



JAKE ROBINSON'S

DIY advice

EXPERT ADVICE

Not as DIY-savvy as you'd like to be? Fear not. Jake Robinson, from TV's *House Doctor*, is here to share his know-how and offer some practical pieces of advice

Q & A

Dear Jake,

I'm about to start decorating upstairs and I'd love to know if you can recommend any eco-friendly, natural paints I can use?

Valerie Emmett, via email

Jake says: Good for you, Valerie. Dulux and Crown both offer fume-free ranges with low VOCs (volatile organic compounds), as do Aura and EarthBorn. Nutshell Paints are my favourites – they smell great and are made of natural materials, so they're ideal for allergy sufferers.



Jake's guide to... the perfect toolkit

Even the simplest DIY jobs require the right tools, so make sure you're always prepared with Jake's list of essentials



[1] A good toolkit that will see you ready for all manner of household emergencies needs to contain the following pieces:

- basic saw
- simple hammer
- spirit level
- planer
- set square
- assortment of hand screwdrivers (pozi-head, Philips and slotted)
- a battery-powered screwdriver with drill bits, masonry bits and wood bits
- a good tape measure (get one free with April's issue of **Real Homes!**)
- and finally, loads of pencils!

[2] Equipping yourself with the basics shouldn't break the bank.

You should be able to buy this set for around £60, without looking any further than your usual DIY stores, such as B&Q, Robert Dyas or Homebase.

Dear Jake,

Is it possible to turn my garden shed into a home office? I think it would make a great place for the kids to do their homework, but I'm worried about the damp and cold.

Mrs H Myner, Grantham

Jake says: If you have a standard shed it will need to be sitting on concrete slabs, which are set onto the soil or raised from the ground. To save you freezing in the winter, get some insulation boards to tuck in between the joists of your shed. Check that you don't have any leaks coming through the felt on the rooftop, too. If you have, seal the gaps with some bitumen paint. Or, if the leak is very bad, you will need to re-felt the roof entirely.



Dear Jake,

Quick query – how do I bleed a radiator?!
Jenny King, St Helens

Jake says: Ah, a nice easy one! You'll need a rag, a small bucket to catch any water

and a radiator key. Place the key on the valve and open it slightly, releasing the air. Once the hissing dies down, this means that the water is coming to the top of the radiator and all the air is free. Tighten the valve to seal the radiator and you're done!



SEND IN YOUR DIY DILEMMAS TO:

DIY Q&A, Real Homes, 64 North Row, London W1K 7LL or send Jake an email at realhomes@hf-uk.com