



# LET'S FIX IT



## All About Sandpaper

We commonly refer to the abrasive paper we use to smooth wood as "sandpaper". This is actually a misnomer. The abrasive paper we use today is divided into two types, neither of them uses sand.

The natural abrasives found on these papers are: flint, garnet and emery. The manmade grits are: aluminum oxide and silicon carbide.

The abrasive mineral functions as the cutting agent. It is bonded to a paper or cloth backing with modern glues that firmly keep the grit in place through even the roughest use. Present-day coating is far more even than it used to be due to the electrostatic coating process now available.

### How to repair bathroom tiles



Q: "All the tiles are coming off our bathroom wall. Can you give us some do-it-yourself ideas or tips for repairing these?"

A: The tiles are probably coming off the wall because the plaster or plaster board behind them has become wet and remained wet. What happens is that the plaster softens up and then the tiles just let go.

First, remove the loose tile with a broad, stiff putty knife. Then repair the plaster wall by replacing the damaged area with a new piece of water-resistant plaster board or 3/4-inch plywood.

Before replacing the old tile, you'll have to remove the cement from the back of the tile. Sanding or scraping will do the job

**FLINT ABRASIVE...** Poor to fair cutting power with short durability, used for light sanding and roughing operations.

**GARNET...** Red to reddish-brown abrasive with good cutting power and good durability. Still a favorite of many cabinet makers who prefer it over man-made grit.

**EMERY...** The familiar black abrasive usually bonded to a blue fabric backing. Medium cutting power and poor durability, this product is usually used in metal finishing.

**ALUMINUM OXIDE...** A man made reddish brown or white abrasive, probably the most widely used today. It has a good to excellent cutting power. It is used primarily for woodworking but can also be used for metal working.

**SILICON CARBIDE...** A bluish-black manmade abrasive with good to excellent cutting power and long life. It can be used for woodworking and metal finishing.

**WET SANDPAPERS...** These so-called "wet sandpapers" are really the same as regular sandpaper except the backing and glue are waterproofed allowing you to use a lubricant (either oil or water) while sanding. This process is often used to bring an extra high gloss finish to

boats, cars and furniture, using a lubricant also considerably prolongs the life of the paper.

**POWER SANDERS...** Power sanders are available in several types. The fastest working of all sanders is the belt sander. It can be used for fast stock removal and leveling of rough surfaces, however care must be taken because of the fast cutting action.

The oscillating and/or orbital sander is excellent for finishing cabinet and woodworking projects and other fine projects.

Disk sanders are mostly used for the fast removal of stock, paint or shaping wood. They are hard to handle and best suited for rough wood and metal work.

The palm or block sander is a very high speed finishing sander that does an excellent job in finishing furniture. An orbital speed of about 22,000 R.P.M. generates the best finish of all.

**HINTS...** The finer grades of sandpaper are often very fragile. To make them last longer a backing of masking tape will strengthen the paper and make it last considerably longer. If you are sanding paint a coating of talc on the sandpaper will prevent clogging.

## TIPS ON CAULKING INSIDE YOUR BATH

The one area inside a house most commonly in need of caulking is around the bathtub or wash basin. Every time the tub or basin is filled with water, it settles a little. This causes a minor separation of the tub or basin from the wall. Splashed water can then work between the tub or basin and the wall, starting the process of rot.

For bathroom projects, a small hand-held tube of tub and tile caulking is usually sufficient.

To replace caulking, clean out the old caulking with a screwdriver or putty knife, being careful not to scratch the tub, basin or surrounding wall tile. Cut the tip of the nozzle

for a moderate-size bead (or remove the cap, if so equipped) and, when the area is completely dry, push the sealant around the edge in one continuous line.

Once the caulk is in place, you can wet your finger to smooth out the caulk.

It is very important that all areas to be caulked be free of any soap and grease deposits or dirt. If not, the caulk won't properly adhere.

When caulking a tub, it's a good idea to fill it with water so the caulk can penetrate the gap between the tub and wall.

## A PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE PROGRAM FOR YOUR HOME

As homeowners we should take a page from industry's book and initiate a preventive maintenance program for our home. Industry learned long ago that it is cheaper to maintain both equipment and premises on a regular basis than to wait for a breakdown to repair a problem. It's much like maintaining your car regularly to prevent large repair bills later.

A good plan is to sit down with a calendar early in the year and note jobs that should be done regularly as well as the seasonal chores. This will act as a reminder as you turn the pages of the calendar each month. It is also wise to note the items you hadn't thought of, as they occur. The calendar then serves as an excellent reference next year.

In a short column like this we can't list every necessary job but we will note a few and let you otherwise compile your own unique list.

1. The furnace has several areas that need attention. First, the motor should be lubricated once a year, preferably at the start of the season. Do not pump quantities of oil into the oiling cap. A drop or two is sufficient as too much oil could cause problems. While there, check the fan belt for fraying or brittleness. If it shows signs of either, replace it. Filters should be changed regularly for best performance. Do not forget about the humidifier if you have one. This should be cleaned and the elements or drum sleeve inspected and changed if necessary.

2. Drains should be treated with one of the drain cleaners on the market regularly (at least twice a

year). There is always a build-up of grease, hair or soap and regular attention can prevent a disastrous flood later. At the same time, check the workings of your toilet tank for wear and corrosion. The cost of water leakage can far exceed the cost of replacement workings. While checking the plumbing examine all the tap washers. Not only does a worn washer waste money with water leakage but prolonged use of a tap with a worn washer may ruin the seat, necessitating expensive repair or replacement.

3. Gutters and downspouts should be checked before the winter sets in, and all leaves and debris should be removed. The latter can create an ice dam and cause water to back up and leak into the house. Joints should also be checked and sealed if they are leaking. The downspout can be tested with a fast-running hose to insure there are no blockages. If your downspout empties near the house, be sure the flow is away from the foundation to prevent flooding from heavy fall or spring rains and melt-off.

4. Check the hoses on your automatic washer regularly and make it a rule to shut off the water supply to the washer after each use. Many floods have been caused by split washing hoses.

## PREPARATION MAKES PAINTING EASIER

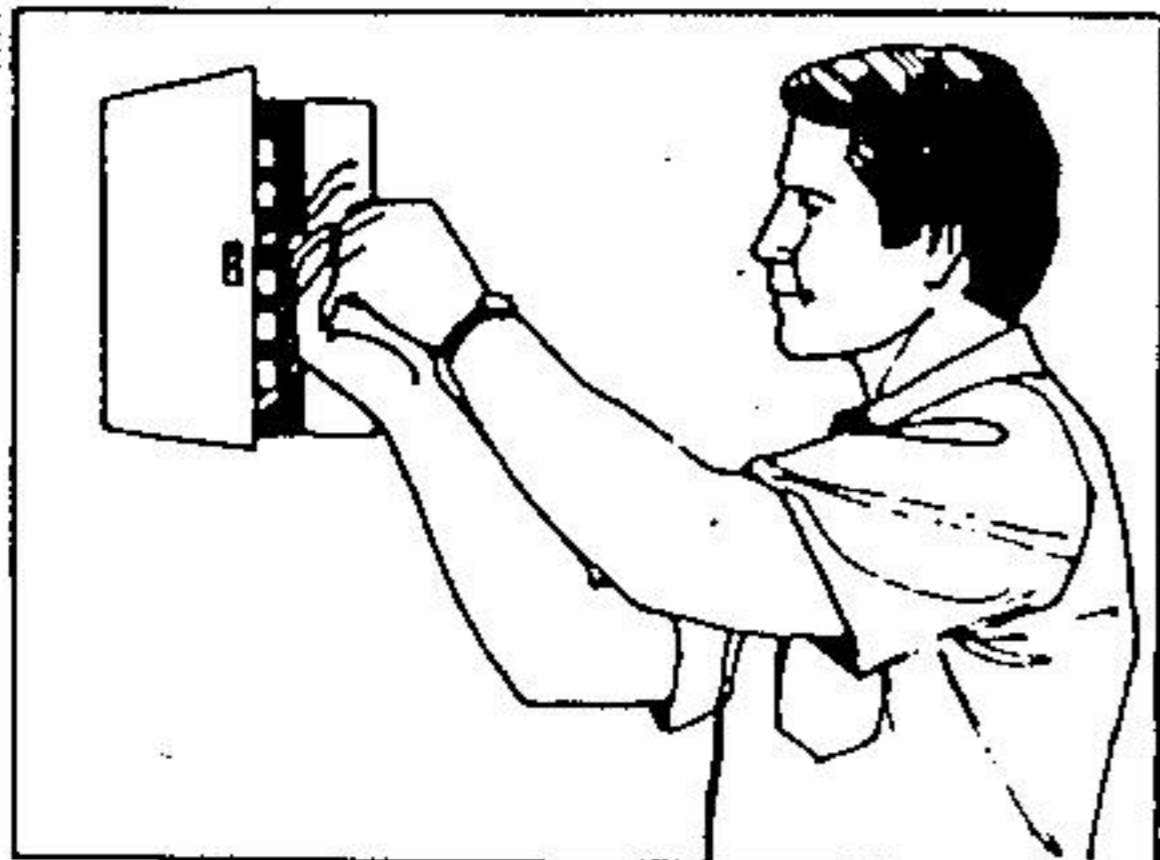
Strangely enough, there are people in this world who do like to paint. While the majority of us like the end result and glory in the new life of a freshly painted room, the actual process of painting can be tiring, messy and frustrating. In this column we will offer a few hints that will make painting easier, quicker and far less frustrating.

Latex paint is by far the easiest to use. It goes on with little effort, is relatively odor-free and, best of all, the brushes, rollers and you yourself can be cleaned up with soap and water. While these paints will not last as long as the oil-based paints in difficult areas (kitchens, bathroom), their ease of application makes them one of the most popular wall coatings. Oil-based paints are used in areas where they will be exposed to hard use (many washings, moisture or grease). They are also the most popular for outdoor

use, where they will be exposed to the elements. Although modern science has come a long way in removing some of the strong odor associated with oil-based paints, they still are considerably stronger than latex paints and very objectionable to some people. Alkyd paint, a relatively modern development, is low in odor but requires a solvent for cleanup. It also works well in heavy-use areas.

Have adequate drop sheets on hand. Old sheets are excellent as are old shower curtains. Remove all portable furniture from the room and move the heavy furniture to one end of the room, cover with polyethylene and move to the other end when painting is completed in that area. Use proper ladders and sturdy chairs to stand on. Allow yourself adequate time to do the job. People who are in a hurry are the ones that end up getting hurt.

## ELECTRICAL SAFETY IN THE HOME



A contractor, when building a home today is required to install an electrical system that adheres to a rigid code that is usually enforced by municipal inspectors and is installed by licensed electricians. The newest safety requirement is a ground fault plug on exterior, bathroom and laundry room installations where a short circuit could cause electrocution.

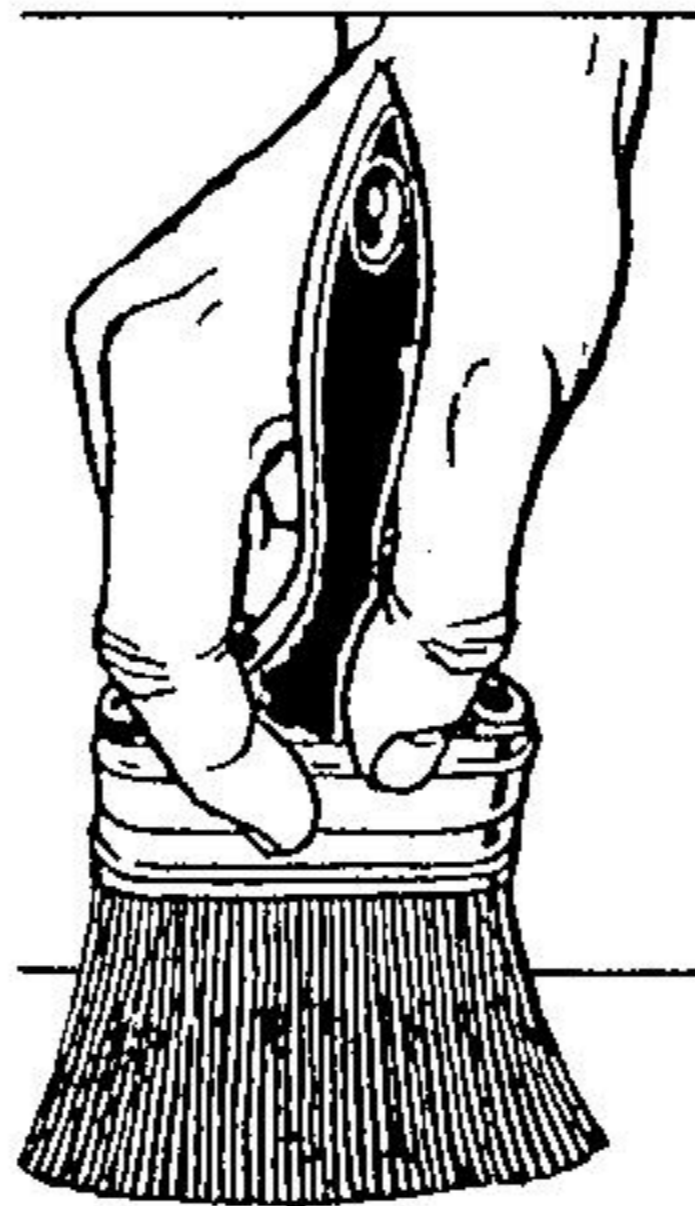
All of these extensive precautions are used in the original construction of a new house, but many of the problems arise when an individual does his own renovations or does not follow common sense rules for fusing and using the electrical circuits.

Hardware stores stock a complete line of electrical wire, boxes, tools, and supplies. If you are going to add some plugs or wire a Rec Room be sure to find out what your local codes are and should you be in any doubt contact an electrician.

### Fuses...

Never use anything more than a 15 Amp fuse in a regular house circuit. If a fuse keeps blowing either the circuit is overloaded or there is a problem with the appliance, lamp or device that is plugged into that circuit. There could also be a problem with one of the plugs or fixtures in the circuit or even with the wiring itself. NEVER, NEVER replace a 15 Amp fuse with one of a larger capacity! If the starting load of an appliance or motor blows the fuse often a Time Delay Fuse will correct the situation. These fuses will tolerate the starting load of a motor for a short period of time allowing the motor to reach running speed where it draws less current.

See your local Canadian Retail Hardware Association dealer for your electrical needs and supplies. Remember, an unsafe electrical installation can lead to a shocking problem!



## HOUSEHOLD WORKSHOP TIPS

Over the years we have gathered many tips on woodworking and general house repairs. People interested in these pursuits traditionally share such information — so here are some of our favorites!

\*If you cut a sheet of sandpaper in half and fold it into three equal parts it will go much further than just folding it in half. You can use the exposed top and bottom surfaces then fold out the one tucked inside for a completely fresh surface. This method also creates a size that fits nicely for hand work.

\*Cover the back of fine sandpaper with masking tape before using. You will find the paper lasts much longer

without tearing. It works particularly well on power sanders whether oscillating or straight-line.

\*Before starting to paint, take a nail and drive several holes into the groove that the lid fits into, this will allow any paint that gets into the groove to drip back into the can instead of building up and running down the sides. It also prevents a large splash when you replace the lid.

\*Make a board with shallow raised sides that you can fasten to the top of your stepladder to hold the screws, nails or tools without having them roll off onto the floor. If you like, you can make only half of the board a box and drill holes into the

other half to hold tools. A word of caution: Do not leave anything on top of the ladder when you are moving it if you don't want it to end up hitting you on the head!

\*To start a nail or screw in a difficult-to-reach area simply push it through a piece of cardboard which can reach into the area, then tear it away once the screw or nail is started.

\*Plastic pill bottles make excellent containers for small nails and screws in the tool box. The only problem is they are hard to find tucked away into the bottom corner of the box. The solution is to build up a string of five or six bottles that is easy to locate and handle, by gluing the bottom of one bottle to the lid of the next with epoxy cement. Just open the section you want, the rest stay tightly sealed. Works great in a fish tackle box too.