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Edited by

Jeff Howell

DIY columnist, The Sunday Telegraph



DIY
ALL-IN-ONE
FOR
DUMMIES®
2ND EDITION

**by Roy Barnhart, James Carey, Morris Carey,
Gene Hamilton, Katie Hamilton,
Don R. Prestly and Jeff Strong**

Edited by Jeff Howell

 **WILEY**

A John Wiley and Sons, Ltd, Publication

DIY All-in-One For Dummies®, 2nd Edition

Published by
John Wiley & Sons, Ltd
The Atrium
Southern Gate
Chichester
West Sussex
PO19 8SQ
England

E-mail (for orders and customer service enquires): cs-books@wiley.co.uk

Visit our Home Page on www.wiley.com

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Published by John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, Chichester, West Sussex

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data: A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN-13: 978-0-470-97450-6

Printed and bound in Great Britain by Bell & Bain Ltd., Glasgow

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



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Publisher's Acknowledgments

We're proud of this book; please send us your comments through our Dummies online registration form located at www.dummies.com/register/.

Some of the people who helped bring this book to market include the following:

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Cover Photos: © Robert Cocquyt

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Introduction



Welcome to DIY and Home Improvement All-in-One For Dummies, the only repair manual you'll ever need. One glance through this book and you quickly see that it's not overloaded with technical details and obscure advice that you'll never want or need to know. Our goal was to compile a book that explains, in a fun and easy-to-understand style, how to complete a wide range of projects. This anybody-can-do-it approach appeals to fledging do-it-yourselfers and seasoned handymen and -women. We encourage you to dust off your toolbox and tackle simple repairs and improvements using our idiot-proof instructions.

Basic steps and illustrations throughout the book walk you through the key points of maintaining and improving your home. These are tried-and-tested solutions to everyday home repair and improvement questions.

Foolish Assumptions

In this book, we make a few assumptions about who you are. We assume that you care about the appearance and condition of your home. We don't think that you're a home improvement fanatic or that you're a DIY expert – you don't need to be. All you need is this book, the right tools, and a desire to see your home be safe, functional, and attractive both inside and out.

How to Use This Book

You can use this book in two ways:

- ✔ If you want information about a specific topic, such as stopping cold draughts with weather-stripping or cleaning out gutters, skip to that section using the index or table of contents and get your answer pronto.
- ✔ If you want to be a home improvement guru, read the whole book from cover to cover. You'll end up knowing so much that Handy Andy will be calling you for advice.

How This Book Is Organised

This book is actually five books in one. The chapters within each of those books cover specific topics in detail. You can read each chapter or book without reading what came before, so you don't have to waste time reading what doesn't apply to your situation. Occasionally, we refer you to another area in the book where you find more details on a particular subject.

Book I: Planning Your Home Improvement Projects

Undertaking a home improvement project without planning is a recipe for disaster. This book walks you through the decision of whether to take on a task yourself or hire a professional, helps you gather the tools you need to do most home improvement projects, and gives you important tips for staying safe.

Book II: Basic Home Maintenance and Improvement

This book takes you through the various parts of a home, from the foundation to the roof, and tells you how to make common repairs. Included are chapters on window and door maintenance.

Book III: Painting and Wallpapering

A simple coat of paint or layer of wallpaper can have an amazing impact on how a home looks. This book helps you choose the best materials for your situation and get them up onto your walls like a pro. The chapters on painting cover both the interior and the exterior of a house.

Book IV: Carpentry, Woodworking, and Flooring

Working with wood really isn't too difficult, we promise. This book talks about the basics of carpentry and woodworking, from fixing pieces together to sanding and finishing wood projects. You'll find chapters covering the processes of repairing and installing new flooring.

Book V: Plumbing

Plumbing may be an area that you've always found a little bit intimidating – many homeowners do. But when you understand how everything fits together, plumbing repairs aren't any more difficult than other home maintenance projects. In this book, you find information about two major, vexing plumbing problems: Leaks and blockages. Before you call a plumber in a panic, check these chapters – you may be able to fix the problem yourself and save a packet.

Icons Used in This Book



We use the familiar For Dummies icons to help guide you through the material in this book.

Get on target with these great time-saving, money-saving, and sanity-saving tips.



Commit to memory these key tidbits of information that come into play in various aspects of your home improvement adventures.



We don't want to scare you off, but DIY is not for the accident-prone. This icon alerts you to potential hazards and how to steer clear of them. We also use this symbol to mark advice for making your home a safer place.



Let this icon serve as a warning that you're treading in trouble-prone waters. Why should you have to learn from your own mistakes when you can learn just as well from others'?



Some projects and repairs require the skills, experience, and know-how that only a professional can offer. Novices and weekend DIYers take note. This icon reminds you not to bite off more than you can chew.



Most people want their toilets to flush, but some aren't happy until they know *how* the toilet flushes. This book doesn't bombard you with loads of technical trivia, but some background tidbits can be useful. If you crave obscure details that most normal people don't care about, seek out these icons. If you'd rather live in ignorant bliss, by all means skip these little diversions.

Where to Go from Here

We don't care whether you start with the Table of Contents, the Index, Book V, or even Chapter 1 (what a novel idea). What's important is that you get going. A better home is just around the corner!

Book I

Planning Your Home Improvement Projects



"George installed the fridge, the freezer, the washing machine, the cooker, the hob oven, the built-in oven, the dishwasher, and I installed the chef."

In this book . . .

Where do you start? Can you do it yourself? What materials, tools, and knowledge do you need? How much will it cost, and how do you keep from going mad in the process? Dig into these chapters that frame answers to these knotty questions.

Collecting basic household tools and the right stuff for specific jobs doesn't have to be a struggle. Venturing into the local hardware store or home improvement centre need not be a struggle – although with the size of today's DIY superstores, you may need to pack a picnic.

Whether you want to estimate the time and cost involved in a job, or check out the possibility of adding more hands-on adventures to your to-do list, you can build comfort and confidence with a cruise through this book.

Here are the contents of Book I at a glance.

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