



JAKE ROBINSON'S

DIY advice

EXPERT ADVICE

If you have a niggling DIY problem, this is your one-stop shop for answers. TV handyman Jake Robinson is our resident font of practical knowledge



Jake's guide to... replacing kitchen worktops

Replacing kitchen worktops can be quite a major job. If you have a gas hob to fit in, you'll need the services of a Corgi plumber. Then you can start on the rest:

[1] While removing the old worktop, use a Stanley knife to score the silicone joining the wall tiles to it. In some cases the tiles may come away from the wall as the worktop is removed.

[2] Make sure before attempting the job that the original tiles can be replaced –

otherwise you may be faced with the task of replacing all the kitchen wall tiles!

[3] Once you've removed the old worktop and are ready to fit the new one, make sure that you accurately measure the areas at the back and front of the walls (annoyingly, walls are not always square so you need to take both measurements). If you manage to take the old worktop out whole, use it as a template for the new worktop. Good luck – this is a big job!

PHOTOGRAPHY QUANTUM FITTED FURNITURE, ALAMY, REDCOVER.COM

It's a dog's life

I had a new lawn put down last year but my dog is wetting on it so I have six bare spots where the grass has died. Is there anything I can do?

Susie Smith, via email

Jake says: Mark & Chappell (www.markandchappell.com) makes food supplements for dogs, which prevent lawn discolouration caused by pet urine. These food supplements are claimed to be safe for both pets and garden. Once this is sorted, buy grass seed to re-grow the lawn in the affected area. Make sure it is well watered before you seed the it, so all residual nitrates are diluted.



Update your tiles

My kitchen floor is laid with self-adhesive vinyl-type floor tiles, which I think have been laid onto a bitumen floor. I'd now like to replace them, as their pattern is a little dated. How should I remove these old tiles?

Ernie Munton, via email

Jake says: As long as they're not ceramic, you can apply new tiles on top of the existing ones. If you'd definitely rather replace them, though, heat up the tiles with a gas bottle and burner. This will melt the bitumen, enabling you to remove the tiles easily. Use protective gloves so you don't get burnt.

Losing layers

My flat's previous owners put carpet in the bathroom. However, between that and the floorboards is a layer of lino with newspaper placed on top of it. Will I have to take everything up and start again for it to look nice? I live in a ground-floor flat.

Katja Petrokov, Slough

Jake says: Personally, I'd take everything up. I don't like carpet in a bathroom, as it is unhygienic. I'd suggest you lay 12mm marine WPB plyboard on top of the floorboards, screwing it down at 300mm intervals with 18mm screws. Invest in a pipe detector so that you can avoid any accidents while screwing the plyboard into the floorboards!



SEND IN YOUR DIY DILEMMAS TO:

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