



JAKE ROBINSON'S

DIY advice

EXPERT ADVICE

Far from a dab-hand at DIY? Don't panic – *Big Strong Boys* and *House Doctor's* Jake Robinson is here with all the decorating advice you need



Dear Jake,

I have just inherited a vinyl-wicker chair by Lloyd Loom but it could do with a facelift. It's currently orange and I would love to paint it white – is there a particular paint or process I should use?

Mrs L Hucknall, via email

Jake says: If you're going to paint your chair, the first thing you will need to do is clean it thoroughly as these chairs can harbour dust. Try gently vacuuming it, then banish the remainder of the dust by scrubbing with an old toothbrush. A lot of people recommend car paint to put on it, though satin-finish paints are also ideal. I would recommend one from Farrow & Ball (www.farrow-ball.com).

Dear Jake,

I live in a top-floor maisonette but when people moved in downstairs I could hear everything from their flat. I laid new carpets but now realise I need some soundproofing beneath them. Can you suggest a reasonably priced solution?

Katie Daly, via email

Jake says: Soundproofing floors can be expensive. The trickiest yet most cost-effective way is to take up the floorboards and squeeze Rockwool insulation between the joists (see www.rockwool.co.uk for details). Then nail the boards back, avoiding cables or pipes, and lay acoustic boarding (try B&Q). This should cost no more than £200 for an average-



Jake's guide to... re-grouting tiles

There are two good ways to do this for a perfect finish – the choice is yours!

Method 1

- [1] Take out all of the old grout using a grouting knife and make sure you don't scratch the edges of your tiles.
- [2] Wipe down the tiles to ensure they are free from any old grout, dust or dirt.
- [3] Apply your new grout with a grouting float, squeezing it carefully into the gaps between each tile.
- [4] Leave the grout to dry for no more than half an hour.
- [5] Get a warm, damp cloth and wash all of the excess grout off the tiles.

Method 2

- [1] Complete steps 1 and 2 above.
- [2] Mix the grout and pour into a plastic tube. Then replace the end cap on the tube and place into a mastic gun (one with a nozzle).
- [3] Use the mastic gun to fill in the gaps between the tiles, then repeat steps 4 and 5 above to complete the job.

Q & A

Dear Jake,

I'm about to paper a feature wall in my bedroom but don't know whether to start at the right and work left, or from the left and work right. The wall features two doors and the underside of a staircase. The paper has quite a delicate 'random match' pattern on it. Can you please tell me where to start?

Mrs M Miller, Gatehouse

Jake says: Always start in the middle of the wall. Join each pattern equally from left to right. This will leave you with one perfect, uniform pattern.



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