

SIMPLE WISDOMS TO KEEP YOUR HOME RUNNING WELL

Managing a household successfully is mostly about small things done well and in a timely fashion. This isn't the stuff that snazzy home improvement TV shows are made of, but diligence with little things is still a make or break issue. Completing simple tasks makes all the difference, and here are a few that I know work well.

// *If your sink, tub or shower drains have started to smell, hydrogen peroxide offers a safe, inexpensive and effective solution.* **//**

STAY ON TOP OF SWITCHING SMOKE ALARM BATTERIES

When it comes time to change smoke alarm batteries and water filter cartridges, write the date on the new battery or filter with a felt-tip marker. This way you'll know for sure how old they are next time you remember to change them.

SHOE POLISH FOR SCRATCHES IN WOODEN FLOORING

Shoe polish is perfect for colouring scratch marks in stained wood floors. Choose a colour that's slightly darker than the floor, then rub a tiny amount into the damaged area.

SIMPLE SINK STENCH SOLUTION

If your sink, tub or shower drains have started to smell, hydrogen peroxide offers a safe, inexpensive and effective solution. Pour a little down the drain



This lidded plastic container keeps fully charged rechargeable batteries organized. Every spent battery gets charged before going back into the container.
Photo credit: Steve Maxwell

before bedtime, and smell will be gone by morning. Sometimes bathroom sinks need to have their overflow passages treated in a second step. Stuff a rag into the drain to block up the overflow passage at the bottom, then fill the passage with hydrogen peroxide from the top.

ORGANIZE LOOSE CORDS IN PIPES

Most Canadian homes have a growing number of cords and cables kicking around desks, tables and behind entertainment centers. Short lengths of inexpensive drain pipe offer a great way to contain them. Saw pieces of pipe into 3 or 4 inch lengths, gather the slack of the cables into an evenly looped bunch, then slip this bunch into the pipe. Pipes from 1 1/4- to 2-inch in diameter are most useful.

TAPE TRICK FOR CALENDAR REPAIRS

Wall calendars are a popular feature of organized Canadian homes, and it's a shame when a favourite calendar starts

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to fall apart before the year's done. The first thing to go is usually the nail hole that the calendar is supposed to hang from at the top. It's not unusual for the staples to let go and the calendar pages to start coming apart, too. In both cases, clear tape is the answer. Reinforce broken hanging holes with it, or secure the pages to each other along the binding with more tape.

ADHESIVE ANSWER FOR BROKEN BITS

White wood glue does a great job fixing broken porcelain and ceramic items. It's safe, odour-free and cleans up with water when wet.

GAS STORAGE ADVICE

Storing a supply of gasoline is necessary to keep lawnmowers, whipper snippers and snow blowers going, and it makes sense as an emergency source of fuel for your car.

Even three or four months storage time in a sealed container is long enough to reduce the effectiveness of gasoline, making motors harder to start.

What you might not realize is the short shelf life of gasoline. Even three or four months storage time in a sealed container is long enough to reduce the effectiveness of gasoline and make motors harder to start. You can have stored gas on hand and keep it fresh by getting in the habit of putting it into the gas tank of your car every few months before replenishing the cans again at a filling station and putting them back into storage. Gasoline stabilizer is a liquid additive that keeps gas fresh for much longer. Add a small amount to the gas



The installation date written on this smoke alarm battery takes the guesswork out of timely replacement. Photo credit: Steve Maxwell

tanks of stored outdoor power equipment, then run the engines for a few minutes to work the stabilizer through the carburetor.

KEEP CHARGE OF RECHARGEABLE BATTERIES

If you use rechargeable AA and AAA batteries, keep your charged supply in a lidded plastic container in a drawer, then charge spent batteries fully before putting them back into the container. This way you never swap one bad battery for another.

Invest small diligences into your home life every day, and they keep most of the big problems away.

Steve Maxwell, syndicated home improvement and woodworking columnist, has shared his DIY tips, how-to videos and product reviews since 1988. Follow "Canada's Handiest Man" at SteveMaxwell.ca, Facebook or @Maxwells_Tips on Twitter.

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