling down the drain.
10. To prevent hitting your fingers with the hammer, hold the nail with a pair of pliers while hammering. Do this especially when nailing into hard wood. This also prevents the nail from bending.

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11. Practice “Clean as you go.” A work area that’s cluttered is more prone to accidents. Be wary of cords that can tangle, blades and sharp instruments that can cut and chemicals that can harm the skin and the eyes.
12. Vacuum stained portions of carpet before repairing. Trim carefully with a sharp knife or scissors. If the damage is deep, cut a piece off from a covered area (under furniture) and patch with a double sided carpet tape.
13. Old plastic shower curtains make handy protective area rugs while working/painting to protect the floor from splutters and drips.
14. If the flames of the gas stove are uneven, the holes may be clogged. Turn off the stove, turn off the gas connection and use a needle to clean each pore of the burner.
15. Have a tube of all-purpose strong glue. It comes handy for very minor repairs. Likewise, have a roll of electrical tape and Teflon tape in your toolbox at all times.
16. If you cut a wood panel too narrow, saw the panel in half then glue a panel of a different shade (to create an “accent”) to join the two panels. Cut from the opposite sides to the original measurement.
17. To prevent paint from spilling all over the cover of the paint can, punch holes all around the cover rim. When you swipe the brush, the excess paint will automatically drip back into the can.
18. Wrap doorknobs with plastic bags and cover plate switches with masking tape to keep them free of paint splatters when repainting walls and doors. If you remove them, put in separate envelopes with the screws to avoid confusion.
19. To remedy a hole on a screen, cut a piece of screen an inch bigger than the hole on all sides. Position the patch over the hole, unravel some wires and weave them securely through the main screen.
20. Storing some chalk bits inside the toolbox absorbs moisture that can rust tools in time.
21. Save the handles of old brooms. They make great extension handles for paint rollers.