

Home is where the hardware is

SCIENTISTS SAY DO-IT-YOURSELF SKILLS WILL VANISH BY 2048. HELP SAVE MEN FROM EXTINCTION!

Percentage of handymen who flip on home-improvement TV shows for DIY tips



Most unlikely new home-improvement show host: **Vanilla Ice**



Don't rely on the tube. "Assume you've missed a step—it's TV, so things are edited out for time's sake," says Josh Temple, host of DIY Network's *Disaster House*. Check the show's site for full instructions, or hit the books instead. For structural work—walls, flooring—use guides published before 1980, "back when things were done right, before prefab," Temple says. Plumbing and electrical work both have modernized, so use newer books for those repairs.

Number of cars on the road with illuminated "check engine" lights



You don't have to draw the DIY line at wiper blades. Most headlight lamp replacements can be done in your driveway—ditto oil changes and coolant top-offs. For more challenging stuff, find an online forum for your car, where owners provide tips and how-to's; or access repair manuals from chiltondiy.com (\$15 for 1 month's access to a single model's guide).

Percentage of men who tried a recent car repair themselves

Percentage of men under 35 who can't wire an outlet



Is your outlet loose or cracked? That's a fire hazard—replace it, says electrician James Young, host of DIY Network's *I Hate My Kitchen*. See his instructions at diynetwork.com/how-to/how-to-install-a-gfci-outlet. Critical step: Make sure the power is off. To find the right breaker, plug a radio into the outlet and crank it up. Then head to the basement and throw switches until the music stops.



Percentage of guys who have at least one broken appliance in their house

Percentage who'd rather buy a new appliance than fix the old one



The most common appliance problems (broken oven heating elements and worn-out dishwasher hoses) have easy fixes. (Go to repairclinic.com for parts and instructions.) And then there's the fridge. "You'll most likely see a bad compressor there," Young says. Unplug the unit briefly; if the compressor comes on right away when you plug it back in, it's probably malfunctioning. Unless the fridge is old or the repair costs more than half the price of a new one, fix it, Young says.

Number of amateur projects that go wrong: **1 in 10**

DUCT TAPE

Guys' favorite jerry-rigging tool

Don't go nuts. Never use duct tape on finished surfaces such as wood floors or furniture. The adhesive will ruin the finishes, says licensed contractor Amy Matthews, host of DIY Network's *Sweat Equity*. But it's ideal for hidden areas, such as subfloors. The tape comes in a variety of adhesive strengths, so if you need something taped temporarily, don't use stuff that's too strong.

KIT HINRICH S (photo-illustrations); FilmMagic/Getty Images (Vanilla Ice); kizlikayphotos/Stockphoto (dishwasher); spaChrome/Stockphoto (duct tape)