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Who Needs a Handyman?

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Here are 10 home repairs every dame can do herself
by Emma Johnson



Sometimes it can be too easy to just call the repairman and get out your checkbook. Leaky faucet? Call! Tub tile cracked? Call!

Here are 10 repairs that every woman should know how to do—for a fraction of the cost of calling a pro. "Some projects might seem a little dirty, but a bar of soap is a lot less expensive than an hour of a handyman's time," says Daniel Vannoni, founder of the website [ProperSee](#), which connects consumers with home repair information.

1. Change a showerhead

Why: "Showerheads can clog with mineral deposits and sediments over time, and newer models have low-flow designs saving on your water consumption without sacrificing the strength of spray," Vannoni says.

Tools: Crescent wrench or slip-joint pliers and Teflon tape

Time: Five to 15 minutes

More help: Home repair expert [Barbara K](#) of AOL's home improvement channel provides guidance in this video titled "[How-To Change a Showerhead](#)."

Tip: "Be gentle so you don't break the shower pipe," Vannoni says.

2. Fix a running toilet

Why: It wastes water and has an annoying sound. This usually indicates that the flapper and sealing flange need a cleaning or replacement.

Tools: A flapper replacement kit from the hardware store

Time: Five to 15 minutes

More help: Check out Howcast's video "[How to Fix a Running Toilet](#)" on identifying and fixing your porcelain throne's issues.

Tip: Wash your hands afterward.

3. Change a light fixture

Why: That wicker ceiling fan got you down? Want more wattage? Swapping out a light fixture can turn around a room.

Tools: Wire tester, screwdriver, pliers, electrical tape and ladder

Time: 30 minutes, depending

More help: Buildipedia's YouTube video "[How to Replace a Light Fixture](#)" gives some safety and DIY tips.

Tip: "Just make sure the circuit is off," Vannoni says.

4. RegROUT your tub


Why: It's important to remove old grout that's cracked or moldy to prevent deep-water damage in the wall and floor.

Tools: Screwdriver for scraping as well as grout and a sponge

Time: 30 to 60 minutes, plus drying time

More help: Los Angeles contractor Chris Wade demonstrates "[How to RegROUT a Bathtub](#)" on a flamingo-pink tub.

Tip: Get in there and use your finger to apply the grout.



5. Stem a washing machine water supply hose leak

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Why: The hose and washers need replacing.

Tools: Adjustable locking pliers

Time: 20 to 30 minutes

More help: Let home repair guru Ron Hazelton shows you "[How to Replace Washing Machine Hoses](#)."

Tips: Rick Johnson, owner of the Groton, Massachusetts, remodeling company Sky's the Limit, offers three tips: Replace old lines with a set of stainless steel braided lines, which are much more durable. Replace both hot and cold lines at the same time. And always disconnect the machine from the power supply before working. If there's extensive leaking, turn the power off at the circuit panel.

6. Fix cracked ceramic tiles

Why: Safely remove the broken tile to replace with a new one.

Tools: Safety glasses, hammer, chisel, grout saw, adhesive, grout, new tile and grout

Time: One hour

More help: Home repair hunk Eric Stromer gives step-by-step instructions to "[Replace a Broken Tile](#)" on YouTube.

Tip: "Remove the broken tile by gently working from the crack outward," Johnson says. "Do not use good tile edges as leverage to pry the broken one out."

7. Keep the dishwasher door gasket/seal from leaking

Why: The rubber seal is worn down and needs replacing.

Tools: A new gasket (take the old one to your hardware store along with the dishwasher model number)

Time: 10 to 15 minutes

More help: RepairClinic.com gives a quick "[Door Gasket Replacement](#)" demo.

Tip: Before replacing, first wipe down the gasket to make sure that food and mineral gook are not preventing a proper seal. Note that the seal may be located on the door or inside the machine. Soak new seal in warm water before replacing.

8. Replace the furnace filter

Why: It keeps your air clean, prolongs the life of the appliance and reduces energy costs.

Tools: Just a new filter

Time: Two seconds (once you identify the filter location)

More help: It really is simple; just check out this "[How to Change a Furnace Filter for Dummies](#)" video.

Tip: If the filter is any color but white, it's time to replace it. Plan to switch it out every 30 days during cold months. Make sure the arrows are pointed in the right direction—*toward* the blower motor or furnace.

9. Fix a leaky faucet

Why: Dripping plumbing wastes water, leads to stains and causes an annoying sound.

Tools: Faucet repair kit, which should include any needed hardware, plus a wrench set and Philips screwdriver

Time: 20 minutes

More help: Lowe's shows you "[How to Fix a Leaky Faucet With a Single-Handle Design](#)" and "[How to Fix a Leaky Faucet With a Two Handle Design](#)."

Tip: Close the drain and drape a towel at the bottom of the sink or tub to prevent hardware from going down the drain.

10. Repair small wall holes and dents

Why: Smooth out your wall to prep for a clean paint job.

Tools: Mesh, spackle, putty knife and sandpaper

Time: 10-plus minutes

More help: AOL's Barbara K shows you "[How to Patch or Repair a Hole in a Wall](#)."

Tip: "Always prime these areas," says Joe Kowalski, a training manager and paint expert for [Glidden paint](#).

[Emma Johnson](#) lives in New York City, where she raises two children and writes about the intersect of money and life. Her blog is [WealthySingleMommy.com](#).

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