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The Complete Do-it-Yourself Manual Newly Updated



Synopsis

The leading manual for home improvements is getting an update to address current codes, latest materials, tools and technology. The bestselling, most comprehensive guide to home improvements has been revised and updated once again since its revision in 2005. Over 10 million copies of *Reader's Digest Complete Do-It-Yourself Manual* have been sold since its original publication in 1973. In 2005, the manual got bigger and better than ever, when *The Family Handyman* and *Reader's Digest* joined forces and completely revised, updated, rewrote, and redesigned this home improvement classic. Now in 2014, *The Family Handyman* has once again updated and revised this do-it-yourself classic to make it relevant to today's homeowners and DIYers. Written in a style of text that addresses readers in a very accessible, conversational tone for easy, user-friendly assistance with every do-it-yourself task. All instructions and materials have been updated to address current codes (electrical, plumbing and building), and revised to indicate the very latest in materials, tools, and technology. Suitable for beginners and experts alike, this newly revised edition includes:

- Over 3,000 photos and illustrations to make complex projects and repairs easy to understand
- Twice as many storage projects that help home owners cut clutter
- New building materials that yield great-looking, long-lasting results and low maintenance!
- New technology that lets homeowners save energy, add convenience or improve security.
- New building codes that make homes safer, more energy-efficient and trouble-free.

The book's tried-and-true instructions provide do-it-yourself solutions to a ton of problems that could cost a fortune if you had to hire a professional. This manual is a "must-have" reference guide for every home-owning man or woman.

Book Information

Hardcover: 528 pages

Publisher: Reader's Digest; Updated edition (October 7, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1621452018

ISBN-13: 978-1621452010

Product Dimensions: 11 x 1.4 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 4.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 169 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #17,735 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #3 in Books > Crafts, Hobbies &

Home > Home Improvement & Design > How-to & Home Improvements > Carpentry #4
inÃ Â Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Home Improvement & Design > How-to & Home
Improvements > Home Repair #14 inÃ Â Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Home Improvement
& Design > How-to & Home Improvements > Do-It-Yourself

Customer Reviews

What an amazing resource this is. I've been in or around the skilled trades my entire life (I don't mean just my adult life; my dad gave me tools for every birthday and Christmas starting with my first one). And for several years, I was a licensed Master Electrician. There aren't many "handy man" jobs that I can't do. I expected to learn a few things from this book, but even with that background I came across one gem after another that I hadn't known. As a further note on my background, I've been writing and editing for the nation's leading electrical trade magazine since 1996. So when I come across any book or article related to the skilled trades, I'm as concerned with the quality of the writing as with the accuracy of the information. Additionally, for nearly as many years I've been working with the nation's leading developer of electrical exam preparation products and other electrical training materials; so I have a keen appreciation of the need for setting the tone. I've also written several guides and standards for the National Electrical Contractors Association, which serves the nation's electrical unions; there, a huge concern is addressing all areas of knowledge that an electrician will need on the job. This "completeness" is another aspect beyond the ones I've mentioned. In this book, all of these (and others) have been done with a great deal of care to get it right. It is an understatement to say I am impressed. Even the arrangement of the book reflects correctly "setting the tone." When I've tried to teach someone how to do a skilled trade task, I've often found the person didn't really understand the tools for doing the job. When I learned various skilled trades, my mentors made sure I understood how to correctly use the right tool for a particular job. That's one reason why, for example, I don't use screwdrivers as prybars and why I avoid using adjustable wrenches (rather than exact wrench). This book starts off with four "general" chapters: Your Home, Hand Tools, Power Tools, and Fasteners & Adhesives. While I found myself mostly nodding in approval while reading these, I also found myself thinking, "Wow, I didn't know that. How helpful!". The book doesn't have formal Part 1, Part 2, etc. But you can consider these four chapters to constitute Part 1. In keeping with this theme, Part 2 consists of chapters devoted to particular trades or groups of trades. It's important to note that this book does not pretend to qualify you as, for example, a Master Electrician. For each trade, it explains the "how to" that a reasonably competent do-it-yourselfer can be reasonably expected to do. There are some things you don't do without

extensive qualifications. For example, you might run a new branch circuit in your home but you need to leave an electrical service panel change-out to a licensed electrician. Here are those chapters and the trades they represent. The skill level is, in my opinion, toward the high end of apprentice.

- *Plumbing. Obviously, plumber.
- *Electricity. Obviously, electrician.
- *Home climate. Insulator, HVAC tech, and system installer. This chapter shows you how to do relatively simple things like replace a water heater, insulate an attic, install a dehumidifier, and so forth. It also gives you a strong foundation in all concepts related to home climate equipment and systems. So while you aren't personally going to install a heat pump system you will understand what that entails and thus be able to select the right system for your home and competently oversee the installation.
- *Interior repairs & improvements. Building maintenance inspector, drywaller, finish carpenter, flooring installer, window installer, door installer, and others. This chapter alone justifies the cost of the book.
- *Painting and wallpapering. Painter, wall paper installer. I have seen hugely shoddy work by DIYs who don't have a clue. PLEASE, if you have not been trained in painting by a qualified person don't attempt a paint job. Here's a simple test. Real painters don't usually need masking tape. Do you know the technique for painting the top edge of a wall without getting paint onto the ceiling, using just the brush? If not, hire a painter. Wall paper jobs are notorious for degrading into nasty fights between spouses who didn't know what they were doing when they started. If you're married and want to avoid the cost of a divorce, don't attempt to save money by winging a wallpaper job. Hire it done, or take the time to understand how (this book explains it). If the book were divided into parts, then Part 3 would cover not the tools (Part 1) or the skills/trades (Part 2), but the applications. What "application" means in construction parlance is where the work is done. The chapters:
- *Exteriors. This covers the gamut, including ladder safety (each year, falls from ladders are at or near the top of OSHA's "accident cause" list). This is thorough, covering every aspect of exterior maintenance and repair. It's also an excellent resource if you're considering an upgrade project of some sort for your home's exterior. Even if you ultimately don't do the project yourself, you will understand what makes a job a quality job and you can manage the project to get the best result for the dollars you spend.
- *Landscaping. This covers everything from various types of retaining walls to various types of fences, to decks, patios, and water gardens.
- *Windows & Doors. Most homes don't have good windows or good doors. I have replaced all of the ones in my home. I didn't have an education on these seemingly simple product categories, and it turns out they are far from simple. I wish I'd had this book when doing those projects. That would have saved me a great deal of time and probably some money. Fortunately, it turns out that I made the right choices. I just wasn't efficient in getting there, due to a big knowledge gap I had to fill.

Part 4, if this book were

arranged in parts, would be about types of materials: *Concrete, Masonry, & Asphalt. Pretty self-explanatory. I've done some concrete work, and have built and poured footings. This book is spot-on, for that topic. My cousin worked as a mason for many years, but we didn't talk shop. So I can't comment on the accuracy of the masonry information but it sure sounds correct to me. Ditto for asphalt (except it was a childhood neighbor, not a cousin). *Woodworking & Furniture Repair. I've done many projects in this area, and this book does show the correct methods. However, for most of this kind of work you need a bit of the artisan to get a good outcome. Or, in many cases, you need special equipment to do the work. For example, I had my dining table professionally refinished. I didn't have the space, for one thing. But if you read this chapter you'll probably guess at my other reasons for having it done. I have refinished many smaller items, however. I've also repaired couches, chairs, and other items. But there is a line I draw based on knowing what it takes to do the job right. *Metals & Plastics. This is another area in which I have been extensively trained and have seen the most awful work done by the untrained DIY. Don't try to save money by "winging it." If you have a desire to this kind of work, you need the kind of "how to" that this chapter covers. And you'll need special tools. The last two chapters are: *Healthy Home & Emergency Repair. I've put significant resources into making my home a healthy home. When this topic comes up in conversation, people are often surprised at what this means. And they find out they live in a toxic home. But they don't have to. Read this chapter! *Storage Projects. The first rule of storage is to get rid of things. There's a limit to that, especially if your home is a sort of base for projects, sports, hobbies, or even "make your living" work. I thought I had the storage thing nailed, but discovered some great tips in this chapter. This book gets my highest recommendation. If you're a home owner, it's a "must read." If you're an apartment-dweller, in some ways it will be even more so (for reasons including those last two chapters, much of which you can apply even in an apartment setting).

Great go to source for all things handy. Wide variety of topics and projects with easy to follow instructions. This book has saved me a lot of money by allowing me to complete projects, small to big, on my own. I am by no means a handy person, but with the Complete Do-It-Yourself Manual I can at least pretend to be.

Maybe I was too optimistic about the utility of this book, but when researching pending projects around the house I find it general information off the world wide web to be far more useful.

As an experience DIY'er from the UK I was a bit confused by the terms I kept seeing on websites as

they are so different to what I was used to. I bought this book as a reference guide and it's not bad. It has a wide breadth of coverage, but it really does lack depth in every field. If I think of an area I need to research it gives me the very basics, and I find I then have to turn to the net to find out the rest.

Amazing book! So much information in here, I would recommend this for first time homeowners! It breaks down simple projects so you don't waste money on plumbers or electricians for simple stuff!

I'm a Dad with adult independent living daughters. This was THE fix-it book to get them. Get it for yours too.

A great gift idea when you can't think of anything else to give

It is dated, but this home project guide was my bible when I had to do most work on my house, including building indoor walls. I bought it for a young person who wants to be a general contractor. It has everything you need to know in general about everything! Black and Decker also has an old one out that is comparable.

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