



JAKE ROBINSON'S

# DIY advice

EXPERT ADVICE

If the thought of attempting DIY over the bank holiday weekends is filling you with dread, turn to our Jake from *Big Strong Boys* and *House Doctor* for advice

## Jake's guide to... Getting your patio ship-shape in time for summer

In those long winter months your patio will have weeds growing through the stone or brickwork. Buy or hire a pressure hose to clean out these areas before you do any repairs. If you see weeds growing through the mortar dig them out, along with any loose mortar. To re-point between the stone or brickwork, you'll need some sand and cement, which you can buy from any builder's merchants. Mix it up and transfer to a watering can, then pour it into the gaps. Use a pointing trowel to

smooth in the mortar, leave to dry for an hour and brush off any excess.

To clean patio furniture, use a pressure washer and a mild disinfectant or detergent, not chlorine or harsh cleaning solutions. It is very important that low pressure is used; if the pressure is strong enough to blow the furniture around the deck, it may be strong enough to peel off the finish as well. Remember to always use protective gear such as gloves and safety glasses while doing jobs like these.



### Dear Jake,

**My husband and I are debating over which paint looks best (and wears well) on skirting and coving – gloss or satin? Can you solve our argument?**

**Gina Foggart, via email**

**Jake says:** Gloss is now mostly used for exterior woodwork, though some people use it to paint stairs and doors. In my own home I use satinwood. It's more subtle and after a year or two it'll still be looking good, while gloss can quickly look worn.



### Dear Jake,

**We have wood panelling in our hall and along the staircase. It's varnished but we want to paint over it. How do we prepare the wood for this?**

**Kim Clynshaw, London**

**Jake says:** This is quite a painstaking job. You'll need an orbital sander, dust masks, a corner scraper and lots of sandpaper and sanding discs. Start sanding the panels using a course disc first, followed by a medium one, then a fine one depending on how thick the varnish is. Make sure you go up and down the grain, not across it. Use the corner scraper to get into the grooves in between the panels. Once you've done all this, you're ready to paint.



### Dear Jake,

**My boiler has started to leak. I'm reluctant to call the plumber to fix it as that can be expensive and the leak is only minor. Is it possible for me to fix the problem safely myself?**

**Laura Cook, via email**

**Jake says:** Well Laura, as long as it's a water leak and not a gas leak then yes you can, it's really easy. Get an adjustable spanner on the nut that's leaking – if there are two nuts then you'll need to hold one part with one spanner and then tighten the loose nut. If you find this has made the leak worse then the nut will need to be replaced, and for that you will need a plumber, so I hope the first option works!



### 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](mailto:realhomes@hf-uk.com)**