

## CONCRETE ADVICE

### How to Repair Flaking or Spalling Concrete.



If your basement floor, garage or patio surface flaking or spalling, they can be repaired and restored to a "like new" appearance. People are often surprised to find this out, and even more surprised when they are told it cannot be done with regular concrete. The coarse gravel aggregate in the new concrete would prevent a strong bond.



What does work are the specially formulated products such as top 'n' bond which contain a high strength bonding agent. King top 'n' bond is available at most building supply stores.

Before using top 'n' bond, clean the repair area of damaged concrete, keep the area damp for several hours - preferably overnight - and remove all dirt, debris and standing water. If the surface has grease stains remove with a degreaser and rinse thoroughly.



Wearing goggles to protect your eyes from flying fragments, break up large areas of spalled concrete surface with a small sledge hammer, let the hammer drop of its own weight rather than swinging it hard against the surface. For small areas use a ball peen hammer and cold chisel. Sweep up dust and debris using a stiff wire brush, if necessary, to dislodge any small fragments.

several hours - preferably overnight. The area should still be damp when you apply the top 'n' bond. When mixing the product use clean tools and water, free of impurities. A 20 kg bag requires approximately 4 litres of water. Mix with a trowel, scoop or hoe making sure all pockets of dry material are thoroughly blended into the wetted mass. Add the water in small amounts until the desired consistency is obtained.



Chip away all cracks to about 1/2 inch below the surface using a cold chisel and ball peen hammer. Flare the walls out slightly making the bottom wider than the opening at the top. Wear goggles and gloves while doing this to protect yourself from flying fragments. Fill these cracks with Sakrete® Sand Mix available from your local building supplies retailer. Allow these repairs to cure for 72 hours before you begin resurfacing.

Trowel a thin layer onto the prepared surface, forcing the mix into the pores of the existing concrete. Immediately spread more top 'n' bond to the required thickness and level. Finish with a wood float for a slightly rough surface or a dampened steel trowel for a smooth surface. Do not overwork or overtrowel. Apply no thicker than 1 cm (1/2") at a time. If necessary, apply several 1 cm (1/2") thick layers, at least 24 hours apart. Level each layer but finish only the top surface.

Wet down the area to be repaired and keep it damp for

For further information on this and other projects visit the "Concrete Centre" at your local building supplies retailer where you will find the information and products you will need.

### Upgrading, refitting oil furnace can save money

Homeowners hoping to increase the resale value of their homes will be further ahead by inexpensively upgrading their oil furnaces, rather than converting to gas or electricity, and using the money saved for other home improvements.

"For less than the \$1,800 cost of converting to gas or the \$2,300 cost of converting to electricity, a homeowner can choose between several home improvements which are likely to increase the value of his property," says Kevin Fullbrook, executive director of the Home Energy Group, which represents Ontario retailers of fuel oil and manufacturers of oil heating equipment.

"Those improvements include installation of a whirlpool, kitchen cabinets, bathroom fixtures or greenhouse window. The savings could also pave the walkway with

decorative brick, pay for a paint job or replace old eavestroughs." Mr. Fullbrook said. "An informal study of real estate trends indicate that these improvements add more to the value of a house than conversion to natural gas or electrical heat."

In contrast to the high cost of furnace conversion, the average cost of retrofitting an oil furnace to achieve improved efficiency is only \$600. And according to Mr. Fullbrook, a modified oil furnace is more energy efficient than either a conventional natural gas unit and less expensive to operate than an electrical unit.

"An older furnace which has been retrofitted will produce more than 104,000 BTUs per \$1 of fuel at today's prices, compared to 96,000 BTUs for a conventional gas furnace and 70,000 BTUs with an electrical furnace.

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