

INTRODUCTION



Your Home Sweet Home

For well over half a century now, I've been preaching the gospel of solving small problems before they turn into big ones. That's a smart strategy to practice in every aspect of life. But it's an absolute must inside and outside your home, where a tiny spot of trouble that's left unattended can quickly escalate into a budget-busting repair project—or even a major disaster.

TIPS, TRICKS & INSIDER SECRETS

If you're tired of emptying your wallet to repair or replace your treasured belongings, then you've come to the right place! These super solutions show you exactly how to solve—and, better yet, prevent—all kinds of interior and exterior woes without shelling out big bucks for professional help. For instance, you'll learn how to:

- ▶ **Detect and repair minor water leaks**—before the elixir of life becomes the potion of death for your walls, floors, or roof (chapters 3 and 8)
- ▶ **Deliver fast first aid for cracks** in drywall, plaster, stucco, and brick—so they don't expand into craters that make your walls come tumblin' down (chapters 1 and 6)
- ▶ **Stop electrical glitches** at the starting gate—to prevent potentially deadly fires (Chapter 2)
- ▶ **Keep your heating and cooling systems** humming along—and avoid one of the costliest household projects of all: installing a new furnace or central AC system (Chapter 4)
- ▶ **Perform quick and easy repairs** to your driveway, deck, and other outdoor structures—which will boost your home's curb appeal and resale value (Chapter 9)

And that's just the tip of the iceberg! I'll also clue you in on a whole lot of fast fixes and practical ploys that can prolong the life of everything from the appliances in your kitchen to the clothes in your closet and the car in your garage. For example, you'll discover how to use common household products to:

- ▶ Put the bite back in a blender's blades (page 270)
- ▶ Refinish disfiguring gouges in wood furniture (page 278)
- ▶ Erase stubborn stains from clothes and accessories (page 335)
- ▶ Remove sticky road deposits from your car—without damaging the paint (page 362)

In every chapter, you'll find plenty of illustrated step-by-step instructions for fix-it projects that would cost you a bundle—if, that is, you could find someone to do the work. These jobs are a piece of cake if you do 'em yourself. Just to whet your appetite, you'll learn how easy it is to reface your kitchen cabinets (see "About!—Face!" on page 123), re-cover a lamp shade (page 314), and unstick a stuck suitcase handle (page 341).

Wait—the terrific tips don't stop there! This book is also filled with fantastic features like An Ounce of Prevention, which contains simple secrets for stopping trouble in its tracks. For example, cutting back on the amount of detergent you use can keep your washing machine in tip-top shape for many years to come (page 255). And if you simply keep your foot off your car's brake pedal while you're driving, you'll dramatically cut wear and tear on the brake pads (page 361).

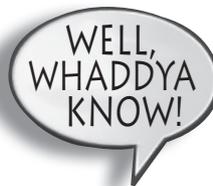
AN OUNCE OF
PREVENTION



In Rehab • Revamp • Revive, you'll discover creative ways to turn would-be trash into treasure. A couple of examples: To fix worrisome wounds in your wooden paneling or trim, just mix coffee grounds or used tea leaves with spackling compound or white glue (page 11). On a more urgent note, when a water or drain line is leaking, a piece of old garden hose can save the day. Just slit it lengthwise, slip it onto the cracked pipe, and secure it with C-clamps, duct tape, or large binder clips. It'll keep the scene clean until your plumber arrives (page 86).



Well, Whaddya Know! is just for fun. These fascinating factoids and tantalizing tidbits relate to the subjects at hand in each chapter. Just to pique your curiosity, here are two trivia questions you can toss out at your next neighborhood barbecue:



Who invented the dishwasher? The answer: A Shelbyville, Illinois, housewife named Josephine Cochrane. For her amazing saga, see page 73.

What momentous fashion event occurred on May 15, 1940? The answer: Nylon stockings first hit store shelves all over the U.S.A. You'll snag the full scoop on page 346.

Finally, my Powerful Potions are fabulous formulas that'll solve or prevent household problems of all kinds. Two cases in point: Dandy Deck Cleaner will spruce up your deck, porch, fence, or any other wooden surface without any of the harsh chemicals that you'll find in those pricey, toxic commercial products (page 212). And my Automotive Anti-Frost Formula will keep your car's windows ice- and frost-free on even the most frigid nights (page 365). So let's dig in ...



While this book is chock-full of sensational strategies for taking charge of your home's health and well-being, there are times when you just can't, or shouldn't, go it alone. These features spell out—loud and clear—when you need to forget DIY measures and summon professional help. At best, your well-intentioned fiddling could wind up costing you a lot more money than you'd have to pay an experienced expert. At worst, getting in over your head (for example, with a potent force like electricity) could be deadly. So know your limits, and always err on the side of caution!

