

# Handy Hints and Tips

The most important points to remember about any DIY projects will start with the planning and preparation Stages. So if you are thinking of under taking any DIY, here are a few tips that you might want to consider.

## Time Allocation & Planning

It goes without saying that the planning stages of any work are important. At this stage it will help you gain a better picture of what or who you need to complete the work. For larger jobs, it makes more sense to write everything down, including who you have spoken to about what. Managing a project can be complicated if you are not organised.

- Who will I need to assist in the completion of the work, such as electricians, plumbers, plasterers, gas fitters, carpet layers etc?
- How much time do you think you need as opposed to how much time do I have?
- Will this time include buying materials, looking to choose exactly what I want and ordering these items?
- Will you need to sit down with a professional such as a Kitchen designer? This may take longer than you think, but the time spent now will save you time later due to mistakes in poor planning
- How much time will you need to clear the area/s to be worked on?

Lastly, never hurry a job. It may result in you having an accident or a poor end result in the work you have set out to complete.

## Budget

- How much do you think the job will cost? Sometimes, it is not the main items that cost the most, but all the smaller items that either finish off the job, or bits you actually don't see, that can cost just as much
- Will you need to call a professional in to assist, which will cost extra such as professional tradesmen, hire tools, skips etc?

## Tools / Equipment

From the smallest of jobs to the larger ones, you will need equipment and tools, which goes without saying. However, ask yourself the following

- What tools will I need?
- Do I already own them, can I borrow them, or do I need to hire or buy them?
- Do I know how to use them properly and safely, and will I need any safety equipment and/or specialised training?

There is nothing more important when undertaking **ANY JOB**, to remember about your health and safety, and that also includes all others around you from the young and old to pets and strangers. Whether using a simple ladder or steps, hand tools with or without a blade, or electrical power tools, always read and understand how to use the tool correctly. If you are in doubt, **Don't Involve Yourself**, and seek professional advice.

## Purchasing Materials & Tools

Cost, how often they will be used, and for what the materials and tools will be used for is an important factor in any job or hobby. I would always recommend the following

- Buy the best materials, equipment and tools you can afford. It will be worth it in the long run.
- Make use of Special offers, and shop around to compare prices.
- Plan exactly how much or how many of each item/s you will need. If you are not sure, ask someone to help you.
- Keep all receipts so that items can be returned for refunds or if goods are damaged or faulty
- Always purchase extra materials so you don't run out halfway through the job. It will allow you to match batch numbers and to allow for off cuts/wastage. This makes good sense for paints, wall papers, tiles, flooring and timber especially. Time can be wasted by having to go and collect extra materials

## Preparation

Anyone who takes on any form of DIY, and who wants the end result to look good will tell you that it is all in the **preparation**. Believe me, this is true.

All of the above headings form part of your planning stage, and are all very important points to consider. When it comes down to starting the actual work in question, the following are of some of the physical preparation tasks.

- Preparing walls and ceilings by rubbing down, filling holes and cracks etc.
- Removing old wall paper followed by the above
- Removing old furniture, cupboards and units, old baths and sinks, old tiles etc. and preparing walls and floors for the next step
- Preparing ground work for out door work such as patios and paths, or removing old posts concreted in, for new fencing
- Rubbing down and filling woodwork for painting
- Chasing out walls for new electrical sockets or lights
- Skimming / plastering walls for a smooth surface
- Removing old flooring/carpets
- Adjusting plumbing and pipe work

As you can imagine, the list is endless. However, there are certain times when no amount of planning can prepare you for the unexpected. This can be frustrating and can mean that your time schedule is thrown out, but that is all part of taking on jobs yourself.

Don't be put off by this, it can, and does happen to all of us at one time or another, so when it does, we can honestly sympathise and know how it feels.

And lastly, a few points which might seem very obvious and basic are actually logical and help you to work in a logical and safe environment

- Ensure you have enough space to work in
- Clean up as you go along. Don't leave it all to the end
- Use basic safety equipment such as safety glasses, gloves, strong shoes or boots, and ear defenders or hard hats if necessary. They are not fashion accessories, they are for your own safety and make sense to use them
- Make sure you know how to use the tools correctly to avoid accidents
- Keep blades sharp. It makes the job easier and safer as less pressure will be required to use them
- If you are tired, stop and take a break