28 TIPS

on how to decorate

from localtraders.com

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PROJECT SKILL RATING GUIDE

1 ROLLER *easy*

2 ROLLERS *medium*

3 ROLLERS *hard*

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INTRODUCTION

PLANNING TO REDECORATE A ROOM IN YOUR HOME BUT HAVE NO CLUE HOW TO STRIP WALLPAPER, RESTORE INTERIOR WOODWORK OR EVEN PUT UP A SHELF?

Not everyone is the 'Do It Yourself' expert they claim to be, but you can pretend to be the next Nick Knowles (star of DIY SOS if you're not a lover of DIY programmes either) with our fool-proof and discreetly downloadable guide to how to decorate.

We'll take you through the basics so you can make mincemeat of dowdy wallpaper, polish dull wooden floors to perfection or professionally hang those pictures you've been meaning to put up since you moved in. '28 Tips on How To Decorate' offers step-by-step advice in plain English (that's right no tradesmen jargon) so you can tackle those home improvement tasks around your home. Each 'how to' even outlines what tools and equipment you need to complete the job in hand and also offers a skill rating so you can build yourself up to those more difficult jobs.

We understand that in these difficult economic times, not everyone can afford to hire a professional decorator but with our guide, you can at least attempt to do it yourself.

28 TIPS *on how to decorate* **GET ALMOST PROFESSIONAL RESULTS FOR HALF THE PRICE**

A step by step DIY guide from localtraders.com

1 HOW TO PREPARE YOUR WALLS

You will need

- *Brush or vacuum cleaner*
- *Sugar soap or homemade alternative of warm water and detergent*
- *Sponge*
- *Bleach*
- *Sandpaper*
- *High quality primer*

As with most DIY projects, preparation is everything! When decorating your home, conducting great prep is the difference between a super smooth finish and a sloppy one.

Start off by dusting the surface of your walls with a towel, brush or vacuum cleaner. Next wash down your walls with warm water and a high quality detergent, use a weak solution consisting of 3 teaspoons of household detergent to one bucket of warm water. Alternatively, you can use sugar soap to remove any stubborn stains like grease, soot or smoke damage. Whether you are using sugar soap or a homemade cleaning mixture, use a damp sponge to apply the solution, which should be regularly rinsed. Don't be afraid to cover old ground either, clean the wall area at least 2 to 3 times to remove excess dirt.

You may encounter mould when preparing your walls for painting and it is important to remove this before applying a fresh coat of paint. These troublesome grey-green speckles could spread across the entire room if left untreated. Invest in a quality mould and mildew remover or create your own solution for a cost effective alternative that works just as well. Mix one part bleach with three parts ammonia-free detergent for a mould removing potion. Apply the solution to the problem area and leave for 10 minutes, then rinse away the solution. When cleaning your walls ensure that they are thoroughly dry before you move onto the next stage of preparation.

Now it's time to remove any imperfections on your walls such as chips, cracks and blisters. Use a scraper to remove any flaking paint, and smooth away any lumps and bumps with some high quality sandpaper. There are a number of abrasive papers you can utilise to get the smooth finish you are looking for. As well as wet and dry sanding papers, the latest product is Polycell Liquid Sander, the solution is painted or brushed onto the surface of your walls and left to dry to reveal a surface perfect for painting.

Walls that have had gloss paint applied to them previously need some extra attention during preparation. Glossy surfaces don't have the same adhesion when painting over them so the new coat will find it hard to stick. Use sandpaper to roughen the surface as well as remove any imperfections. Whether you are preparing a glossy or matte surface, fill any cracks and chips with filler then smooth with sandpaper for a ready to paint surface.

The final stage of preparation is applying primer, also known as the professional painter's 'secret weapon'. Using the preparation methods mentioned above, applying a high quality primer is the final stage of hiding away imperfections. Attention must be paid however to which primer is best for your wall. For water and smoke damaged walls use an oil-based primer, whilst new drywalls should be treated with a water-based alternative.

Whether you're freshening up a room or going for a complete design overhaul, preparation is an essential part of a long lasting and beautiful finish.

Take a few hours out of your weekend to prepare like a pro

TIP 2 HOW TO PREPARE INTERIOR WOODWORK

You will need

- *Wood filler*
- *Knotting compound*
- *Sugar soap*
- *Electric sander*
- *Filler knife*
- *Fine sandpaper*
- *Cloth*
- *White spirit*
- *Wood primer (quick drying and water-based)*

Preparing your woodwork should always be a part of your home decoration preparation, after all prep is the key to a complete and professionally finished result. Messy woodwork can be the fine line between a beautiful home interior and a 'not so beautiful' one so prepare your woodwork today with a few tips straight from the experts.

Cracks and holes in your woodwork are unsightly to say the least so repair these with a good quality wood filler. Large knots can be off putting too so use a knotting compound to seal these. If you are working with a painted surface and wish to spruce it up with a fresh coat, wash the surface down with sugar soap before you commence work. The sugar soap will remove any dirt, grime and dust that can go unnoticed to the naked eye but creates a poor result once the new coat of paint has dried.

For a professional finish, prepare your woodwork with an electric sander and remove any flaking paint with a filler knife. Finish by sanding down the whole surface with a fine sheet of sandpaper, paying particular attention to the areas where the newly applied filler has dried. Give the surface a quick wipe down with a cloth dampened in white spirit to remove any fine dust, then seal the surface with a water-based and quick drying wood primer. This sanded and sealed surface is now ready to be painted; the sanding will not only smooth the rough surface but also provide extra adhesion for the new paint to stick to.

When repainting start with vertical strokes and brush out the paint horizontally to get right into the grain of the wooden surface. Finish the first coat using light strokes, painting in the direction of the grain. Allow the first coat to dry before you apply the topcoat.

WHAT IF THE NEW COAT DOESN'T COVER THE OLD ONE?

Painting over woodwork in a different colour takes patience and a lot of paint. But the trick to a beautiful finish is to do multiple coats rather than cover the surface in one thick layer of paint. Why not spend some extra time preparing the wood for painting? It may take a couple of extra hours to sand down the painted surface to bare wood but the end result will be second-to-none.

TIP 3 HOW TO PROTECT YOUR FURNITURE

You will need

- *Masking tape*
- *Dust sheet*
- *Polythene sheeting*

Decorating is an essential part of transforming a house into a home, but it is important to overhaul your decor without putting your stamp on all of its contents!

It's not always possible to remove every item of furniture from the room that you are decorating so every item left behind needs to be properly protected. No matter how handy you are with the paintbrush, accidents happen and paint droplets can turn up in the strangest of places. Take preventative measures for peace of mind and a pleasant painting experience.

Flooring is one furnishing that needs to be protected, some homeowners choose to lift the carpet and remove it all together but you can use masking tape and dust sheets to keep your carpet or wooden flooring in prime condition. Mask the carpet where it meets the skirting board, after all the edge of your flooring is an area that just attracts paint and other spillages. Use a thick strap of masking tape for extra assurance and cover the rest of the area with a clean dust sheet. Keep a bucket of warm water to hand to wipe away any splashes from the woodwork, any spillages will be hard to remove once dry.

When it comes to protecting furniture, gather all movable items in the centre of your room and cover with polythene or dust sheet, you can then easily manoeuvre around the room whilst painting or wallpapering. Some furnishings like kitchen fittings and fixtures can't be moved; use poly sheeting to cover these items and secure with masking tape for the ultimate protection. It also doesn't hurt to double up when using polythene sheeting; some products are thin and can become easily torn when decorating.

Don't forget to remove any curtains and their fixtures before you commence, also if light fittings cannot be removed, wrap these in polythene sheeting and secure with tape to protect them from rogue paint and wallpaper paste.

4 HOW TO STRIP WALLPAPER

You will need

- *Stanley knife*
- *Scraper*
- *Stripping solution (homemade or shop brought)*
- *Sponge*
- *Steamer or steam stripper*

Stripping wallpaper can be a pain and is a feat that has lead many of us to choose paint over wallpaper when overhauling our interiors. However, with the correct equipment and the right techniques you can tackle the most stubborn wall coverings. New wallpaper adheres to stripped surfaces much better so it pays to strip your walls properly.

The important thing to remember is to treat your wall with care when removing old wallpaper, stripping is the main cause of damaged walls. Whether you are opting for a traditional scraper or a steamer, the easiest method of removal is to firstly score the wallpaper with a Stanley or craft knife, this will allow the stripping solution or steam to soak into the wallpaper thoroughly. Be careful not to score too deeply as this may damage the wall underneath. Score the wallpaper in strips for easy removal.

Once scored, if you are not using a steamer, apply a stripping solution to loosen the wallpaper. The stripping solution can be made using hot water and washing up liquid. You can also use 1 part vinegar to 3 parts hot water or use fabric softener with hot water for a sweeter smelling solution. For more stubborn wall coverings, you can buy a ready-to-use stripping solution. Use a sponge to apply the solution to the wallpaper, section by section. Leave to soak for 10 to 15 minutes and see whether the wallpaper can be removed with a scraper. If it still won't budge, apply the stripping solution once more.

When stripping wallpaper it is important to note what type of wall you are removing it from. Drywall and plaster are the most common forms of interior wall material. Drywall is thinner than plaster so is more vulnerable to water damage so try not to over-soak the wallpaper with stripping solution.

DRYWALL VS. PLASTER

Plaster has been used as an interior wall material since the Roman Times, but as home building evolved so too has our choice of wall material. Even though plaster is much sturdier, many modern homes use drywall. As well as being cheaper, drywall gives builders the freedom to cut the wall material to shape and there is no need to wait for the surface to dry, so you can wallpaper or paint straight after installation. Drywall does have its downfalls; plaster is thicker and long lasting whilst drywall is prone to water damage and mould.

When using a scraper be careful not to dig in, the soaked wall below will be more vulnerable to damage when damp. A steamer is a great investment for easy wallpaper removal, they are affordable to buy or can be hired for a small cost from a local tool hire company. Follow the manufacturer's instructions to steam your walls effectively.

Remember: don't leave the plate of the steamer on the wall for too long, prolonged heat can leave the plaster or drywall underneath damaged.

TOP TIP!

When choosing your new wallpaper, why not try the dry-strippable varieties. When it comes to redecorating, this type of wall covering can be loosened and peeled away for easy stripping.

5 HOW TO REMOVE ARTEX

You will need

- *Dust sheets or polythene sheeting*
- *Protective gear (goggles, mask and hard hat)*
- *Chisel*
- *Hammer*
- *Steamer or steam stripper*

Please note you must consult a licensed asbestos specialist before removing artex.

Artex is essentially a homeowner's nightmare! The textured coating was all the rage in the 1970's and 1980's but has plighted generations since by being very difficult to remove and earlier artex can be health risk too.

Before the mid-1980's artex was made using a high level of white asbestos in order to strengthen the mixture but as many people now know asbestos is a dangerous substance that can cause respiratory problems if the harmful fibres and dust are inhaled. If you don't know whether your artex coating was applied before the mid-eighties, you must get it tested by a local asbestos specialist. If it is found to be made with asbestos, your artex should be removed by a licensed contractor, who will dispose of the harmful material correctly.

If the test for asbestos comes back negative and you are particularly brave, then you could choose to remove the textured coating yourself. Removing artex is a very messy job so be sure to cover every inch of your room with dust sheets or polythene, also ensure that you are protected by putting on goggles, a dust mask and hard hat. Make sure the room is well ventilated too. Use a chisel and hammer to remove the artex or if the coating is not too textured, you can remove it with a steam stripper.

Artex can make interiors look and feel dated and many homeowners just put up with it for a hassle-free existence. There are other alternatives to having it removed completely, many contractors recommend having the artex skimmed or caulked over. Once dry, you can then decorate as normal.

TIP 6 HOW TO STRIP PAINT

You will need

- *Dust or polythene sheet*
- *Goggles, gloves and protective overalls*
- *Chemical stripper or heat gun*
- *Scraper*
- *Curved scraper or steel wool*
- *Shavehook*
- *Old paintbrush*
- *White spirit or bucket of warm water*

When overhauling your decor, it's not just the walls that need attention,your woodwork needs to be prepared and painted to complete the look. When wallpapering your walls, you wouldn't dream of applying new wallpaper on top of your old covering, the same applies when painting woodwork like skirting boards, handrails, panelling or doors. Strip your woodwork, just as you'd strip your walls, for a perfect result.

Paint can be sanded away but the easiest and fastest method is to use a heat gun or chemical stripper. Before you begin however make sure you protect yourself and your surroundings. Cover flooring and furnishings with a dust sheet or polythene, and put on old clothes or protective overalls, goggles and gloves to protect yourself from the harsh chemical stripper. Also, work in a well-ventilated area by opening all windows and switching off your central heating.

If you're choosing the traditional chemical stripper method, consider which type of chemical stripper suits you. These strippers come in liquid, spray, brushable or aerosol form, so it's up to you which application method you prefer. The most common form is the liquid stripper, pour this into a small container before application and dab onto the woodwork with an old paintbrush. The trick when using a chemical stripper and applying the solution for maximum absorption is to go with the grain, especially when it comes to removing paint from more ornate wooden features. It may help to have a damp cloth to hand to wipe away any spillages; the chemical can damage other furnishings and upholstery.

You then need to give the stripper time to react with the paint; the reaction time varies from product to product so please consult the manufacturer's instructions. After leaving the solution for the allotted time, test whether the paint comes away with a shavehook. The paint should come loose using gentle scraping, if the paint doesn't come away easily then leave the solution a little longer. Use a curved scraper or steel wool to remove paint from handrails, mouldings and staircase spindles. Please note that steel wool should not be used on oak woodwork, the metal creates black stains on oak so use a nylon pad instead.

After you have removed all the paint from your woodwork, apply warm water or white spirit to the wood to neutralise. Leave to dry for 24 hours before you apply a fresh coat of paint.

When removing paint or varnish from larger areas, like doors and panelling, it may help to use a heat gun. These are relatively cheap to buy (the average price is around £20) and are available from any good DIY store. Delicate areas however can be easily damaged by the prolonged heat from the heat gun. Hold the gun a couple of inches away from the wood and scrap as you go from side to side. For a flawless result, use a shavehook to get into the nooks and crannies where paint loves to congregate.

ARE YOU UP AGAINST LEAD-BASED PAINT?

Lead-based paint isn't used today but was particularly popular before the 1960's, so if you have an older home, chances are you're going to come across a lead-based alternative. Lead-based paint has to be treated a little differently – buy a home testing kit and see whether your wood work is covered using lead-based paint. If it is then use the chemical stripping method to remove, not a heat gun.

7 HOW TO MIX PAINT

You will need

- *Range of paints in same finish (also known as 'mixers')*
- *White paint (again in same finish as mixers)*

In a world where everyone has to be different, your interior should be no exception. Creating a custom interior is a wonderful idea but not as easy as many people think...

Before you go crazy and mix every colour you can get your hands on, buy some tester pots of paint, most DIY stores offer a full range of paints in these smaller quantities. When choosing your paints, make sure you choose paints that have the same finish, i.e. matte, silk, emulsion or gloss. Also, if you have no clue of what colours you want to mix, refer to the colour theory, which consists of primary and secondary colours. Primary colours, like red, yellow and blue, can be combined to form a secondary colour.

The key to mixing paint and finding a colour that suits your taste is to experiment! Many budding decorators choose to throw the colour theory out of the window and just go for it. However, don't throw caution to the wind completely; try to stick to mixing 2 to 3 colours or you may risk creating an unrefined custom colour.

If you do find that the colour you have created is too dark, have some white paint to hand (again of the same finish as the paints you are mixing) and add some to the mixture to lighten the tone. It's important that throughout your experimentation phase you keep track of what colours you have mixed with what and how much of each colour you used to create your personalised shade.

Make up a few custom colours that you like before you test them out.
Paint a few swatches of each onto your wall and allow to dry before standing back and picking your favourite. It's surprising how different the paint will look out of the tin and on your wall. Once you are satisfied, make your chosen shade in a larger quantity, it may be impossible to replicate the exact shade that you created in the first instance but again play around with the shade until you are happy.

The golden rule is to make sure you have enough paint to create enough of your custom colour, there's nothing worse than running out of paint when your room is only half decorated.

TIP 8 HOW TO PAINT A CEILING

You will need

- *Overalls and other protective gear*
- *Angled brush*
- *Your chosen paint*
- *Roller*
- *Tray*
- *Extension handle*

You can't just freshen up your decor by just painting the walls, go the whole hog and paint the ceilings as well. The ceiling should always be painted first, followed by the walls, then to finish the woodwork should be varnished or glossed.

Generally you will need the same equipment for painting a ceiling that is used to paint the walls, but you can choose to invest in an extension handle which will extend the length of your roller. Using an extension handle in the safer and more efficient alternative to painting your ceiling from a step ladder.

The first stage of painting a ceiling is cutting in, create a border of paint (approximately 2 to 3 inches wide) so that you can roll without the danger of getting paint onto your cornices and the walls below. Unlike painting a wall, which should be cut in and rolled wall by wall, you should cut in as you go when painting a ceiling. This will allow you to work with a wet edge whilst rolling larger areas to avoid a banding effect or ridges, which show up when the paint has dried.

Start at one corner and cut in a small section and roll, working your way around the ceiling.

When it comes to rolling the larger areas, attach the extension handle and dip the roller into the tray, take extra care to distribute the paint evenly via rolling the roller onto the grate. Avoid overloading your roller, paint will not defy gravity and your overalls will get covered! Roll in parallel lines across your ceiling for a flawless effect when dry.

TIP 9 HOW TO PAINT A WALL

You will need

- *Overalls and other protective gear*
- *Angled brush*
- *Your chosen paint*
- *Roller*
- *Tray*

Painting is one of the most common home improvement projects taken on by DIY enthusiasts all year round. You don't have to paint like a pro to be able to successfully paint a room, but it helps to have a few techniques up your sleeve to ensure a high quality finish, after all a poor paint job is easy to spot.

After you have prepared your room by protecting your furniture and smoothing walls (see page 3 to find out 'how to prepare your walls' and 'how to protect your furniture' on page 4), you can then begin by cutting in. Ensure the room is well-ventilated before you commence.

Cutting in is a well-known painting technique used by professionals and amateurs alike. Use an angled brush to cut around the edges of your skirting, corners and cornices, also cut around radiators and doorways. Dip your brush into the paint, covering a third of the bristles and tap off any excess paint (do not brush excess paint away). Paint a band of 2 to 3 inches around all corners, skirting, cornices and fixtures, this will give you some breathing space when it comes to rolling. Once you have created a border, smooth any areas that are heavy in paint or any drips with the brush to achieve even coverage. When painting, complete the room wall by wall, rolling on paint when the edges that you have cut in are wet will provide an even shade once dried.

TOP TIP!

Protecting your skirting boards with masking tape isn't always as effective as you think. For ultimate protection, protect your skirting with a paint shield, also known as a 'George'. This is held over the skirting board so you can paint freely above without the danger of dripping excess paint onto your woodwork.

Next it is time to fill in the gaps by rolling paint onto the larger areas inside the border. Fill the tray with paint, leaving half an inch before the grate, dip the roller into the tray and roll onto the grate to distribute the paint evenly across the roller. To distribute the paint further, roll a 'W' onto the wall and then start rolling paint vertically from ceiling to floor. Overlap with the edges where you have cut in to blend away brush marks and drips.

Before applying your second coat, make sure you wait for the first coat to dry for the best results.

TIP 10 HOW TO HANG WALLPAPER

You will need

- *Pasting table*
- *Pasting brush*
- *Wallpaper brush*
- *Plumb line or spirit level*
- *Tape measure*
- *Stanley knife*
- *Scissors*
- *Pencil*
- *Damp sponge*

Whether you are using wallpaper to create a feature wall or covering your whole room with a designer wall covering, hanging wallpaper can be tricky and it's not always possible to call on a professional so why not do it yourself!

After preparing your walls and protecting yourself and your furniture, you must start by measuring out your wallpaper. Use a measuring tape to size up the length of your wall and leave 2 inches at the top and bottom of the length, which will be trimmed later for a seamless finish. With patterned wallpaper ensure you have the pattern the right way round before you start measuring up and cutting lengths, it may help to label the top and the bottom of each section of wallpaper so there is no confusion when hanging.

Next each length must be pasted and folded, use a paste containing a fungicide, especially when it comes to decorating rooms that are exposed to moisture, for example, the kitchen, bathroom and utility area. Mix the paste in accordance to the manufacturer's instructions. You can also buy ready mixed wallpaper paste

for ultimate ease. Start at the top of each wallpaper section and apply paste to the whole length of the paper, from top to bottom, spread the paste from the centre to the edges for even coverage. Fold each pasted length inwards so that the top and bottom of the wallpaper meet in the middle. Put each piece of wallpaper to one side for soaking, ensuring that the paste has absorbed correctly for effective hanging.

Now comes the tricky part – hanging the wallpaper. Avoid wonky results by using a plumb line or spirit level to draw a line so you can hang your first length straight, the rest of the lengths will follow suit. When you hang the wallpaper leave the plumb line showing so you can double check that the length is completely straight.

TOP TIP!

Make your own plumb line by attaching a weight to a long piece of string, your homemade version will rival any shop brought plumb bob. Hang the plumb line from the ceiling and leave it to swing and come to a stop naturally, you can then mark your perfectly straight, vertical line onto the wall with a pencil.

To hang a length of wallpaper, open the top fold of the section and stick to the top of the wall, following the plumb line as a guide. Don't forget to leave roughly 2 inches at the top of the wall for the final trim. Use the paper brush to smooth away any lumps and bumps, work from the centre and out to the edges to dispel any trapped air. Finish by opening the bottom fold and smoothing down to the skirting, again leaving the 2 inch excess at the bottom. Ensure that the edges of the wallpaper length are fully fixed, add more paste if necessary. Any paste that has fell onto the surface of the wallpaper must be removed using a damp sponge immediately as once dry it will be particularly difficult to remove.

Use the scissors to gently crease the extra 2 inches either end of the wallpaper length, use the crease as a guide to cut away the excess paper with the Stanley knife. Repeat this process ensuring each length of paper meets exactly.

WHY USE LINING PAPER?

Lining paper is recommended by all professional painters and decorators. Not only does lining paper effectively hide any damage on the wall below, but also provides an extra adhesive surface for the wall coverings to stick to. Lining paper is particularly useful when papering over walls that have been previously painted with gloss or silk paint, but also when hanging heavy wallpapers or wall coverings with specialist finishes.

Lining paper is hung like normal wallpaper, but can be hung horizontally or vertically. Many choose to hang horizontally so that the joins of the lining paper do not conflict with the joins of the wall covering. Allow the lining paper time to dry before hanging wallpaper.

11 HOW TO WALLPAPER INTO A CORNER

You will need

- *Wallpaper*
- *Tape measure*
- *Scissors*
- *Wallpaper paste*
- *Pencil*
- *Wallpaper brush*

Wallpapering into corners can be a difficult yet inevitable job, but it's not an impossible one. The key with wallpapering into corners is to plan ahead. You must plan to start just before the corner, not using a particularly long or short length of wallpaper to avoid creasing and other imperfections. Plan to run just a small amount into the corner.

Start by measuring from the last length of wallpaper that was hung before the corner, take a measurement from here into the corner and cut a length that is 1-2 inches bigger than your measurement. Paste and hang this section, which will run into and slightly past the corner. Now take the second piece and hang from the corner, along the vertical line, this will create a seamless effect and the end result will almost look like one piece of wallpaper running across the corner.

Finish by brushing into the corner to remove any blisters and creases.

WORKING WITH PATTERNED WALLPAPER?

As with hanging any wallpaper, it is important to match up the pattern as closely as possible, which will be a little difficult when cutting shorter sections to paper into a corner. The joy of papering into a corner however is that any slight mismatch will go unnoticed to the untrained eye.

TIP 12 HOW TO REMOVE PAINT FROM CARPETS

You will need

- Paper towels
- Turpentine, mineral spirits or glycerin (depending on the type of paint you're using)
- Rubbing alcohol or nail varnish remover (varies based on paint type)
- Solution of mild detergent and clean water
- Dry towel
- WD40 for dried in stains

Redecorating is a common task taken on by many homeowners and with painting a room, there is always a risk of spilling paint on your floors and furnishings. Even if you protect your room well, paint often finds its way underneath polythene and dust sheets and onto your carpet.

The key to removing paint that gets spilt on your carpet is to act fast! If the paint has time to dry fully, then you could be left with a permanent stain. How paint is removed largely depends on the type of paint you are using. Start however by containing the spillage or else you could be removing paint from a larger area than you anticipated. Surround the spillage with dry paper towels, which will soak up any spreading paint.

After containing the paint, blot any excess paint with dry paper towels to remove as much as possible.

The next step is determined by the type of paint you have used...

- Oil-based paint

This type of paint requires chemical treatment. Before you start the application, test your chemical of choice on a small section of your carpet to ensure that the formula does not stain. Apply your chemical solution (usually turpentine or mineral spirits) using paper towels and a blotting action. Once the paint has been removed blot with rubbing alcohol, this will remove any residue left from the chemical. Finish by blotting with a mild detergent and clean water, and dry with a towel.

- Acrylic paint

Use glycerin to remove acrylic paint instead of chemical treatments. Again blot onto the stain with a paper towel and then rub on acetone or nail varnish remover to take away any leftover glycerin.

- Water-based paint

Water-based paint requires no chemicals, just use a soapy mixture of mild detergent and clean water to remove the paint. Blot this on the spillage with a paper towel. Don't use too much water however, excessive dilution will cause the spillage to spread and stain a larger area. Dry with a towel or wet/dry vacuum cleaner.

WHAT IF THE PAINT HAS DRIED INTO THE CARPET?

It's not the end of the world if the paint has dried into the carpet! Scrape away any excess paint with a razor blade, being careful not to spread it. Then use a chemical treatment to remove. WD40 is a great solution for removing dried in paint, give it a go! For paint that is irremovable, repair the section with a carpet patch.

13 HOW TO CLEAN PAINTED OR WALLPAPERED WALLS

You will need

- *Duster*
- *Cloths*
- *Natural sponge*
- *Bucket of cleaning solution (read on to find out how to mix cleaning solution)*
- *Bucket of clean water*

Finish and maintain your new decor by cleaning your painted walls or wallpaper to perfection. During the decorating process and over time, walls become plagued with smudges, smears and fingerprints, which cause damage in the long run and produce a tired, unkempt appearance.

Before you start the cleanup, protect your room. Cleaning your walls and wallpaper can be a very messy job, use a canvas drop cloth or dust sheet to cover your floor and furniture. The cloth will absorb any soapy spillages. Now mix your cleaning solution – for light cleaning, mix warm water and some washing up liquid to create a cleaning solution. For heavily soiled walls, use a mixture of warm water, clear ammonia, white vinegar and Borax powder. This will provide a gentle yet powerful solution to tackle the most stubborn marks and stains.
Now it's time to clean! Start by removing dust with your duster, circle the room wiping all walls and woodwork as you go. Alternatively you can use a vacuum with an upholstery attachment to get into those hard to reach corners.

Next wipe the walls with your cleaning solution, use a natural sponge as coloured sponges may leave dye on lightly painted walls. Be careful that you do not make your sponge too wet as dripping solution may stain if it isn't rinsed away properly. Work on small sections and rinse as you go with clean water.

Finish by blotting away any excess moisture with a clean cloth.

14 HOW TO REMOVE TILES

You will need

- *Dust sheet*
- *Dust mask*
- *Goggles*
- *Padded gloves*
- *Hammer*
- *Cold chisel (wide-bladed)*
- *Heavy duty refuse bag*
- *Scraper*
- *Plaster filler*

To transform the look of your kitchen or bathroom it's more than likely that youare going to have to remove a few old tiles. After all tiles are one item of home decor that is difficult to change the look of without removal.

Prepare your room by removing as many items as you can and covering all work surfaces or sanitaryware with a dust sheet. It may be worth doubling up on dust sheet protection as small bits of tiles will be ground into the sheets and can often make their way to your floor, where they can cause considerable damage. Put on a dust mask, goggles and padded gloves before you begin to protect your eyes and hands during work and prevent inhalation of dust and debris. Use a hammer and cold chisel to remove tiles along the grout line.

Hammer in the chisel underneath the tiles and lever to remove. Work your way around the room and collect all debris as you go to prevent damage to your floors and work surfaces, dispose of in a heavy duty refuse bag. Next scrape off any grout or adhesive that remains underneath the tiles, most will be loosened during tile removal. Use a scraper or cold chisel to remove grout and adhesive. If the plaster underneath becomes loose, then just chip it away and fill in with plaster filler later. If you have a stud wall, it may be easier to remove the entire plasterboard panel, adding new panels during redecoration.

15 HOW TO FIT TILES

You will need

- *Plaster filler*
- *Plaster stabilising solution (for powdery surfaces)*
- *Tape measure*
- *Pencil*
- *Plumb line*
- *Timber batten*
- *Waterproof adhesive*
- *Grout spreader*
- *Spirit level*
- *Tile spacers*
- *Tile cutting jig or freehand cutter*
- *Tile saw*

Tiling doesn't need to be left to the professionals, with the right know-how you can take tiling in your stride. As with any decorating, the perfect finish begins with the perfect start so ensure you prep your surfaces before you commence work.

Any large holes should be repaired using plaster filler, allow to dry before you begin tiling. If the surface dries unstably and powdery, apply a plaster stabilising solution which will steady the surface for when you add your adhesive and tiles.

Now comes the fun part – plan where your tiles will lie with the timber batten, plumb line and tape measure. Use the batten as a guide to mark horizontal lines on the wall, move up the wall, leaving a tile width as you go. If you arrive at the top of the wall and have a small strip left to cover, simply move the bottom row up and position the narrow strip at the bottom for a neater finish. Now attach the batten to the first line, this can be used to position your tiles on top so they can be attached in a straight line.

CUTTING TILES

Not every room is perfectly square, especially with the amount of fitted furniture and appliances in the way, which makes sure tiling is always a challenge. Don't be defeated by oddly shaped rooms and protruding pipes, tiles can be cut to your specification to cater to any space.

The glazed surfaces found on hard ceramic tiles needs to be scored with a cutting jig or freehand cutter, which allows the tile to be broken. To fit tiles around more awkward shapes, use a tile saw to cut the tile to fit around fixtures and fittings.

Add your adhesive using the notched end of your spreader, this will create a ribbed effect whilst spreading for extra adhesion. Work with a square metre at a time so that the adhesive does not dry out. Now start tiling; press the tiles onto the adhesive using the batten as a guide for your first row, use the spirit level to ensure that the tiles are flat and their surfaces are in line with each other. Use tile spacers for a professional finish, these are positioned between the tiles as you go to ensure you leave an even gap in between each tile. Leave to dry before you remove the timber batten guide and start to grout.

16 HOW TO GROUT TILES

You will need

- *Sponge*
- *Bucket of clean water*
- *Scraper*
- *Pliers*
- *Grout*
- *Grout spreader*
- *Cloth*
- *Waterproof sealer*

For a professional and completely waterproof finish, you must grout your tiles once they are in place. Once the adhesive is completely dry, use a damp sponge and clean water to remove any excess adhesive that may have made its way to the tile surface. Use a scraper to get rid of tougher, dried on adhesive. Next use pliers to remove the tile spacers from the corner of each tile.

Apply the grout using the grout spreader, spread on the grout diagonally, forcing the grout in between the tiles as you go. Work with a square metre at a time so you can ensure that the grout does not dry too much to the surface of the tile. Wipe away excess grout with a damp sponge, rinsing regularly with clean water. Once the grout and tile surface has fully dried (read the manufacturer's instructions of your grout product for drying times), polish with a cloth for a pristine finish.

TOP TIP!

Don't forget to seal the gap between your bottom row of tiles and the work surface, bath or sink with a waterproof sealant.

17 HOW TO REPLACE BROKEN TILES

You will need

- *Goggles*
- *Carbide-tipped scoring tool*
- *Painter's tape*
- *Drill with ceramic bit*
- *Hammer*
- *Cold chisel*
- *Wide-bladed chisel*
- *Adhesive*
- *Grout spreader*
- *Sponge*
- *Bucket of clean water*
- *Grout*
- *Cloth*

Broken floor or wall tiles can ruin the entire look of a tiled room, but damage that can be easily caused can be amended just as quickly without having to replace the entire set of tiles. All you need is a steady hand and the equipment shown above.

Put on your goggles to protect your eyes from flying debris and dust, now use the carbide-tipped scoring tool to chip away at the grout surrounding the broken tile. Be careful not to slip and damage any neighbouring tiles. Once the grout has been removed from around the tile, apply painter's tape on the edge of the grout line, this will prevent surrounding tiles from getting chipped whilst you are removing the damaged tile.

Next drill a hole into each section of broken tile, this will loosen the adhesive below slightly and make it much easier to remove. Take your hammer and cold chisel, and work from the centre outwards to remove the broken tile sections. Gently tap away at the tile until it becomes loose. Once all the tile has been removed, use the wide-bladed chisel to remove the adhesive underneath, again be careful not to damage surrounding tiles as dried on adhesive can be tough to remove. Ensure that the surface is even and all adhesive has been removed before you place the new tile.

Take your new tile and use the notched end of the grout spreader to comb adhesive onto the back and into the vacant space on your floor or wall. Place the tile into the space and press down firmly. Continue to apply pressure until the new tile is level with all the surrounding tiles. Once it is level, adjust the tile's positioning to produce even spacing on each side of the tile. When the adhesive is dry, use the sponge, which should be dampened with clean water, to wipe away any excess adhesive. Grout around as normal and finish with a wipe of a damp sponge and polish with a dry cloth. If you are replacing a floor tile, make sure you don't stand on the tile for at least 24 hours to allow it to dry properly and position without pressure.

TIP 18 HOW TO FIX A SQUEAKY FLOORBOARD

You will need

- *Talc*
- *Pencil*
- *Drill and drill bit*
- *Screwdriver*
- *Screws (60mm)*
- *Cold chisel*
- *Hammer*
- *Timber batten*

There is nothing more traumatic and annoying then noticing a squeaky floorboard, but unbeknown to many this problem can be fixed easily and hours of wincing at the noise a loose floorboard creates can be averted in an instant.

So why do we get squeaky floorboards? Over time floorboards swell due to the heat and moisture in the room, the board becomes distorted and expands causing the edges of the boards to collide and rub together to create a squeaking noise. Other squeaks are caused by loose boards and unsupported board ends.

Before you reach for the tools, you may be able to solve your creaky problem without even touching a drill, screwdriver or cold chisel. Firstly however, you must do some detective work and track down which floor board is the creaky culprit. Lift and remove the floor covering in the room and simply walk the boards to see if you can hear the squeak, walk in various directions to test the boards completely. If you have more than one squeaky floorboard, carry a pencil with you and mark each board that creaks. Some squeaking boards can be remedied with a simple household product like talc. Sprinkle the board with talc, paying particular attention to the edges of the board. The talc reduces friction and could prevent minor squeaks.

If the noise persists however, the squeak may be coming from a little deeper. Many creaks are caused by joists that support the boards becoming loose. These must be tightened to prevent creaks; drill holes into the end of the board and fix in the 60mm screws, the holes must be drilled first to prevent the wood from splitting. If the board isn't supported by any joists, then it may be worth adding some to stop squeaky boards and to reinforce the board's strength. Lift the board with a wide-bladed cold chisel and hammer, cut your own joist from the timber batten and place underneath to support the board ends. Lay the board on top, noting the position of the joists and fix, again using the 60mm screws.

HOW DO YOU FIX A SQUEAKY STEP?

If you can get underneath your wooden staircase, then fixing a creaking step is an easy job. Fashion a wooden wedge and screw this into either end and in the middle of the joint where the step and side of the stair meet. Use a strong, high quality wood for the ultimate support.

TIP 19 HOW TO LEVEL A FLOOR

You will need

- *Spirit level*
- *Hammer*
- *Try square*
- *Punch tool*
- *Hardboard sheets*
- *Bucket of clean water*
- *Paint brush*
- *Saw*
- *Straight edge*
- *Diamond-headed panel pins*

When laying carpet or installing tiles, you need to ensure that the surface you are laying them on is completely level. You may not notice a slope at first but you will become aware of a slight slope as time goes by, creating a very annoying and rather disappointing result. Take a spirit level and use this to check the slope of your floor before tile or carpet laying commences.

If your floor does have a slope, this can be easily corrected using hardboard sheets. Before you begin, remove your skirting boards, these will be fixed on again after you have levelled the floor. Also, check the ventilation of your floorboards by looking for the room's airbrick. If you cannot find the airbrick and your flooring does not have sufficient ventilation, install an airbrick and look for signs of mould and damp, this should be treated before you install your hardboard. It is useful to mark out the location of underfloor pipes and electrics on your old floorboards using a try square. When it comes to the installation of the hardboard sheets lay narrow strips of board on these marked areas so that they can be easily lifted for emergency repair or maintenance.

Next prepare your old floorboards by driving in any protruding nails using the nail punch and screwing down any loose boards. Due to the humidity being different in every room, it is essential that your hardboard sheets have time to acclimatise to the room in which they'll be placed. Bring your hardboard sheets into the room and brush around one litre of water onto the rough side of each board. Leave the boards in the room for 24 hours so that they can adjust to their new surroundings.

Once the boards have acclimatised for a full day, saw to the desired size using the straight edge as a guide. Lay the boards rough side up and fix using the diamond-headed panel pins, pin every 100mm for a secure finish. After attaching all the sheets, the floor will now be ready and level enough to house your new carpet or tiles to a highly professional standard.

TIP 20 HOW TO SAND A FLOOR

You will need

- *Dust sheet*
- *Dust mask*
- *Goggles*
- *Ear protectors*
- *Overalls*
- *Drills and screws*
- *Nail punch*
- *Timber cuttings*
- *Wood glue*
- *Hammer*
- *Wood filler*
- *Wide-bladed chisel*
- *Floor sander*
- *Sanding sheets*
- *Round-edged sander*
- *Cold chisel*
- *Vacuum*
- *Cloth*
- *White spirit*
- *Varnish/ clear finish*
- *Brush*

Having authentic wooden flooring in your home creates a look that is beautiful and timeless, but this feature must be successfully maintained via sanding and staining to preserve its quality over time.

Prepare the room for sanding by removing all furniture, furnishings and floor coverings, all the items which cannot be removed, cover with a canvas sheet to protect them from dust. Don't forget to protect yourself too – put on a dust mask, goggles, ear protectors and overalls before you begin work. Ensure that there is an appropriate level of ventilation in the room during sanding by opening all windows and exterior doors.

Now prepare your floorboards for sanding; screw down any loose boards and use the nail punch to sort out any protruding nails. Close up any large gaps between floorboards by removing the floorboards and pushing them closer together. Alternatively, you can cut a small strip of timber to fit within the gap, smear both sides with wood glue and hammer into the gap to fit. Fill all dead knot holes in your floorboards with a good quality wood filler. Any broken or damaged floorboards should also be removed with a wide-bladed chisel and replaced with a similar wooden board, matching quality as closely as possible.

You can hire a professional sander from a local rental shop or invest in your own.

Use the sander with a medium grade sanding sheet if your floor is in a relatively good condition and is not stained. More heavy duty sanding sheets may need to be utilised if your floors are in bad condition and have been treated or painted. Initially work diagonally with the floor sander, keeping the same pace as you work your way across the room. It is important to keep moving at all times to ensure even coverage. Once you have covered the whole room, replace the sanding sheet and start again. Now move in the direction of the boards, finish by going over the boards once more, this time with a fine abrasive.

The room's edge needs a bit more attention to detail and precision – using a round-edged sander work around the edge of the room, keeping as close to the skirting board as possible. Use a cold chisel to remove any dirt congregating in the corners of the room, between the floorboards and underneath the skirting. Vacuum the room to remove any dust and wipe the boards with a cloth dampened in white spirit. Seal the floor with a clear or coloured varnish, brush on at least two coats and leave to dry.

TIP 21 HOW TO LAY FLOORING

Laying any flooring, from laminate and wooden floors to tiles and carpets, can be a tricky job but it really doesn't have to be left to the experts. Let's start off with how to lay wooden flooring, whether it is an engineered or laminate product you are looking to fit...

Wooden Floors

Wooden floors expand due to the humidity of the room so it is essential that you allow time for your flooring to acclimatise to the room's atmosphere. Move your flooring into the room, open the pack and lay in sunlight for the flooring to get the full impact of the room's temperature. Leave the flooring for 24 hours before you start installation.

Remove skirting boards with a crow bar, these are refitted during the last steps of laying a wooden floor. Vacuum the floor then fit the underlay; use a utility knife to cut the underlay to size and secure by taping around the edges. The tape will also ensure that any moisture residing underneath the underlay doesn't rise and damage your flooring. Now position plastic spacers around the room, this will allow some extra room for expansion as the wooden floor will swell after fitting. Now lay the first board, ensuring that the groove is facing the wall. Check the manufacturer's instructions to see whether the flooring should be fixed using nails or glue. Cut this first board to fit and use the cut end to start the second row to stagger the joints of the adjacent rows for a truly professional result.

When fitting the rest of the boards, continue to stagger the joints and push the sides of each board using a fitting tool for a snug fit. Work your way across the room and cut the final board lengthways to fit, again force in with the fitting tool. Cut any boards that conflict with pipes or corners to fit. To finish remove the plastic spacers and refit the skirting to cover this gap, this allows enough space for expansion as well as providing an expert finish with no gaps!

Tiles

See our section 'How to fit tiles' on page 18. The same rules apply when it comes to fitting tiles for wall and floor; the only thing that differs when fitting floor tiles is that you have to leave the adhesive to dry for up to 12 hours, without walking on the tiles. You also have to seal the tile surface to protect from damage and finish by grouting.

Carpet

Start by removing any old carpet or flooring and fit gripper strips around the edge of the room, ensuring they are positioned at least 1/5 inch away from the edge of the skirting board. This small gap between the skirting and the gripper strip ensures there is sufficient room to tuck the carpet under neatly when you have finished the fitting. If you are laying onto floorboards, nail in the grippers, however, if you have concrete floors glue the grippers to the floor with a quick setting polyurethane product.

Fit the underlay next, roll out the underlay across the room and join the edges with doubled side carpet tape. Trim the underlay so it fits perfectly within the gripper strips. Now unroll the carpet and fix to the grippers, smoothing out any creases by stretching the carpet to fit. Fix all sides of the carpet to the grippers to secure. Next tuck the edges of the carpet into the space between the gripper strip and skirting board, use a bolster chisel to push the carpet into this tight gap. Finish by trimming off any excess carpet from the edges with a Stanley knife.

TIP 22 HOW TO MEASURE FOR CURTAINS AND BLINDS

You will need

- *Step ladder*
- *Metal measuring tape*
- *Pen*
- *Paper*

Ordering curtains and blinds needs precision when it comes to measuring, there is nothing worse than getting home and realising those blinds or curtains that you love (and that were on sale) are too wide or too long. When measuring for either blinds or curtains use a metal tape measure for accuracy and measure in centimetres to the nearest ½ cm. The golden rule when measuring for curtains and blinds is to always double check the measurements; after all it's easy to misread a measurement by a centimetre or two and that extra centimetre can make all the different between a perfect finish and a not-so-perfect one.

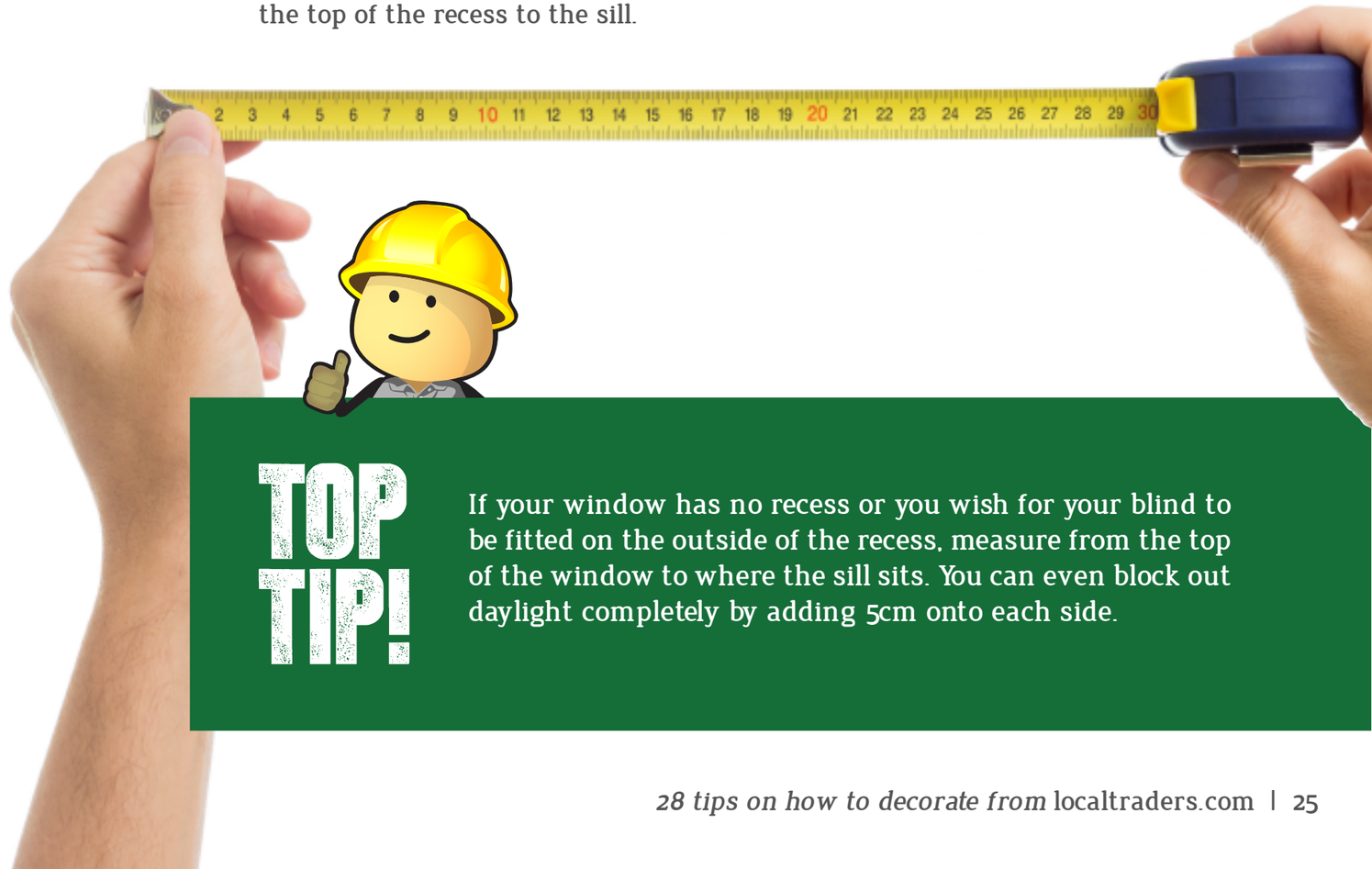
With curtains, two measurements must be taken – width and drop. To measure the width for a pole affix the curtain, measure in between the decorative fixtures placed at either end. Whilst for track fixtures, measure the entire length of the track.

Before you measure the drop length of the curtain, you must first decide what finish you would like. The two standard lengths are sill and floor length. When opting for floor length curtains, measure the floor length and add an extra 15cm to the measurement, this will ensure a perfect finish and conceal an uneven floor. For sill length curtains, measure to the sill and either add 15cm to the measurement or subtract 1-2 cm, depending on which look you'd like. Tab top, eyelet and pleat headed curtains require different measurements. For tab top or eyelet curtains you must measure from the top of the pole to the desired length. Pleated headings require eye drop and heading height measurements...

- Eye drop: this is the distance from the eye, where the hook is attached, to where the curtain finishes.

- Heading height: the distance from the eye to where you want the top of the curtain to be. For tracks the heading height usually sits just above the track, covering the fixture; whilst for pole fitting, the heading height is 2cm above the pole.

Measuring blinds is a little different. If your window has a recess, i.e. is set back from the wall, you can choose to fit the blind inside the recess for a neat finish. Measure the deepness from edge of the wall to the window in three places and take the smallest measurement. The length is measured in the same way from the top of the recess to the sill.



TOP TIP!

If your window has no recess or you wish for your blind to be fitted on the outside of the recess, measure from the top of the window to where the sill sits. You can even block out daylight completely by adding 5cm onto each side.

TIP 23 HOW TO FIT A ROLLER BLIND

You will need

- *Pencil*
- *Ready-made roller blind kit (should include screws and brackets)*
- *Drill and drill bit*
- *Wood plugs*
- *Metal tape measure*
- *Spirit level*
- *Hand saw*
- *Scissors*

There are a number of ways you can fit a roller blind, you can either fit it directly onto your window frame, inside the recess of your window or on the outside of the recess, sitting on the wall in which your window is set back into. A huge part of prep is deciding the most practical way to position your blind as to prevent damage to your walls, you need to get it right the first time. Also, before you begin work decide which side you'd like the cord that controls the roller to sit on, again think about practicality.

Once the fundamentals have been decided, take your pencil and mark where the first bracket should lie, read the manufacturer's instructions to determine how many screws will be inserted and in which position. Based on this, hold the blind up to your markings and test whether the blind fits and that the window can still function correctly. If you find it hard to open the window or the blind simply doesn't fit in, reconsider the position of the markings; test the position every time you reposition your bracket markings. When you are completely satisfied that you have found the right position for your blind, drill carefully into the markings to create holes for your screws.

Insert wood plugs into these holes and screw the first bracket in place. Measure the position of this first bracket with the metal tape measure and match that position on the opposite side to create a perfectly aligned position for the second bracket. Use these markings to fix in the second bracket using the drill, wood plugs and screws. Pop your roller blind into both of the brackets and double check whether it is level by using a spirit level.

In terms of the blinds length, very often the blind will fit perfectly. If not, unroll the entire blind whilst it is hanging from the brackets and mark on the desired length. It may be wise to add on another inch to the desired length, just in case a mishap occurs, such as a mis-measurement or sloping cut. Remove the blind from the brackets and use the hand saw to cut off the roller and lath (the wooden section at the bottom of the blind), then use some sharp scissors to cut carefully along the mark you made earlier on the blind. Reattach the roller and lath, and slot the blinds back into their brackets.

24 HOW TO SHORTEN CURTAINS

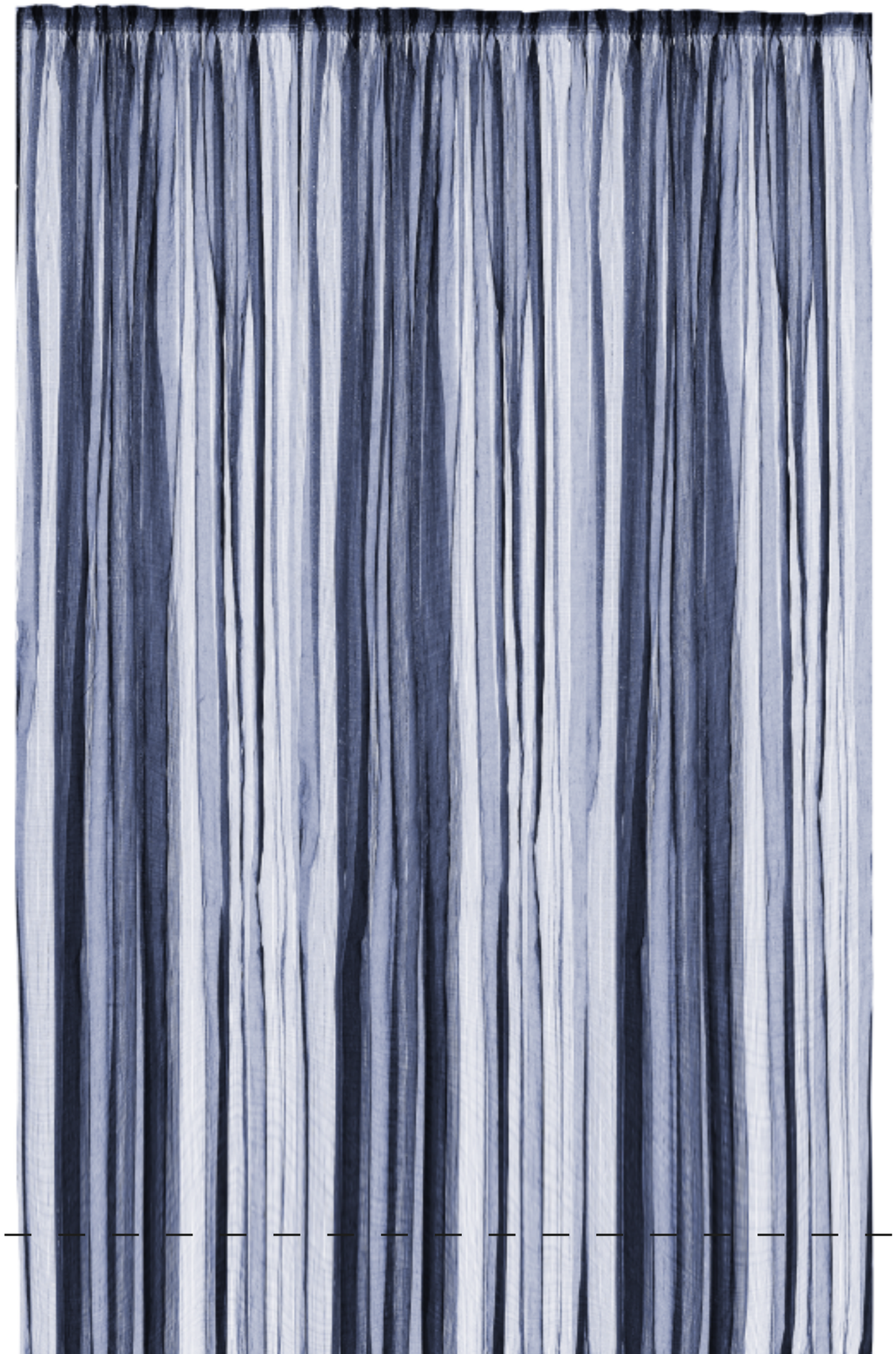
You will need

- *Tape measure*
- *Sewing pins*
- *Scissors*
- *Iron*
- *Sewing machine or needle and thread*

Having alterations made to your curtains can be expensive but with a basic sewing kit and a few simple steps you can easily shorten curtains yourself.

Firstly measure your curtains whilst they are hanging from their pole or track, marking on your desired length using the pins. Don't forget to double check your measurements to ensure that you don't cut the curtains too short and get the alteration right the first time. Now remove the curtains from their pole or track and carefully unpick the stitches that fix the main curtain material to its lining. Make a note of the measurements of your existing curtain material and lining.

Unpick the existing hem on the curtain material and trim the excess fabric to the mark you made earlier. Ensure that you leave enough fabric to make the new hem. Turn the fabric up to create the hem , checking it is level by using the tape measure, press the fabric in place and pin if necessary. Stitch across this to create a hem either by using a sewing machine or by hand stitching with a needle and thread. Repeat this process with the lining material and rejoin both the curtain material and lining with a row of stitching.



TIP 25 HOW TO HANG A DOOR

You will need

- *New door*
- *Screwdriver*
- *Pencil*
- *Safety goggles*
- *Dust mask*
- *Panel saw or hand plane*
- *Screws*
- *Hinges*
- *Mallet*
- *Chisel*
- *Wooden wedges*

To complete the look of your decorated room, hang a new door to compliment your new interior. Start by removing your old door, take out the screws from the bottom hinge and then the top, ensuring that the door is properly supported throughout removal. Use the screwdriver to remove any paint that has dried over the hinges and screws.

Next cut your new door to size, hold the door up to the frame and mark on the door where the wood needs to be trimmed with the pencil. If your old door was a perfect fit, use this as a guide, lay the old door on top of the new door and mark where to cut. Make sure you take an equal amount from the top and bottom of the door so that finished product will be correctly balanced.

Now put on your goggles and dust mask – remember safety first. Use a panel saw if you are cutting more than 6mm off, for trimmings less than the 6mm, use a hand plane. Trim carefully in accordance to your markings, allowing an extra 2mm either side and at the top of the door to ensure that the door can open and close smoothly once fixed into the frame. If you have a particularly thick carpet, leave up to 10mm at the bottom of the door.

The hinges must now be put into place, check the new hinges against the section where the old hinges were in place on the door frame. If they are not the same size, use a mallet and chisel to cut out a hole for the new hinges. Once you are satisfied, fix the hinges into the door frame with a single screw and open the hinge. Prop the door against the frame with the aid of two to three wooden wedges and mark where the hinges fall onto the door. Lay the door flat and remove the hinge from the door frame, placing the hinge onto the door. Mark around the entire hinge and use a mallet and chisel to carve out the section of wood so the hinge slots in and lies flat. Fix one screw into the door, which will hold the hinge in place temporarily.

Again prop the door up to the frame using the wooden wedges, fix the hinge flaps to the door frame using one screw so you can make any adjustments if necessary. Check that the door opens and closes correctly, then fix the rest of the screws into the door and door frame.

26 HOW TO FIT A DOOR HANDLE

You will need

- Pencil
- New door handle (latch, spindle and screws)
- Drill and drill bits (including flat wood cutting bit)
- Masking tape
- Chisel

The second stage of hanging a new door is the fitting of the door handle, which is a job in itself! Firstly, the latch needs to be put in position at the middle of the door. Generally the bottom of the latch sits 1 metre above the floor. Hold the latch in place at the 1m mark and at the centre of the edge of the door; mark its position with a pencil.

Take your drill and flat wood cutting drill bit and place against the latch to measure the depth that you must go to whilst drilling. Use masking tape to mark this position and start drilling. Drill the hole into the side of the door and chisel out any debris. Next insert the latch, ensuring it is level, and mark around the entire latch. Use the chisel to scrape away the wood to create a shallow hole to allow the latch to lie flat.

Now you must accommodate the spindle part of your new door handle. Hold the latch in position on the outside of the door and pencil where the hole in the latch is positioned. Repeat on the other side of the door. Choose a drill bit that is 2mm wider than the actual spindle and start drilling into the door to create an insertion point.

Again use the chisel to remove any debris from the freshly drilled hole. Slide in the latch and place the spindle in and through the latch hole. Finish by screwing the latch in place.

TOP TIP!

Keep an eye on the other side of the door whilst drilling a hole for your spindle, as soon as the drill bit starts to emerge, stop drilling and continue from the other side to prevent the wood from splitting.

TIP 27 HOW TO HANG PICTURES

You will need

- *Drill and drill bit*
- *Wall plugs*
- *Screws*
- *Multi-purpose electronic tester*

This may sound like a simple feat but how many times have you hung pictures and a week or two later they've fallen down?

With this fool-proof advice you can picture hang to perfection, after all it's not as easy as banging in a few nails and hoping for the best.

How to hang a picture correctly depends on the type of wall you are working with, generally wall types fall into two categories – masonry and cavity walls. Masonry walls are made from solid stone or brick, whilst cavity walls are thinner and house electrics and pipe work. When working with masonry walls drill a pilot hole into the wall first and insert a wall plug. Ensure that the wall plug fits into the drilled hole snugly and lies flat against the wall. You can then fix the screw into the wall plug as usual and hang your picture.

AVOID AN ELECTRIFYING EXPERIENCE

Never drill above or below light switches or plug sockets! In these areas, it is likely that there is an electric cable hidden behind the wall and as you can imagine a metal drill bit and electricity don't quite mix. Use an electronic tester to determine whether there is any danger of encountering concealed electrics.

Cavity walls are much thinner than masonry walls, and contain your home's pipes and electrics so you have to be careful when hanging pictures. Use a multi-purpose electronic tester before you drill; this handy device is placed onto the wall and emits a signal to alert you of any electrical current or metal pipe work.

In older homes, cavity walls are made from lath and plaster, which consist of thin strips of wood that have been plastered. Lath and plaster lies on vertical and horizontal timber strips, also known as 'studs' and 'noggings'.

It is not recommended that you hang a picture on lath, it is too weak to support heavy items like mirrors and large frames but the timber strips that hold the lath and plaster in place make the perfect surface to insert a screw to hang a picture. Tap on the wall and listen – when you encounter lath it will sound hollow but with a timber strips, a more solid sound will be heard.

TIP 28 HOW TO PUT UP SHELVES

You will need

- Pencil
- Spirit level
- Masonry drill bit
- Drill
- Wall plugs
- Shelf kit (including fixings)

Once your decor has been finished, you may want to add some shelves toyour walls to declutter your room further. Firstly decide on the position of your shelves and use a pencil to mark the shelf height onto your walls. Make sure the mark is discreet and can be covered easily by the shelf; you don't want to ruin your freshly painted or newly papered walls. Before you mark further, use a multi-purpose electronic tester to ensure that there are no pipes or electrics residing underneath the wall surface.

Once you are satisfied that it is safe to install a shelf in that position, you must ensure that you install the shelf level; use a spirit level to mark the positions of your brackets. Make sure that the brackets are positioned no more than 600mm apart, as this could lead to the shelf bowing, especially if you use it to display heavy items. Also if you intend to paint your shelves, do this before installation and allow to dry before fixing to the wall.

Select the masonry drill bit and drill pilot holes into the bracket markings you just made. Drill to the depth of the wall plug, instead of guessing, it may be useful to position the wall plug against the drill bit and mark its depth by wrapping masking tape around the bit. If you are putting up shelves on a solid brick or block wall, use the drill on the hammer action setting to drill more effectively. Once you have made your holes, insert the wall plugs, checking that they fit snugly. If the wall plug is loose, insert a bigger wall plug. Next fix in the brackets by inserting screws into the wall plugs; finish by attaching the shelf to the bracket, the shelf will either clip in or be fixed via screws or panel pins, read the manufacturer's instructions which come with the shelf before attaching to the brackets.

FIXING A SHELF TO PLASTERBOARD

If you intend to fix the shelf onto a plasterboard wall, choose a cavity wall plug when drilling into the wall. The shelf itself should be fixed directly to the timber studwork underneath, instead of the plaster and lath of the plasterboard wall. Do the 'tap test' to identify the stud wall; you should hear a solid sound when you hit the timber rather than the hollow noise created by the lath.

28 TIPS

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