



JAKE ROBINSON'S

DIY advice

EXPERT ADVICE

Don't worry if you're not as DIY-savvy as you'd like to be – Jake Robinson of TV's *Changing Rooms* and *House Doctor* is here to offer some words of advice

Dear Jake,

My husband has just laid a lovely new patio in our back garden with large paving slabs, and we are pleased with the results. What we'd like to know is, what is the neatest and most successful way to point the slabs – ie to set them with cement – without them looking messy? Is there some kind of tool (like a nozzle for icing cakes) to direct the cement neatly between the slabs?
Mrs C Galloway, Bucks

Jake says: A good pointing job can make all the difference to your patio, and there are two ways to do it. First, you can fill a watering can with water and pour it in-between the slabs, then brush in the mix, although this can get rather fiddly. The second method is much less messy. Simply cut an old watering can right back to make the nozzle larger, fill it with your cement mix, and then pour the mixture carefully between the slabs.



Q & A

Jake's guide to... beating draughts

In the winter, up to 25% of household heat can be lost through window draughts. Fix this common problem with these tips:

Dear Jake,

About six months ago I bought a strip of four spotlights for my kitchen. For some reason, the bulbs keep blowing. I seem to be buying new ones all the time and it's costing me a fortune! Can I do anything or is this just tough luck?
Ms Wendy Sheevers, via email

Jake says: Do ask an electrician to check the transformer and power supply going into the light fitting. If your transformer is faulty, take the light fitting back to where it was purchased and exchange it for a new one. Also, make sure you are using the correct wattage bulbs as this can burn out a transformer. Bulbs should last at least a year.



[1] Draught proofing

You can buy a basic draught-proofing kit from most DIY stores. Fill smaller gaps with a silicone rubber sealant or a self-adhesive foam strip. For sash windows, fit wiper or brush seals, and don't forget under-door draught excluders.

[2] Secondary glazing

This is an inexpensive way to insulate your room further. The cheapest solution is to use plastic sheeting, stretched and sealed around the edges of the window. Alternatively, you can invest in glass panes that slide up and down or across.

[3] Double glazing

An expensive solution, double glazing is only economically viable if the windows need replacing, or if you want to improve the look of your house or cut down noise. However, it does reduce heat loss through windows by 50%. Better insulation can be achieved using Low E or K glass.

Dear Jake,

Is there anything I can do to stop condensation forming between my double-glazed windows? It gets worse in the winter and nobody I ask knows what to do about it. In fact, you're my last hope!
Mrs Jean Butler, Wiltshire

Jake says: Firstly, have you checked for signs of damp? With the heating on and damp in the room, this creates condensation. Also, ask your window installers to check that all your windows have been correctly sealed. Finally, you can get a bricklayer to install airbricks above and below the windows, creating good airflow.



SEND IN YOUR DIY DILEMMAS TO:

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