



JAKE ROBINSON'S

DIY advice

DIY questions stopping you from starting that big project? TV handyman Jake Robinson has all the answers to help you smooth over the bumps

Jake's guide to... filling small cracks in walls

There are various different types of fillers on the market – Tetron and Polycell being a couple of the best. Many people will just fill in a crack, sand and paint over it, and before long the crack reappears. But there are ways you can avoid this.

[1] Before filling, make sure the wall behind the crack hasn't blown, meaning a gap has formed between the brickwork and the plaster. Check this by tapping the wall with a hammer. If it sounds

hollow, mark out the area with a pencil and take out that part of the wall.

[2] Re-plaster with bonding and a multi-finish. If it's just a very small area, you can do this with filler. Once it has dried, sand and paint the wall, which should prevent any more cracks from forming.

[3] If you have hairline cracks and the wall is solid, this is probably due to movement in the building. Just fill the cracks with filler, leave it to set, then sand and paint.



Q & A

Remove or repair?

My bedroom ceiling has previously been papered and painted, but the paper is now starting to lift – will I need to rip it off to replace it or can I stick it back down and repaint?

Clare Salloway, Chichester

Jake says: If it's only a small area, dab wallpaper paste between the ceiling and paper with a brush and set it back in place. Otherwise, score the ceiling in a criss-cross pattern and use a large brush to soak it with warm water. The paper should come off using a scraper.

Competence check

I want a power supply to my shed and was told by an electrician that I will need to notify Building Control (BC). The electrician is a member of the Competent Persons Scheme and says he can notify BC for me for a small fee when he does the work. Is this true?

Catherine Dean, via email

Jake says: Competent Persons Schemes were set up to enable individuals and companies to self-certify that their work complies with Building Regulations. Check with your local council that your electrician is Part P registered and so qualified to do this.



Under pressure

Is a pressure washer the best way to clean a garden patio? My husband and I are thinking of investing in one but want to be sure first.

Jacqui Friend, via email

Jake says: A pressure washer is the way to go, but be careful while cleaning the stone work as you could lift the mortar that sets the slabs in place. Make sure you use a low-pressure setting. A mild disinfectant used in pressure-washer solutions called quaternary ammonium chloride is very effective for cleaning garden furniture without any harm. Use moderately and wear protective gear.



SEND IN YOUR DIY DILEMMAS TO:

Expert Advice, Real Homes, 64 North Row, London W1K 7LL or send Jake an email at realhomes@hf-uk.com