

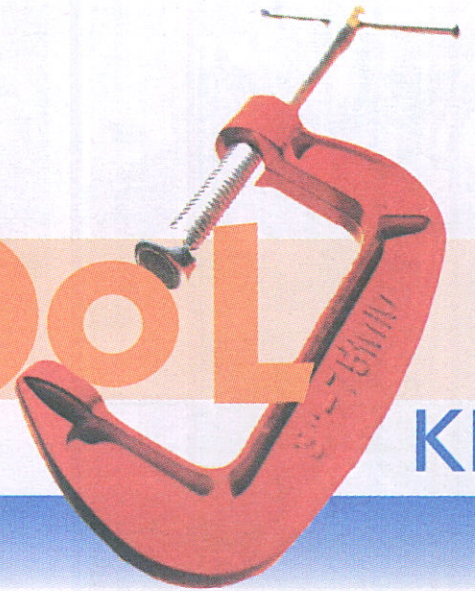
Interior—Exterior



THE BASIC HOME

TOOL KIT

With Lisa Alexander



Now with summer slowly on its way out and autumn just around the corner, you may be making plans for some basic home improvement over the winter months or during the day while the kids are back in school. It's a good time to get to some of those small projects you've been thinking about.

A great place to start with home projects is to make sure you have some of the basic tools you will need around the house. My late father who could build or fix just about anything always said to me, "Lisa, with the right tools, you can do anything." I think that's true about all kinds of "tools" in life, but for now we are talking about old-fashioned tool basics.

THE BASICS

All homeowners' tools kits should contain a few basics:

- Measuring tools
- Cutting tools
- A hammer(s)
- Pliers
- A drill and basic bit set
- Set of screwdrivers
- Some simple painting items
- A few wrenches of varying sizes.



MEASURING

I'm sure you heard the phrase "Measure twice, cut once." Boy is that ever true.

My late father practiced this theory and made few mistakes because of it. Heeding his advice, I, too, practice this most of the time. In haste a few times I didn't and regretted it later, a lesson my impatient husband has yet to learn, even after several costly mistakes.

Make sure you have:

A retractable steel tape that measures up to sixteen feet. If you have anything smaller than the length of the average room, you run into the possibility of making a mistake in your calculations when piecing lengths together from several measurements.

A small level that can fit into a pocket is handy. You can always get a larger one later if you get in to bigger projects.

For checking right angles you need to have a square.

Don't forget a soft pencil for marking measurements on wooden surfaces and a waterproof pen for glossy surfaces.

CUTTING

If we are just talking some basics here, you don't need much. As you get into more serious projects, you can assess your needs for those jobs and pick your tools accordingly, like an electric circular saw...one of my favorite power tools.

For now you can start with:

A must have is a good utility or snap-blade knife.

Keep a small all-purpose knife on hand; a good pocketknife will do.

Purchase a handsaw, preferable a medium size backsaw. You'll recognize one by the extra steel strip that runs along the top of the blade from the handle down to the end of the blade to keep it straight and more rigid. This will help you make cuts in large and small pieces of wood.

GRIPPING

For gripping you need several things:

A small assortment of pliers, like a pair of combination pliers and a long-nose pliers for those hard to reach areas.

An adjustable wrench and/or several wrenches of various sizes would be prudent to have in your basic tool kit.

PAINTING

Let's face it, if there is one simple home improvement project that can easily and inexpensively change the look of a piece of furniture, room, or whole house, it's painting.

Everyone does it at one time or another, so it's best to keep the basics on hand.

- A scraper
- A putty or stripping knife, several sizes
- A flexible knife
- Painter's tape
- A selection of different size paint brushes
- A roller, roller brushes of different thicknesses, and a paint tray

DRILLS, DRIVERS, AND OTHER "MUST HAVES"

Having a basic screwdriver set is a must. Make sure it contains both flat and Phillips heads in various sizes. If space in your toolbox is limited, then a pump screwdriver with interchangeable bits is an option for you.

As far as I'm concerned, a cordless drill is another

must and also another one of my favorite power tools. It doesn't have to be big, just make sure it's a good one and you have a basic bit set to go with it. Have several bits in different sizes.

Who could forget the basic HAMMER!!!! No toolbox would be complete without at least one. Make sure one of your hammers is a curved claw hammer so you can remove nails.

THE TOOL KIT

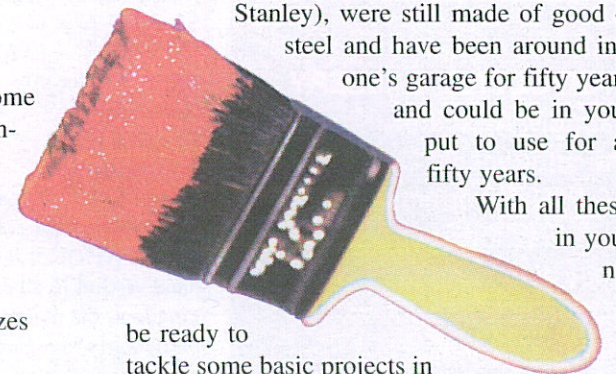
This is a matter of preference. Any home center or hardware store will have a variety of tool kits to consider. Choose the one that best fits your organizational style and home needs.

Points to remember...**BUY GOOD TOOLS.** I can't stress that enough. If you buy cheap tools, they'll let you down when you need them most. Many tools are made in third world countries these days out of cheap white steel. They tend to bend and break easily. Good tools are something that you'll have a long time, and old hand tools have become valuable.

Since it is the end of summer, you may want to look around for some garage sales for some old hand tools. The old hand tools, (I like Craftsman & Stanley), were still made of good old US steel and have been around in someone's garage for fifty years or so and could be in yours and put to use for another fifty years.

With all these tools in your arsenal, you should

be ready to tackle some basic projects in your house this fall and all winter long. Having a complete basic tool kit on hand will help make you life and home better.



Lisa Alexander hosted the popular show "Room for Improvement"

on WFMZ channel 69 in the Allentown, PA area. The show was rated number one even in reruns.