



### It's easy to kick back and rely on your fella or trusty old dad to help you out when things go wrong around the house. But let's face it, it's not doing much for our independence, is it?

And what do we do if they're not there - hang around in the cold and the dark without even a cup of tea to ease our pain? As if.

Now everyone relax, it's not rocket science, it's just a little bit of DIY and if THEY can do it, we certainly can.

Here, DIY expert [Jo Behari](#) shows us how it's done...

#### De-stink your sinks

Unblocking a sink is one of the easiest and cheapest DIY jobs.

Pour two to three tablespoons of bicarbonate of soda down the plug hole, followed by some glugs of vinegar - supermarket brands are fine - then simply flush through with hot water. Voila.

#### Tackle a really stubborn sink

If your sink still isn't playing ball, you'll need more drastic action.

Place a bucket under the sink and start dismantling the U-bend. You won't need tools as all the connections will be hand-tightened.

Wash the U-bend in another sink and reassemble. Then everything - including your worries - will be

washed down the drain.

**Top tip:** Keep some old clothes and a nose peg handy in case of smells and spillages.

#### Turn off the water

Some of you might need to ask directions to the stopcock, but after that you're on your own.

Turn it on and off every few months to check it hasn't seized.

If your stopcock doesn't stop the water coming from your tap when it's in the 'off' position, then it's not working.

Get it replaced pronto, before you need it in a crisis.

#### Reseal a bath

Guaranteed to impress friends and family, but quite

a time-consuming task. As soon as black mould starts to appear around your tub, use a utility knife to cut out the old sealant.

Clean the areas with white spirit and wait until dry. Fill the bath with water so it's at its heaviest.

Then, using a cartridge gun, slowly

apply a silicone sealant (this can be bought in a long tube with a nozzle screwed on the end - cheaper and easier to use than a squeeze tube).

Keep consistent pressure on the trigger and keep the gun moving. Once you have placed an even bead round the whole bath, smooth along with water or washing up liquid using the tip of your finger.

**Top tip:** You can't release the water from the bath until the sealant has dried, which can take up to 24 hours, so make sure your family is squeaky clean beforehand.

#### Re-oiling wood surfaces, doors or tables

Kitchen tables or bedroom doors looking a bit lack-lustre? Like all natural products, they just need a good feed!

Ensure the wood is clean and sand away any nasty marks or chips.

Wipe the surface with white spirit or a tack cloth (a sticky cloth that feels oily to touch and is great for picking up lint) to banish dust.

Pour some oil (Danish wood oil is best) on a lint-free cloth and work

into the wood, following the grain. Wait until it's dry and apply another coat.

Ta-da... all done.



### Cleaning taps of limescale

Use the trusty bicarbonate of soda and vinegar combo again - a couple of tablespoons of bicarb to one tablespoon of vinegar mixed in a plastic bag.

Tie the bag over the taps, ensuring the ends are dipped in the solution.

Leave for two to four hours and scrub off with an old toothbrush.

### Paint a window

External windows and doors

need to be painted regularly as it protects wood from the elements.

Scrape away any flaky paint, sand back the area, fill any holes with wood filler and sand again.

Clean the area and apply paint with a small, one-inch brush.

Don't overload the brush and don't overwork the paint. Work slowly and methodically and your windows will look pretty as a picture.

### Use a power drill

Come on, they aren't that scary!

Before you start drilling, practice in thin air (think air guitar) and then on a scrap of old wood or plasterboard.

For stronger surfaces, such as brick, you'll need a hammer drill and a masonry drill bit. For softer services use a wood bit and take the drill off hammer setting.

Start with a smaller hole than you need - you can always make it bigger.

### Change a fuse

Fuses stop items overheating. If your electrical appliance suddenly stops working, the fuse is often the culprit.

To replace it, unplug and use a screwdriver to unscrew the plug.

The casing will open and reveal lots of wires and the fuse itself. The

plug will also have a stamp stating the type of fuse that should be put back in - 5 amp or 13 amp, for example.

Use a small screwdriver to lever the fuse out, replace with a new one and

screw the plug back together. Sure to impress the husband!

### Hang wallpaper

Make sure the wall is well prepped, which means that it should be smooth and clean. Live by the rule "measure twice, cut once".

Apply wallpaper paste to the paper and let it soak in for 10 minutes.

Offer the paper up to the wall and move it around until you are happy with the position. Smooth over using a dry wide brush.

Easy peasy... who needs men?



JO BEHARI HAS JUST LAUNCHED THE GOOD LIFE CENTRE, WHICH HOLDS PRACTICAL WORKSHOPS FOR WOMEN WHO WISH TO BE HANDY AROUND THE HOUSE. BOOK YOUR PLACE BY GOING TO [WWW.THEGOODLIFECENTRE.CO.UK](http://WWW.THEGOODLIFECENTRE.CO.UK)



Replace a faulty stopcock before you have a crisis

