

Questions to ask before embracing DIY

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Home improvement projects are as popular as ever. In its 2017 True Cost Survey, the home improvement site HomeAdvisor found that, between February 2016 and February 2017, homeowners spent an average of just over \$5,000 on home projects. That marked a nearly \$1,900 increase from the year prior, indicating that homeowners are increasingly opening their wallets to transform their homes.

In addition to spending money to improve their homes, many homeowners are spending their time on projects as well. While DIY projects can provide a sense of fulfillment and personal attachment to one's home, prospective do-it-yourselfers should ask themselves some questions before picking up their hammers and getting to work.

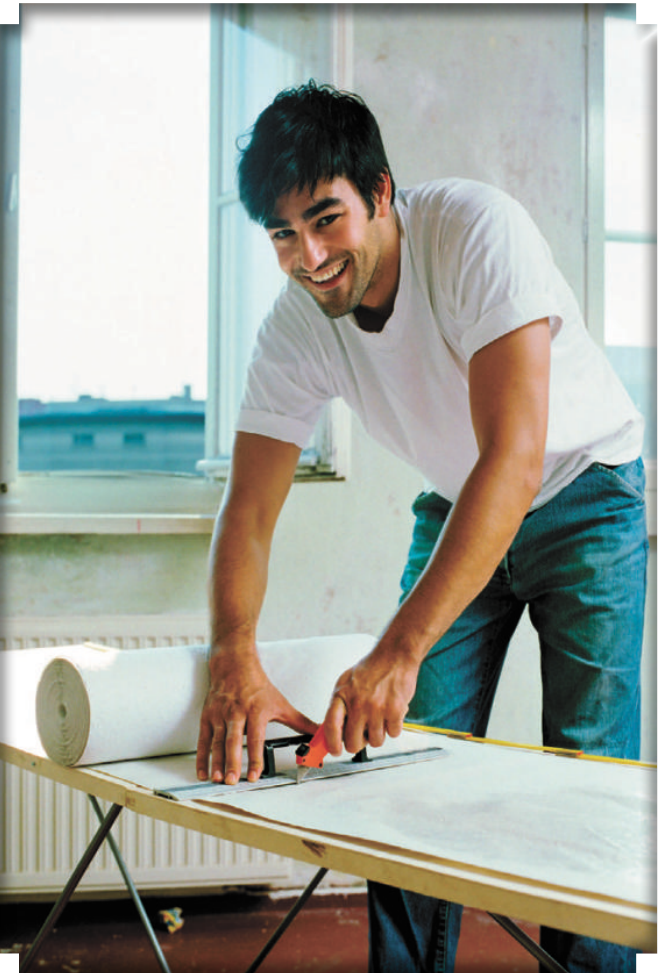
Do I have any physical limitations? No matter how much home improvement television shows may simplify projects, prospective DIYers should know that such undertakings are typically very difficult and oftentimes physically demanding. Homeowners with existing health conditions or other physical limitations may not be capable of performing certain tasks or may need to take frequent breaks, which can delay projects.

Do I have the time? Many home improvement projects require a significant amount of time to complete. Homeowners whose time is already

stretched thin with commitments to work and/or family may not be able to complete projects within a reasonable amount of time. That's fine if working on a part of the home that won't affect daily life, but can prove stressful or problematic if the project is in a room, such as a kitchen or bathroom, that residents of the home use each day. Novice DIYers should be especially honest with themselves about the time they have available to work on the project, as such homeowners are bound to experience a few time-consuming missteps along the way.

Can I afford it? While DIY might seem more affordable than hiring a contractor, that's not necessarily true. Novice DIYers may need to buy or rent tools, costs that can add up. Contractors already have the tools necessary to begin and complete projects, so the cost savings of DIY might not be as significant as homeowners think. Before going the DIY route, homeowners should solicit estimates from contractors, comparing the estimates to how much a project will cost if homeowners do it themselves.

Can I go it alone? Many home improvement projects require more than one set of hands, and it's risky and even foolish for first-time DIYers to assume they can begin a project and see it through to completion entirely on their



own. Homeowners whose spouses, partners, friends, or relatives are willing to chip in may think that's enough. However, the DIY skills of those who volunteer may be a mystery until the project begins. Novice DIYers should enlist the help of a friend or family member with home improvement experience. If

no such person is available, it may be wise to hire a contractor instead. Home improvement projects may seem simple on television. But prospective do-it-yourselfers must make honest assessments of their skills, time and budgets before taking on a DIY project. FH188178

Is it time to replace your entry door? What to know

(StatePoint) Is it time to replace your home's entry door? If your foyer is drafty, the answer is yes. Particularly with winter around the corner. Not only will a new door boost exterior appeal, it will prepare interiors for a temperature dip, making your home more comfortable, while saving you money on utility bills.

So, what should you be looking for in a door?

- A tailored fit. Nothing feels quite as good as well-tailored clothing created spe-

cifically to your size, shape and style preference. Off-the-rack clothing just doesn't fit everyone's measurements. Similarly, off-the-rack doors fall short of expectations in the same way. The materials and workmanship that go into custom-made doors are of exceptional quality and durability, and far exceed what is available as ready-made. Unlike consumer-grade doors, which are cut down to fit your need, professional-class doors are built to your exact measurements for a more secure and energy efficient door.

- Energy efficiency. Look for ENERGY STAR certified doors, which have been independently tested and certified to meet strict energy-efficiency standards set by the Environmental Protection Agency. While a new door does come with a price tag, it's important to keep in mind that the right choice can help you lower your utility bills and ultimately present a return on your investment.

- Quality materials. While wood doors offer a beautiful classic look, they require regular maintenance and lack the endurance, security and energy efficiency of fiberglass or steel. Consider opting for quality materials that



will last a long time but not force you to sacrifice the look you want. For example, the low-maintenance fiberglass options offered by door system manufacturer ProVia include the Signet and Heritage collections and provide the classic look of real wood-grain, but are engineered to be highly energy efficient. The Legacy steel collection provides durability and energy efficiency, whether you opt for a woodgrain texture or smooth steel look, and is a good choice if security is your top priority.


- The right style. When selecting a style and color,


take into consideration the current architectural elements of your home. Use online tools that allow you to upload an image of your home's exterior and play with various combinations to determine the right fit. Keep in mind that an entry door can either be a place to maintain the overall mood of your home's exterior or a way to add a pop of color.


For more tips and resources, visit provia.com.

This fall, set yourself up for a comfortable winter. Upgrade your entry door for substantial energy savings and a more secure home.

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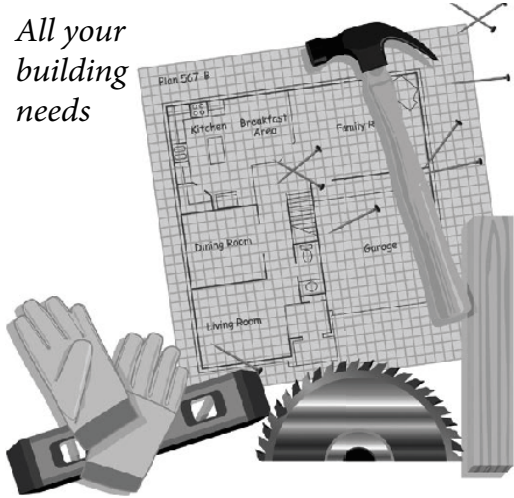
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