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# Handyman

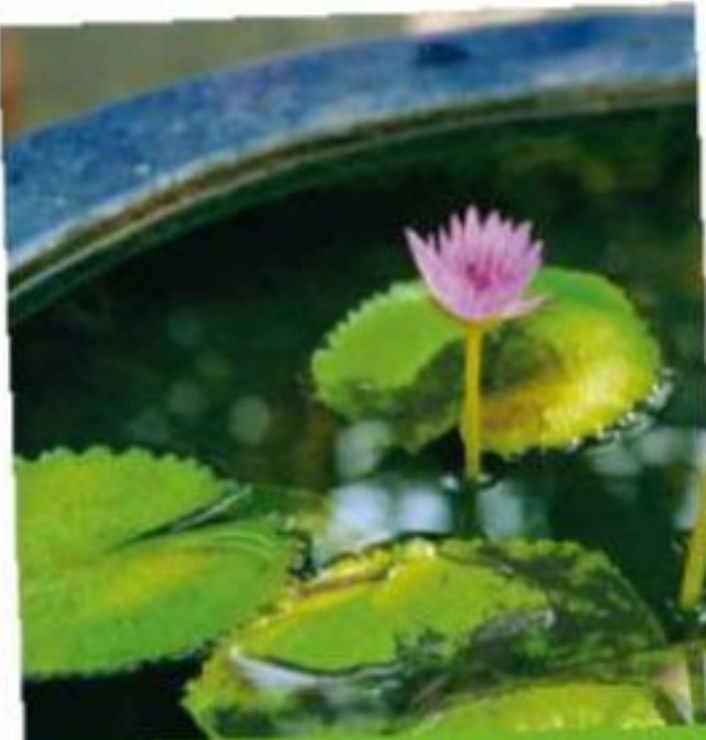
**EASY  
GARDEN  
PROJECTS**



Build a timber arbour



Plant chillies now



Make a pond in a pot

## **DIY BATHROOM** *makeovers*

**SMALL SPACE DESIGN TRICKS**

- Install a shower screen
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- Hang a new mirror

Budget-friendly  
**LAUNDRY RENO**

No stress guide to  
**MOVING HOUSE**

Setting up a  
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### **PROJECT** FRAMELESS

The 10mm frameless glass Project Series is available as an acrylic package or Ezi-Lay tile package. This Project Series offers a premium and versatile frameless shower package that will take your bathroom to the next level.



### **EMILIO** SLIDING DOOR

A modern sliding shower with stylish frameless glass. This enclosure is a practical solution for when space is limited. Package options includes the Ezi-Lay tile tray or an acrylic tray with one piece acrylic wall liner.



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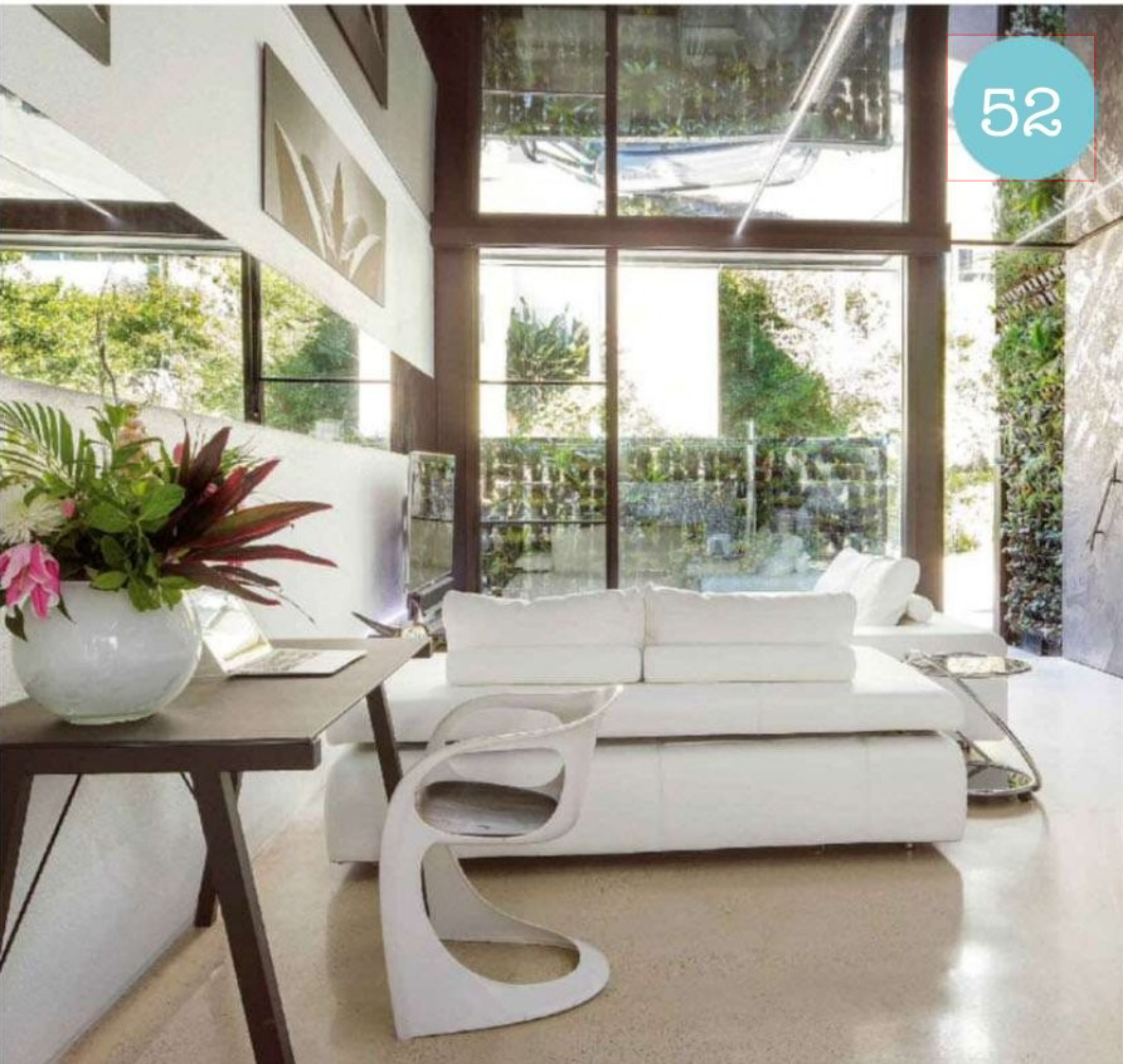
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# October *issue*



## This issue

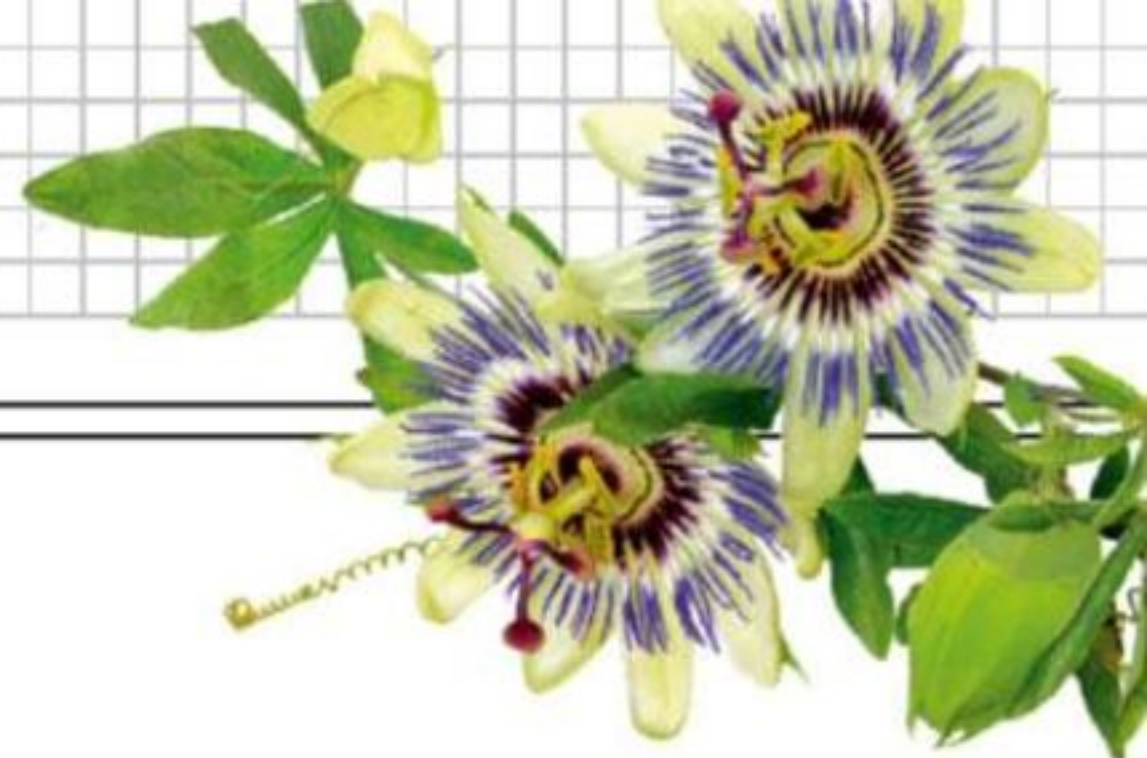
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### Moving house

We've all done it at least once and are always surprised at how much stuff we have accumulated.

And sometimes, it can be more cost-effective to hire professional movers than tackle it all yourself.

We untangle the mysteries of how to avoid the common pitfalls of relocating house, on [page 62](#).

Plus, we have expert tips on moving heavy, awkward pieces of furniture around without hurting the floor, the woodwork or your back, on [page 66](#).

### Go gardening

As we relish the joys of spring, it's that time of year when we can start to really enjoy the outdoors again.

We have some great projects in this issue to add a feature to your backyard, and a pond in a pot you can make in just a few hours, on [page 92](#).

For landscape makeovers, we show you how to pick the healthiest plants at the nursery and what you should plant right now. We also share fun gardening projects the kids will love, on [page 108](#). So let's get into it!

Enjoy the issue,

MANAGING EDITOR  
LEE DASHIELL



Add character to your backyard with a timber arbour.

### More inspiration

Are you planning on revamping your garden and need some more inspiration?

Pinterest lets you create and organise boards of your favourite pictures. It's a great way to find and share ideas for your next DIY project.

Check out *Handyman* at [pinterest.com/diyhandyman](https://pinterest.com/diyhandyman) or scan this code with your phone.



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# DIY PROJECTS

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# HANDY STUFF

A collection of clever ideas for the backyard, the workshop and camping in the great outdoors



PLANCHA HOT PLATE

TRAVEL BAG

## Hot stuff

Stylish, compact and portable, the BeefEater BUGG Barbecue, \$499, or \$749 on the stand, looks and cooks great. Grill and sear with the lid up or roast with it down. Two powerful stainless steel burners and rust-free cooktops will have barbie fans drooling. It comes with optional extras like a plancha hotplate, \$149, and travel bag, \$149.

[bugg.co.nz](http://bugg.co.nz)

## Keep it clean

Cut back on cleaning up after a barbie with a BBQ Buddy Hot Plate Liner, about \$19. Easy to wipe off with a paper towel and dishwasher-safe, the non-stick liner will withstand the barbecue's heat time after time. It measures 485 x 400mm but is easily trimmed to fit most hotplates.

[mayohardware.co.nz](http://mayohardware.co.nz)



## Endless edges

Sick of running out of battery or cord length while working in the garden? Problem solved thanks to the Ryobi 18V Hybrid Line Trimmer, \$229. The new technology means you can switch between a battery or corded mains source so you won't ever have to leave a job half finished again. >

[ryobi.co.nz](http://ryobi.co.nz)



### Light up the night

Switching from day to night is simple with the Panther Vision Powercap, \$25. The brushed cotton cap will protect your face from the sun and the four concealed LEDs under the brim provide light for up to 43 hours. Two of the LEDs illuminate up to 12.8m in front of the wearer while the other two focus on close up work.

[panthervision.com](http://panthervision.com)



### Electric jacket

Find you're feeling a little too frosty? Warm up with an AEG 12V Heated Jacket, \$249, available in sizes small to XXL. Made of soft, durable polyester with a fleece lining and built-in hood, it's wind- and water-resistant. It also features three carbon-fibre heating elements with three heat settings. ➤

[aegpowertools.co.nz](http://aegpowertools.co.nz)

### One-tool wonder

No workshop should be without a Dremel Trio 6800 Multi-Purpose Tool, \$169. It'll cut, sand and rout materials including wood, plastic, sheet metal and wall tiles without switching tools. Its unique 360° cutting technology and plunge-cut ability allow quick, controlled cuts.

[dremel.com](http://dremel.com)



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Make sure you get all the right gear for your next camping trip.

### Fold-away comfort

Rough it in style and comfort on the OZtrail Outdoor Cool Boy Camp Chair, \$49. Easy to fold up and transport, it has a cushioned polyester seat and back while the armrests feature a drink holder and two storage compartments. Relax and enjoy the view.

[bunnings.co.nz](http://bunnings.co.nz)



### Gas up 'n' go

Fire up the grill anywhere, anytime with the butane Gasmate Portable Cooker, about \$31. It's lightweight and easy to transport, while a gas leak prevention and shut-off system combined with solid brass valves mean it will take a knock or two.

[aber.co.nz](http://aber.co.nz)

### Shine a light

Get more from your day with the Arlec 24-LED Rechargeable Camping Lantern, \$40. To ensure you're heading in the right direction, it even has a built-in compass. A retractable hook makes it easy to hang up around the camp site.

[arlec.com.au](http://arlec.com.au)



### Keep the chill out

When it gets chilly camping out under the stars, fire up a Gasmate Portable Gas Heater, \$60. Lightweight and portable, it has Piezo ignition for easy starting. A polished reflector radiates plenty of heat and a safety grill guards against accidents.

[aber.co.nz](http://aber.co.nz)



### Take a drink

If you're hitting the trail, take your water in the Esky 4L Hybrid Drink Bottle, \$18. The outer cover is insulated and the hard polyester bottle will stand rugged handling. Complete with a grab handle for easy pouring and a comfortable shoulder strap, it has a wide spout and the square-edge design makes it easy to pack in a rucksack.

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# All the latest looks in outdoor living for a lot less

Whether you're just updating the barbie or creating a luxury resort in your own backyard, Bunnings Warehouse has an amazing range of everything you need for enjoying the great outdoors this summer.

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# The choices are endless

Whether you're looking for a traditional look in sustainable hardwood, the latest in wicker or a sleek contemporary feel, you'll find a huge selection at Bunnings Warehouse. And best of all, everything is at a great low price every day... so you don't need to wait for a sale.

## HUGE ON VALUE GREAT ON SIZE

The Mimosa 4 Piece Lounge Setting represents huge value. Its compact size makes it great for balconies or patio settings and it comes ready to assemble in a handy transportable box. Made from aluminium and rattan, it won't rust and is easy to maintain. **\$398.**



## TRADITIONAL STYLING

The Mimosa Timber Adirondack Chair is the quintessential kiwiana chair. Constructed out of timber with natural oil finish, it is strong enough to take a good kiwi bloke of 120kg. **\$147**



## GET COSY OUTDOORS

Create a cosy ambience and keep your toes warm on cool summer evenings with the Jumbuck Cast Stone Fire Pit. Its large 76cm steel fire bowl comes with a dome shaped fire screen, interior charcoal grid and poker. Ideal for concrete or brick patios but unsuitable for wooden decks. **\$249**



## DREAM YOUR DAY AWAY

The Mimosa Day Bed with cushions and matching pillows is designed to compliment the Mimosa Corner Sofa with Coffee Table. In the same grey and white deep cushioned fabric, and made from the same oiled FSC® eucalyptus timber, it looks equally good as a feature piece on its own. **\$549**



## DAY DREAMS ARE MADE OF THIS

Complete your resort style look with the Mimosa Curved Timber Hammock. Finished in stunning oiled FSC® eucalyptus timber, imagine lying back and letting the family wait on you while you relax, enjoy your favourite magazine or just take in some rays. Dreams are affordable at just **\$249**



### BEACHSIDE LIVING

The Mimosa 5 Piece Cable Beach Bar with its classic minimalist look will bring the feeling of the coast to any outdoor area. Designed to withstand the elements, with its graphite powder-coated aluminium frame and 5mm white tempered glass top. The cushions are black and made from UV treated PVC polyester with comfortable polyester filling. **\$599**

### COOK UP A FEAST

Use either gas or charcoal to create delicious meals for your family and friends on the Jumbuck 3 Burner Dual Fuel Hooded BBQ with cabinet. Finished in a stylish black powder-coated finish with stainless steel handles, it will give you a host of options for your outdoor entertaining this coming summer. **\$549**



### FULL SIZE FLAVOUR IN MINI SIZE

The tough little Beefeater BUGG is a new species of BBQ. It gives all the heat and control of a full sized BBQ with the size and ease of a portable. Cook with the hood up for crispier grilling, or hood down for roasts. Made from porcelain enamel coated cast iron and stainless steel to keep it rust free for 5 years. Stand \$249. BBQ **\$498**



### THE ULTIMATE IN RELAXATION

Gently rock your way through summer with the Mimosa Swinging Egg Chair. Made from long lasting, UV stabilised and weather-resistant open-weave resin wicker, this pod shaped seat is suspended from a durable powder coated steel frame with soft, oversized spun polyester padded cushions to cocoon yourself in luxury. **\$429**



### PERFECT FOR LAZY SUMMER DAYS

The Mimosa Corner Sofa with Coffee Table is the perfect solution for long, lazy summer days and evenings. Made from oiled FSC® eucalyptus timber, it comes complete with deep, soft cushioning to add a layer of luxurious comfort to any outdoor situation. **\$1499**

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# Space-saving luxury

Turn a small, cramped bathroom into a streamlined sanctuary with a few simple design techniques

WORDS ARTEMIS GOUROS

**B**athrooms are often the smallest and yet the busiest room in the home, making a good layout both essential and a challenge.

Maximising a compact floorplan means using modern fixtures to open up the room and streamline the space without sacrificing form for function.

The first rule of small-bathroom design is to forget the tub and go for a frameless glass shower screen.

Focus on creating the illusion of more space with lighting, mirrors and windows. Glossy surfaces reflect light and add a luxury feel, while colour is used to highlight not dominate.



Add a modern touch to any style of bathroom with a sleek chrome showerhead and sink mixer.

### Adding colour

To bring a small bathroom to life, add enough colour to brighten the space without overpowering it.

Stick to fresh yellows, blues or greens, and take the colour from floor to ceiling, keeping the fittings and other surfaces white.

Accessories are another way to inject colour in a white space or use the floor, choosing dark grey or brown to anchor the room. >

A glossy yellow wall provides a bright backdrop to the side-by-side shower, toilet and basin in this tiny bathroom.



Combine stone, glass, timber and porcelain to add texture and warmth to a room, whatever the size.

### Bring in light

Skylights and clerestory windows are a great way to flood a bathroom with natural light, and they're even more useful if wall space is at a premium.

Take advantage of high ceilings to include as many windows as possible, using opaque glass for privacy.

Mirrored cabinet doors trick the eye into seeing a bigger room, while downlights are a good unobtrusive choice for low ceilings.

Wall recesses provide storage for toiletries without taking up valuable floorspace, and keep the vanity clear and clutter to a minimum.

A part-wall or single glass panel can be used to screen the shower and avoid closing off a corner of a small room.



### Keep it white

Older houses typically have lots of features that seem to go against the modern design ethos of sleek shapes and shiny surfaces. But with minimal work, you can turn old-fashioned features into small-space assets.

Choose white and another neutral or light colour for the walls, finishing panelling and plasterboard with paint designed for wet areas.

Use the same colour for all trim, including mirrors, dado or picture rails, skirting and window frames.

Keep all fixtures white and strip back any lino or other flooring to reveal original floorboards.

Don't cram in furniture and accept that the bathroom doesn't have storage space for supplies of toilet paper or stacks of towels. >



Old-fashioned pedestal sinks look streamlined, so simply top with a mirror, not a cabinet.

PICTURES ALAMY

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The ceiling-mounted showerhead and single glass panel keep the mosaic tiles the main feature of this space.

### Tile it bright

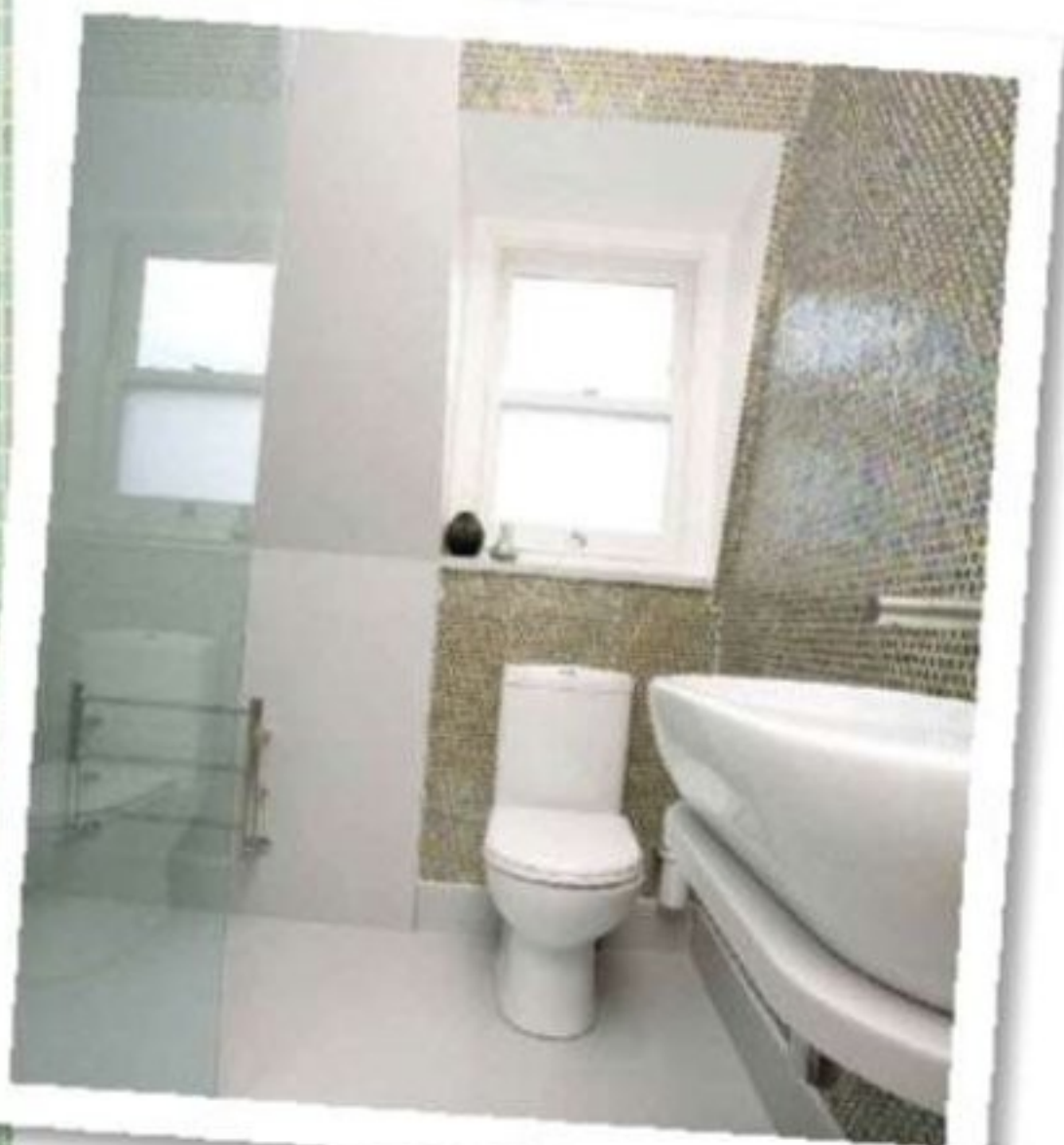
In a small bathroom, fittings should be kept simple to prevent clutter, with colour being introduced through tiles, such as an eye-catching feature wall or a mosaic floor or wall strip.

Mosaic tiling is an easy way to add glamour, and iridescent tiles help reflect light. The tiles come in sheets, which cuts down on installation time.

Team coloured wall tiles with white flooring, or add visual depth by taking the tiles up the walls.

Keep the look seamless with a trayless shower and freestanding towel rail, so the walls are clear and the tiling is still visible.

Add a wall-hung toilet and sink to bring the room bang up to date. ➤



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INTERIOR FLOORING



A shower stall and powder room take up one side of this narrow space with cabinets tucked into a corner under a window.

### Trim it right

Sometimes, it's the layout rather than the square metres that make a bathroom feel small. Part-walls or internal powder rooms can make design difficult.

The most budget-friendly solution to overcome floorplan obstacles is to work with, not against, an architectural style, and avoid moving plumbing or knocking out and building walls.

For a traditional home, cornices, skirting, doorframes and window shutters are best left in a bathroom, as removing them may make the space feel clinical, not contemporary.

Glass shower screens are essential to keep the room open, but vanities can be older-style with a solid benchtop and doors with a decorative profile.

White ceilings are a must to keep the room fresh and light, but they can be panelled. Walls should simply be painted or tiled in one colour.

**TIP** An awkwardly shaped space may present an opportunity to put in a tub.



PICTURES ALAMY, THINKSTOCK

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**PHILIPS**

# Design a small bathroom

Make a big impact in a compact space with the clever use of fixtures and accessories

WORDS DANIEL BUTKOVICH MAIN PICTURES CHRIS L JONES STYLING GEMA BENEITEZ

**A** bathroom that is practical and aesthetically pleasing can be a challenge to design, especially when working with a small space.

Measuring only 2.4 x 1.9m, the bathroom in this first-floor extension needed every trick in the book to make it look and feel bigger than it is.

When the extension was added, the bathroom was built as an empty shell with only plumbing and wiring installed by the tradesmen.

The layout was kept simple, with plumbing for just a shower, toilet and vanity, as a bathtub in a room this size would occupy too much space.

For the waterproofing and tiling, a professional tiler was called in. Large-format tiles were selected to increase the sense of space.

The chocolate colour on the floor was continued up the wall opposite the door to add visual depth, while glossy white tiles were used for the other walls to brighten the space.

## Boost the light levels

With a small, west-facing window, the room was designed to make the most of the limited natural light. A mirror was mounted on the wall above the vanity so there was no medicine cabinet creating an obstruction at eye level.

The vanity was positioned adjacent to the window so the mirror could bounce light into the room. The white wall tiles and glass shower panels also function as reflective surfaces.

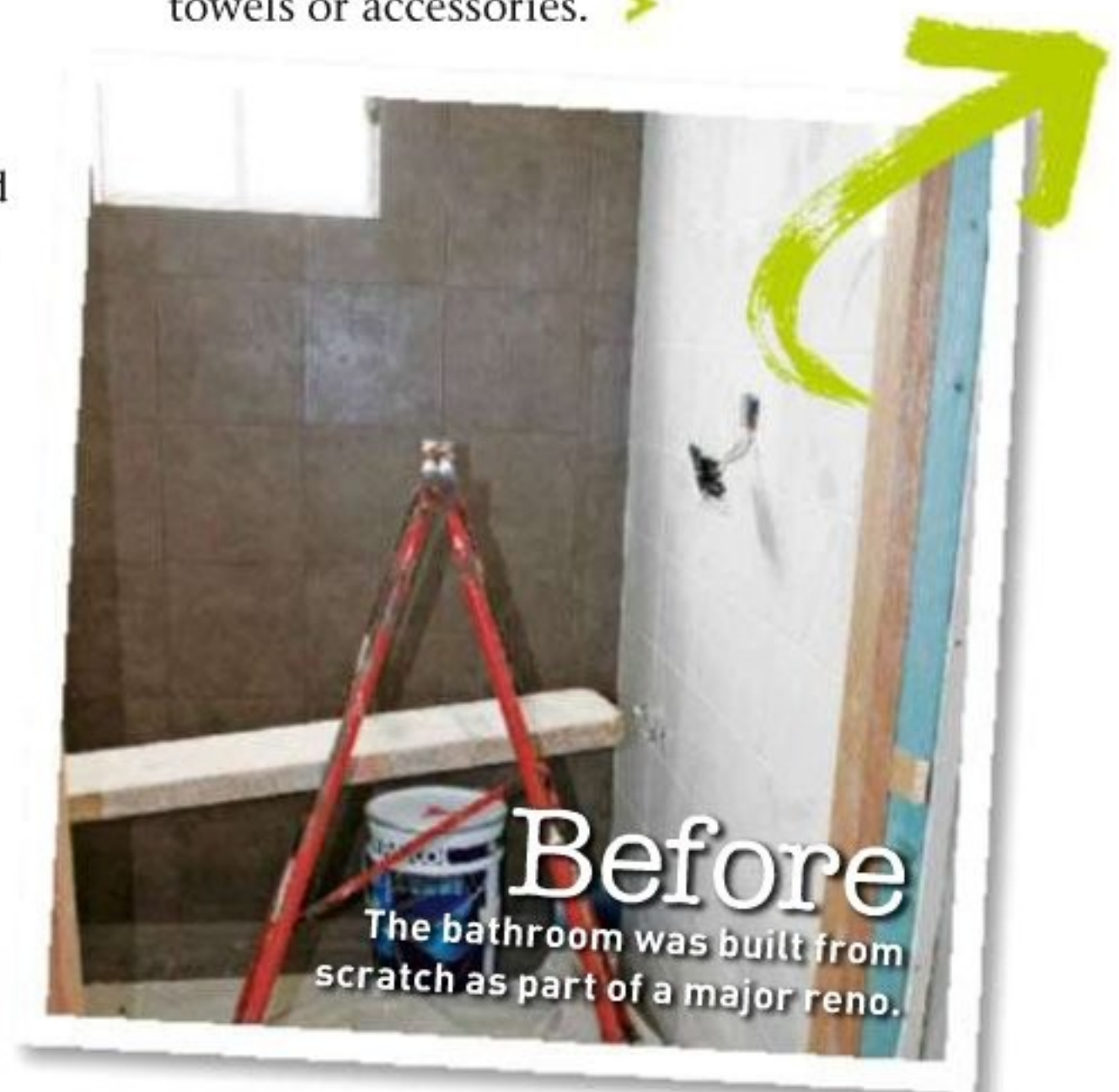
Despite the small space, the bathroom door has just enough clearance to open inwards, without hitting the vanity.

Frameless glass was chosen for the shower screen to open up the space and make the room look bigger than it is.

The toilet was tucked into the corner next to the shower to keep it out of the line of sight from the doorway.

To complete the contemporary look, chrome taps and shower fittings were installed, and complemented by chrome towel racks, as well as a handy shower caddy to keep the space tidy.

**TIP** Brighten up a modern bathroom by adding splashes of colour using towels or accessories. >





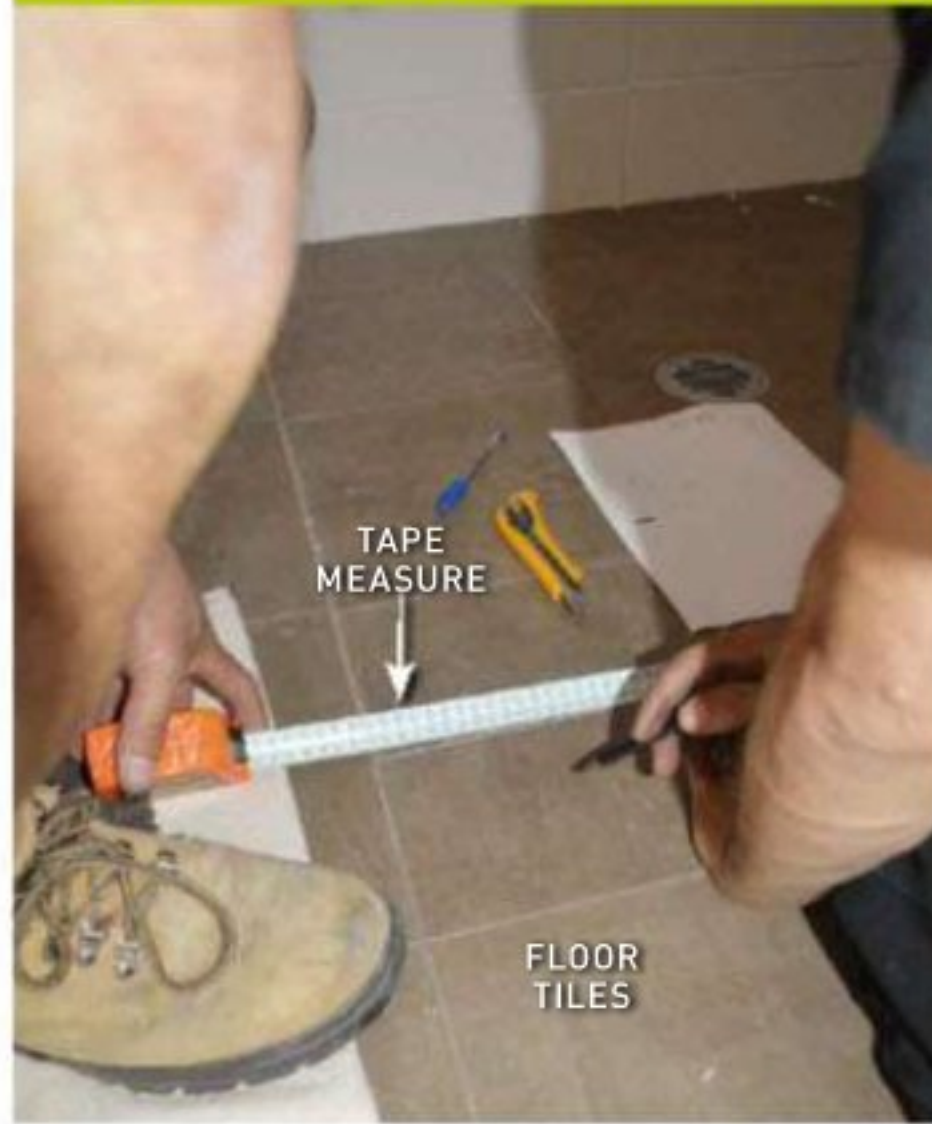
What it cost

Tiler	\$1300
Tiles	\$500
Plumber	\$600
Vanity	\$406
Toilet	\$343
Mixers and showerhead	\$347
Shower screen	\$1424
Mirror	\$37
Accessories	\$98
TOTAL	\$5055

# After

Sleek fittings and a frameless glass shower screen open up the compact bathroom, giving the illusion of space.

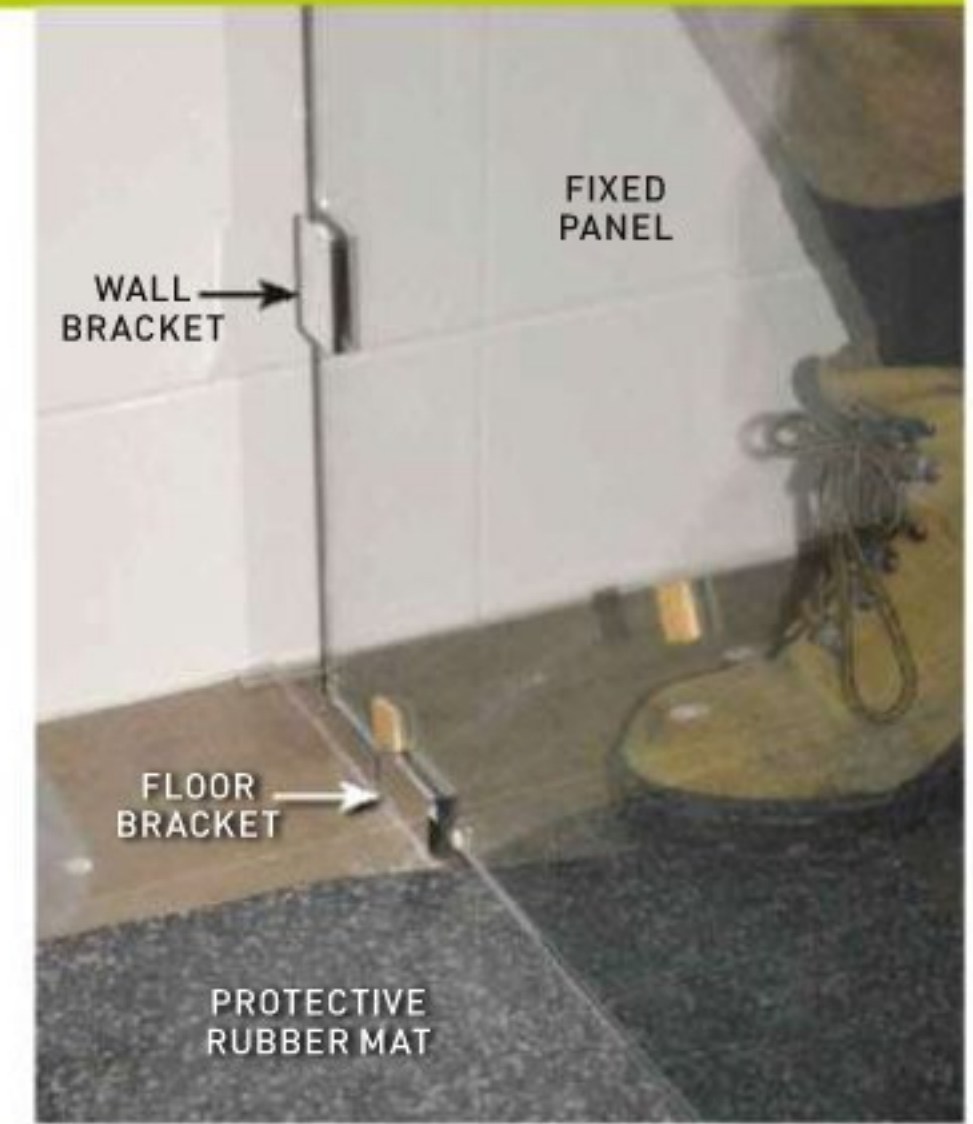
## Install the shower screen



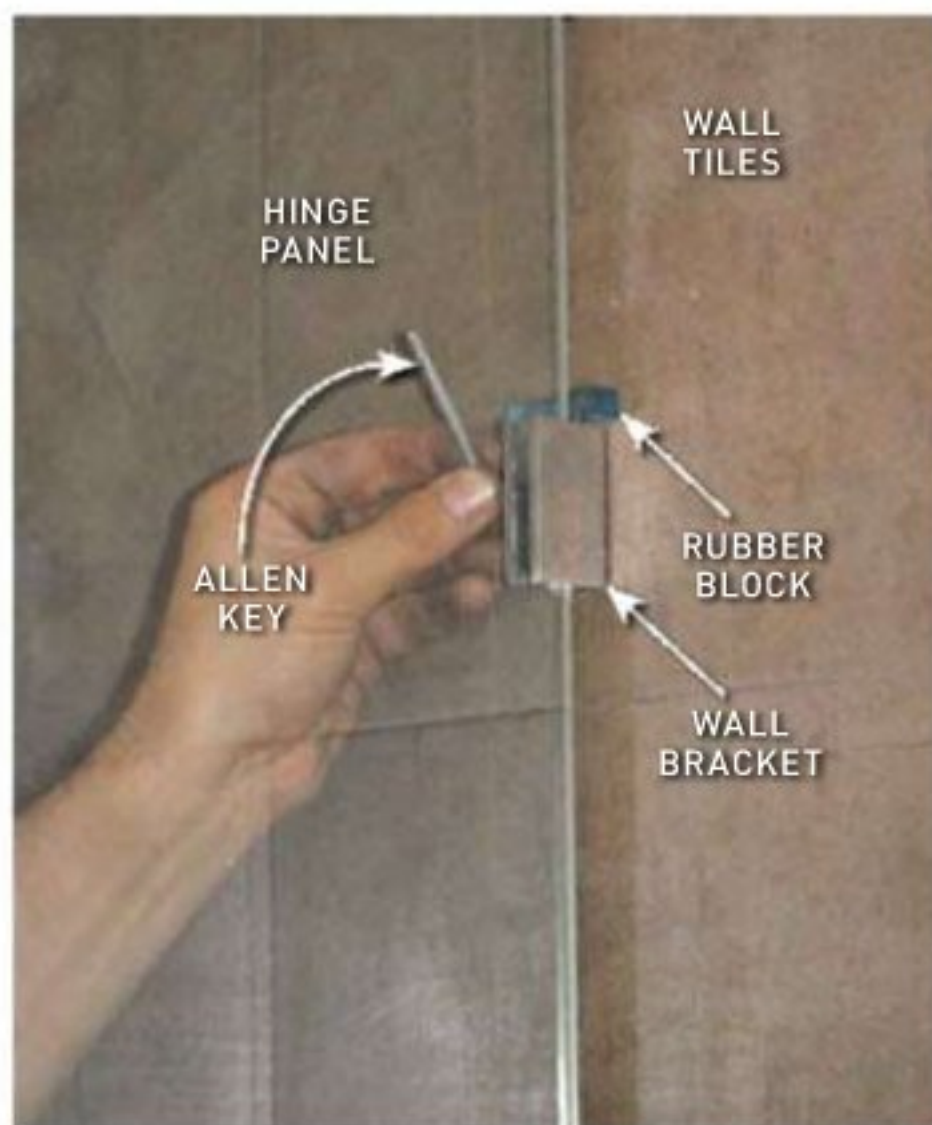
**1 Set out the bracket locations** Mark the centreline of each panel on the floor and use a spirit level to mark vertical centrelines up the walls to 2000mm high. Mark the screw holes for the mounting brackets along the panel centrelines on the floor and walls at the spacings recommended by the manufacturer.



**2 Attach the brackets** Use a 6mm ceramic drill bit to drill the marked holes to a depth of 30mm, applying even pressure at low speed. Insert the supplied plastic plugs into each hole and trim the excess using a utility knife. Position the brackets and attach using the supplied screws, then loosen the grub screws.



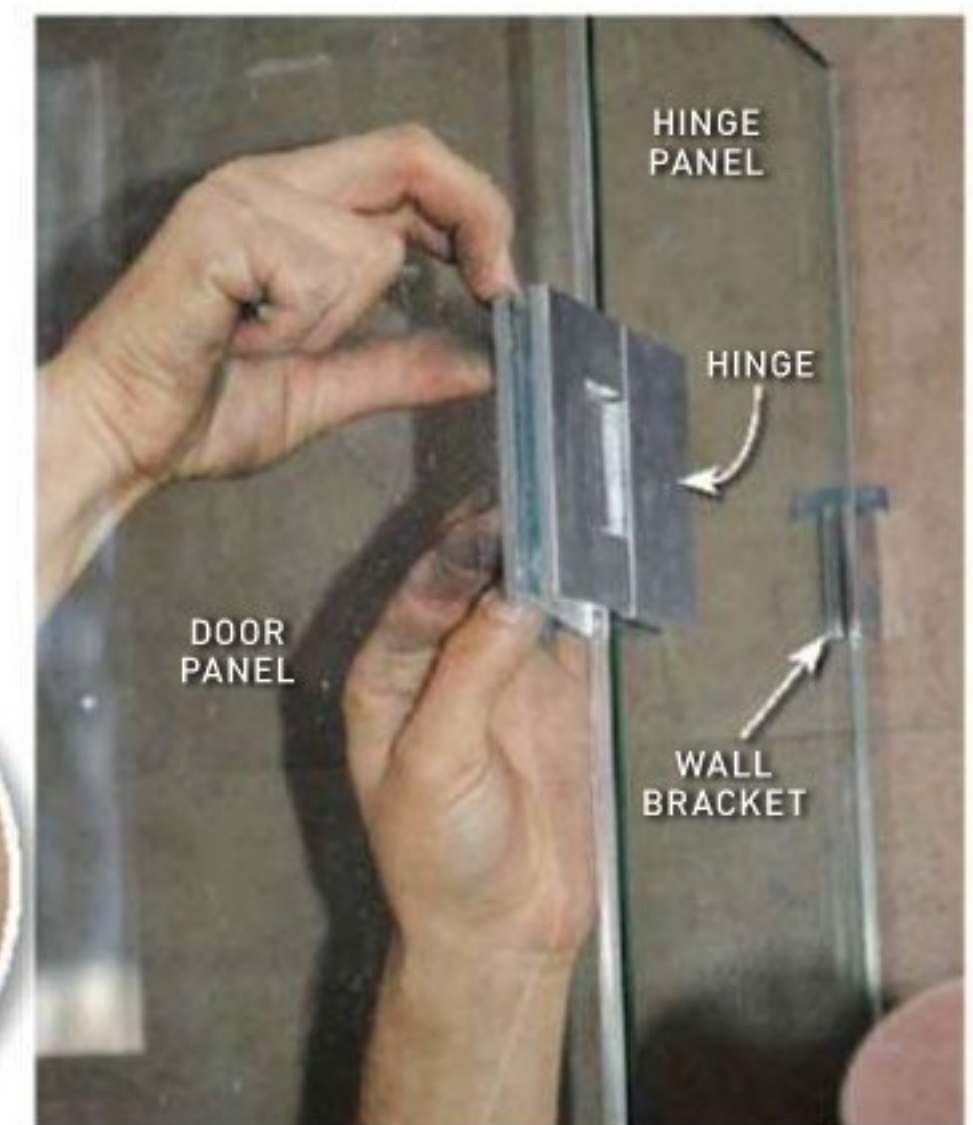
**3 Secure the fixed panel** Cut the supplied rubber blocks to 6mm and position them in front of each bracket to support the glass. Lift the panel into the floor brackets, slide it into the wall brackets and hand-tighten the grub screws using an Allen key. **TIP** Use glass-lifting gloves and have a helper assist when lifting the panels.



**4 Secure the hinge panel** Repeat the process with the hinge panel, checking that the door opening is 6mm wider than the door panel and that the gaps between the walls and the panels do not exceed 12mm, then tighten the screws using the Allen key. **TIP** Temporarily position rubber blocks above the brackets for an even gap.



**5 Seal the gaps** Apply bathroom silicone liberally along the gaps between the panels and the wall. Use a silicone spatula to push the silicone into the gaps and scrape away the excess, smoothing the surface with the rounded corners. **TIP** Seal the gap between the floor and the panels after the door is installed.



**6 Attach the door panel** Secure the hinges to the recesses in the hinge panel. Position rubber blocks in the door opening, lift the door onto the blocks and attach the hinges to the door panel. Check all gaps are even, tighten the screws and remove the rubber blocks. Cut away excess rubber from beneath the other panels.

## Get the look

Create a contemporary, streamlined space with modern chrome fittings, a compact vanity and a touch of colour.



Conciso 750 x 465mm Imola Free-standing Vanity Unit, \$400, from Bunnings.



Everloc Solutions 50cm Chrome Twin Towel Rail, \$45. everloc.com.au



Everloc Solutions Chrome Shower Caddy, \$40.



Marlborough Bamboo Six-piece Bath Towel Set, \$80. queenb.co.nz

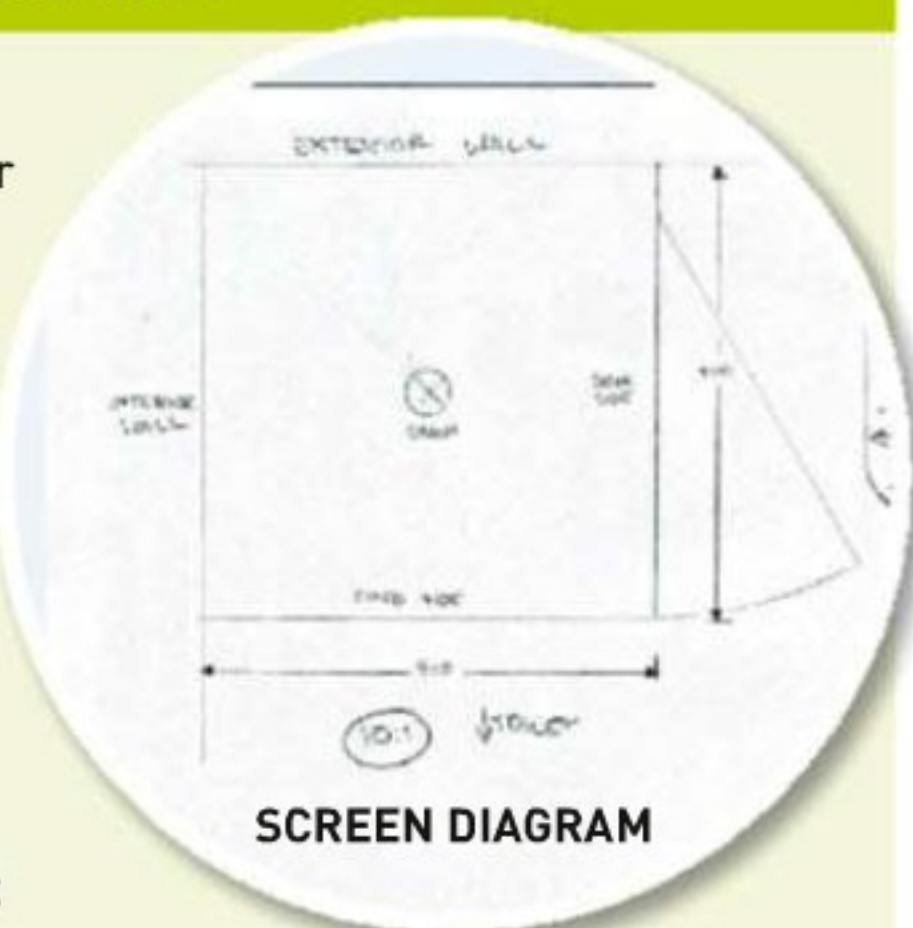
## Design the shower

Frameless shower screens are ideal for small bathrooms, as they make the space appear bigger and evoke a sense of being in a luxury hotel.

The shower screen for this bathroom was custom made to suit the 900 x 900mm recess.

To keep the look streamlined in the small bathroom, the shower was designed without a tray. The shower door opens both inwards and outwards, which is a useful feature in such a compact space.

Aluminium angle was installed before tiling to form the shower recess and a mortar bed was laid to create a slope. The tiles were laid, then the glass panels installed above the angle to conceal it. ➤



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# Mount a mirror

With an emphasis on saving space, the bathroom needed a vanity with lots of storage, as there would be no medicine cabinet, but also a small footprint to allow clearance for the door.

The vanity is 750mm wide and includes two drawers and a single-door cabinet with no handles to make it more streamlined. The shallow basin allows maximum storage underneath.

Frameless mirrors suit almost any style of bathroom but work especially well in contemporary homes. This mirror is the same width as the vanity, measuring 900 x 750mm, and is mounted flush to the wall.

**TIP** Mount the mirror at an appropriate height to suit all bathroom users.



Stein 900 x 750 x 5mm Polished Edge Mirror, \$69. [stein.co.nz](http://stein.co.nz)



The slimline mirror and compact vanity are ideal for a small bathroom.



## 1 Make the spacers

Have a helper hold the mirror up against the wall and mark the base edge. Measure the distance between the mark and the vanity and cut two lengths of timber to size for spacers. Position the spacers on the vanity at either end and use them to support the mirror when mounting it on the wall.



## 2 Apply the tape

Secure strips of double-sided tape to the back of the mirror at the top, base and sides, leaving the backing on one side. Apply mirror adhesive to the vinyl cutouts on the back of the mirror. **TIP** Ensure both the wall and the back of the mirror are clean and dry before applying the tape and adhesive.

## 3 Hang the mirror

Peel one corner from the backing of each piece of tape so it extends beyond the mirror's edge. Stand the mirror on the spacers, then firmly press the mirror against the wall and check it is level. Remove the rest of the backing from the tape by pulling the corners hanging out from the back.

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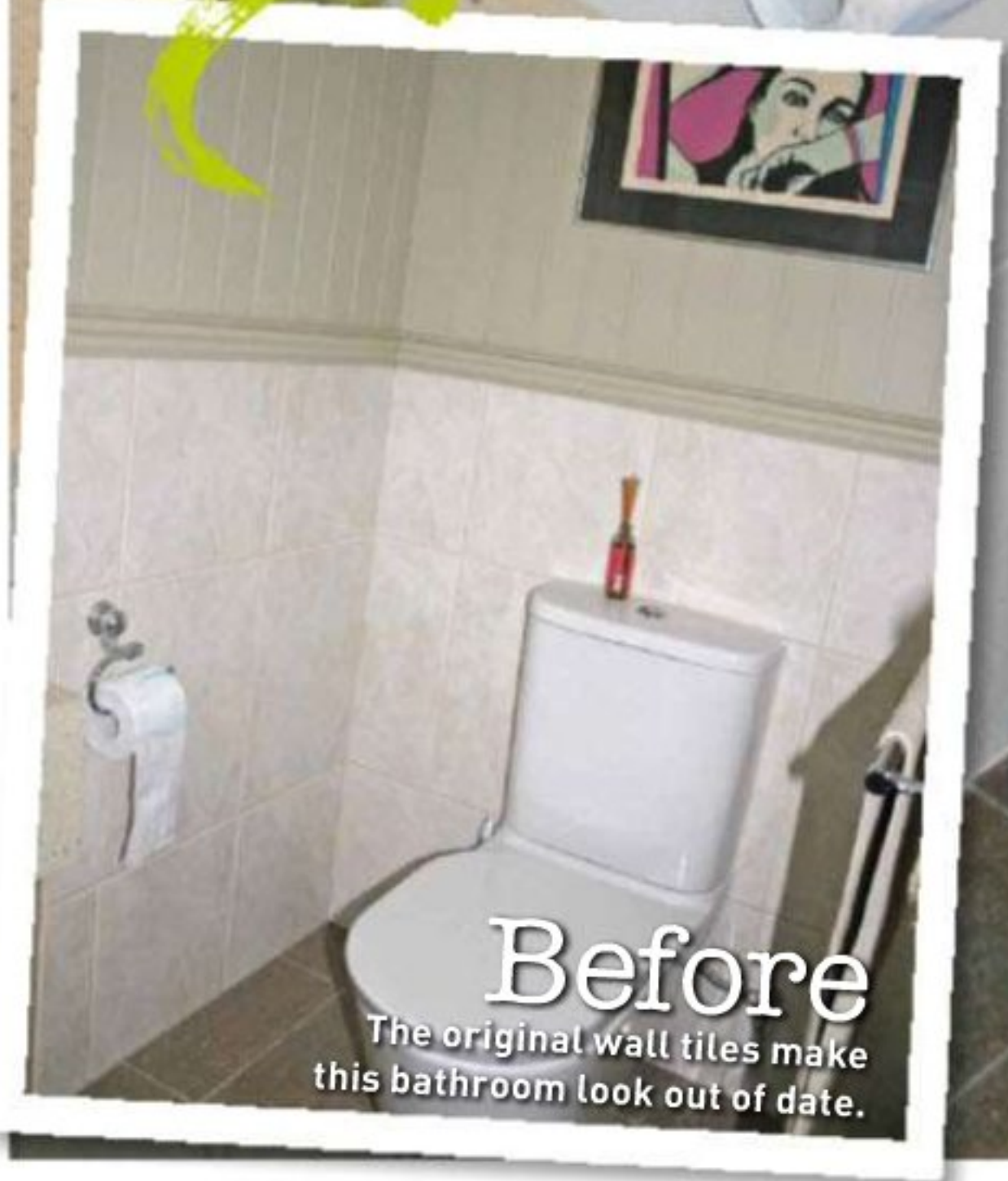


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# Before

The original wall tiles make this bathroom look out of date.

# After

A few coats of paint transform the tiles for a fraction of the cost of replacing them.

# PAINT OVER OLD TILES

Give your bathroom a brand-new look in just a couple of days by resurfacing rather than retiling

**PROJECT AND PICTURES** LEE DASHIELL

**R**eplacing bathroom tiles is a big job, involving chipping out the existing tiles and restoring the wall to a smooth finish. Wet areas then need waterproofing before the tiling can begin.

The amount of labour combined with the cost of the new tiles makes this an expensive renovation.

For an easy and high-impact makeover, you can paint directly over the tiles, and the paint can be tinted to suit your colour scheme.

The finish is gloss, so proper preparation is the key to a professional

result. Scrub any soap scum, mould or dirt from the areas to be painted, then use a tile cleaning product.

Apply a primer and two coats of tile paint, sanding between coats, taking care not to overload the brush or roller.

To calculate how much paint you need, measure the length and height of the area to be painted to give the number of square metres. Divide this by 12 to get the total litres required.

This ensuite had been renovated a few years ago, but the original wall tiles were retained. The faux-marble design was outdated and the shower

had discoloured grout as a result of being plumbed to a rainwater tank.

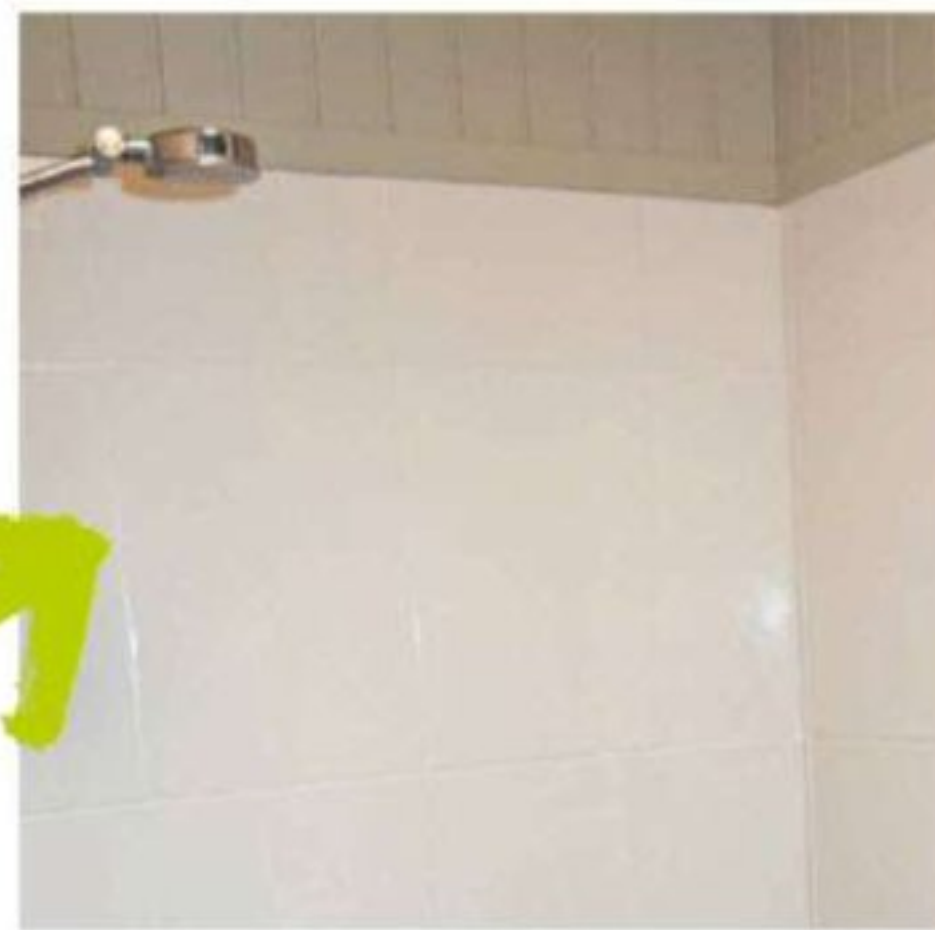
After two days of DIY, the tiles and grout now repel water and the bathroom looks clean and modern. >



**White Knight Tile & Laminate Primer, \$52 for 1L, Tile Paint, \$52 for 1L. [whiteknightpaints.co.nz](http://whiteknightpaints.co.nz)**



**Tank water had discoloured the tile grout in the shower recess.**



**Tile paint covers the grout and provides a non-absorbent surface treatment.**

## Taping a clean edge

When using painter's tape, press it down on the edge of the area to be painted. If loosely applied, paint will bleed underneath the tape, resulting in an uneven edge.

It's best to remove tape before the paint has dried. But if two or three coats are needed, the base coats will be dry. To break the seal between the paint and tape, score the edge with a utility knife, then pull it away at a 45° angle.

## Paint the tiles



### 1 Clean the tiles

Scrub the tiles and grout with a solution of one part bleach to 10 parts water to remove mould, then leave to dry. Spray with tile cleaner, leave for 30 seconds, then wipe off with a wet sponge to remove soap scum and oil.

**TIP** We used White Knight Tile & Laminate Cleaner, \$15 for 500ml.



### 2 Mask the edges

Use painter's tape to mask off the walls at the floor and ceiling and any other edges. Press firmly on the edge of the tape along the area to be painted to give a clean finish. Fill any cracks with grout or gap filler and leave to dry. Position drop cloths on the floor.



### 3 Sand the tiles

Give the tiles a light sand all over with a sheet of 240 grit wet/dry abrasive paper and a sanding block to create a rough matt surface. This will help the paint adhere better to the tiles. Wash and rinse off the tiles using a wet sponge and clean water, then leave to dry completely.



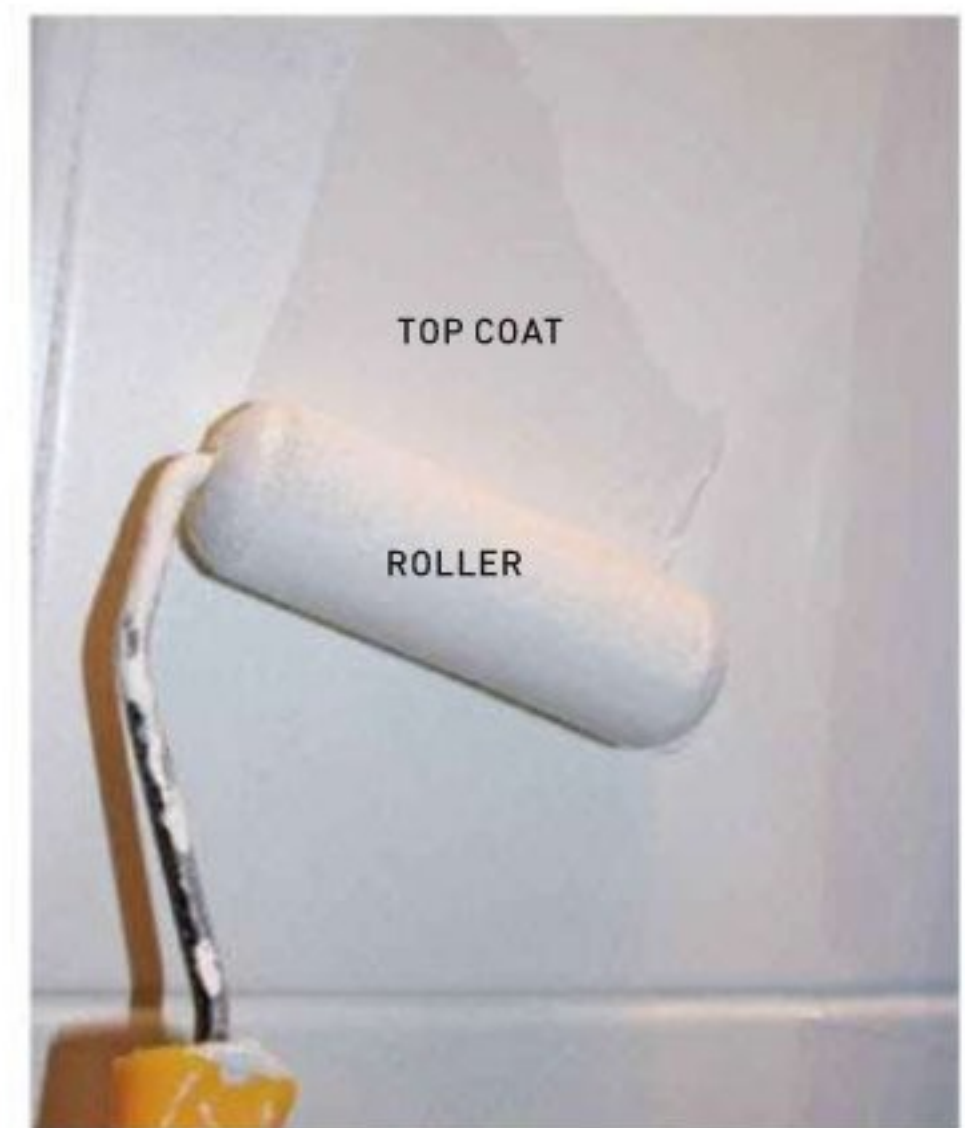
### 4 Apply the primer

Stir the primer well, then pour into a roller tray. Paint a small area of the tiles at a time using a microfibre mini roller and a brush to cut in the edges or around tricky areas such as taps. Roll on the primer in a zigzag pattern, then smooth out, working from the top to the base. Leave to dry.



### 5 Paint the first coat

Lightly sand the tiles with 240 grit paper and wipe down. Apply the first coat with the roller, using a brush to cut in. Paint a small area at a time in a zigzag pattern, then roll smooth. When the paint is spread and only a little is left on the roller, go over the area in one direction from top to base.



### 6 Finish the painting

Store the brush and roller in water until the first coat of paint is dry, then squeeze out the water. Lightly sand the tiles with 600 grit paper. Wipe off the dust, then apply the top coat using the same technique as for the first coat. Allow to dry for a day, then wait a week until fully cured.



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# Fast DIY bathroom fixes

Save on tradesman costs by tackling small jobs to keep on top of repairs and maintenance

**T**idy, well maintained bathrooms minimise morning chaos and are a pleasure to be in.

While many bigger bathroom jobs require a qualified plumber both by law and to avoid costly disasters, minor repairs like fixing leaking taps and regrouting tiles can be completed by anyone with DIY experience.

Regular maintenance keeps the bathroom looking great, avoiding water damage and expensive repairs.

## Unblock U-bends

Slow water drainage can be caused by a build-up of grease, hair or soap in the U-bend under the sink.

Traps or U-bends contain water that blocks sewer gas from entering the building. Their shape can also trap solid matter, causing blockages.

If the pipe isn't totally blocked, try a homemade drain cleaner of half a cup of bicarb soda, a cup of white vinegar and four litres of boiling water.

Pour down the drain and repeat, if necessary. This should break apart any greasy build-up, but solid blockages need to be cleared by dismantling the U-bend, clearing the blockage and cleaning it out with a bottlebrush. >

**Fix-A-Loo 115mm Sink Plunger, about \$5, from Bunnings.**



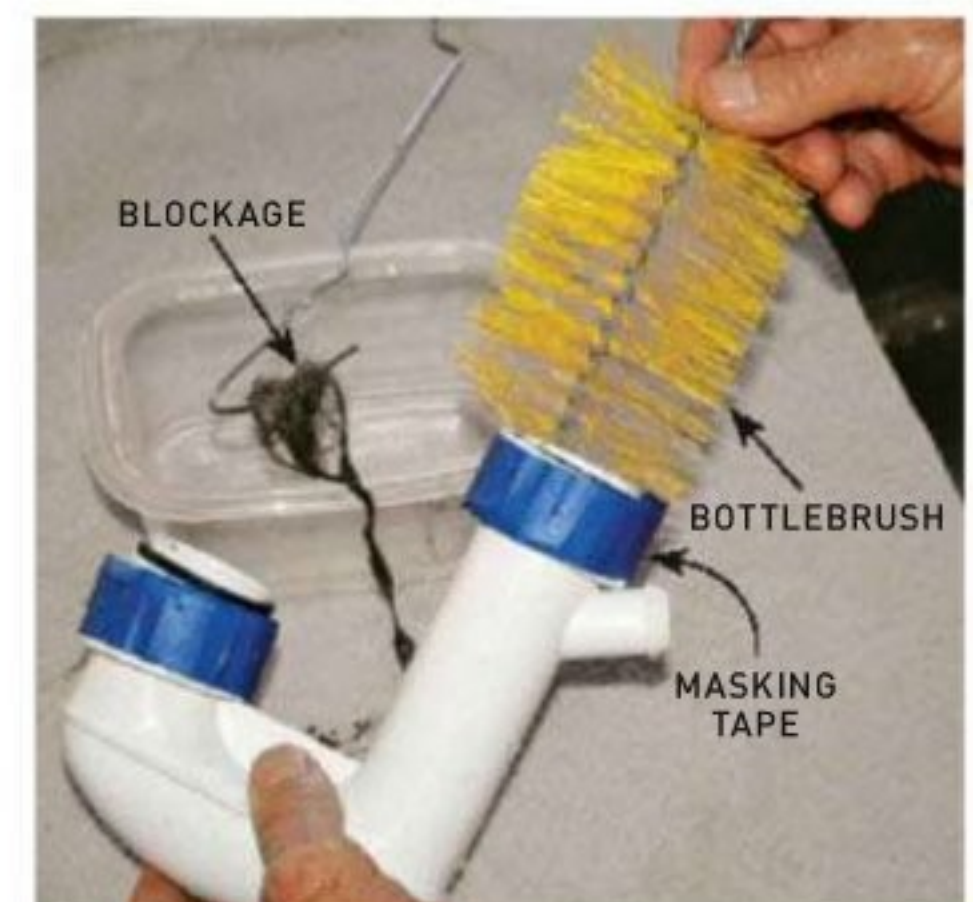
### 1 Use a plunger

If water is backed up into the basin, bail it out until there's just enough to cover the plunger cup. Position the plunger cup over the drain and pump vigorously, straight up and down, for at least a minute to dislodge small blockages from the U-bend.



### 2 Dismantle the U-bend

If the basin remains blocked, position a container under the U-bend. Wrap masking tape around the nuts on both sides of the U-bend and loosen with a pair of large multigrips. Remove the U-bend and pour excess water into the container.



### 3 Reassemble the U-bend

Use a coathanger to remove the blockage and scrape gunk from the U-bend. Clean thoroughly with detergent and a bottlebrush. Smear petroleum jelly around the screw threads before replacing to make removal easier next time.



PICTURE THINKSTOCK

Keep the bathroom looking immaculate and functioning well with a bit of regular DIY.

# Install a towel rail

Bathrooms typically have towel rails already fitted, but when retiling, changing the layout or installing a new bathroom, a new towel rail will need to be mounted.

Towel rails should be positioned for easy access from the shower, bathtub or vanity, but not where they can get wet from splashing. The ideal height is 1200-1700mm, depending on the ceiling and any obstructions.

Select a towel rail that matches the style of shower and tap fittings. Double rails are available to store multiple towels, while a second rail may be necessary to hang a bath mat.

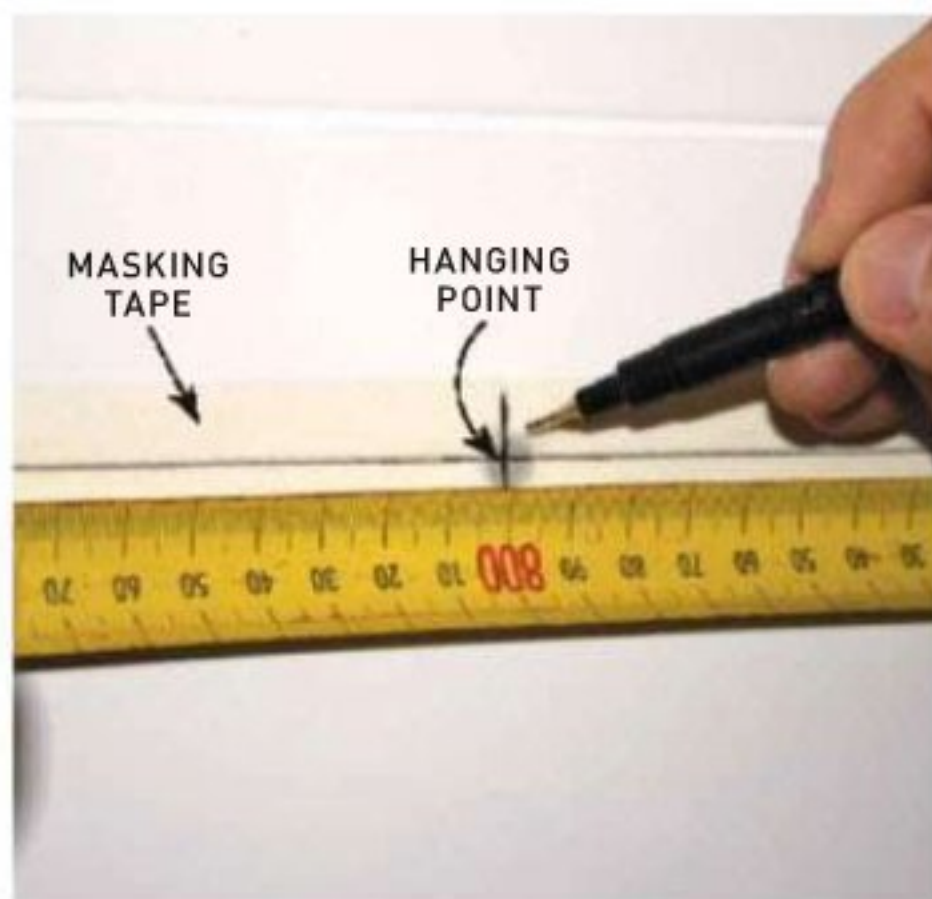
**TIP** Choose a rail that allows towels to hang freely without touching the wall, as this can cause mould. >



Starrett 6mm Diamond Tile Bit, \$23, from Bunnings.

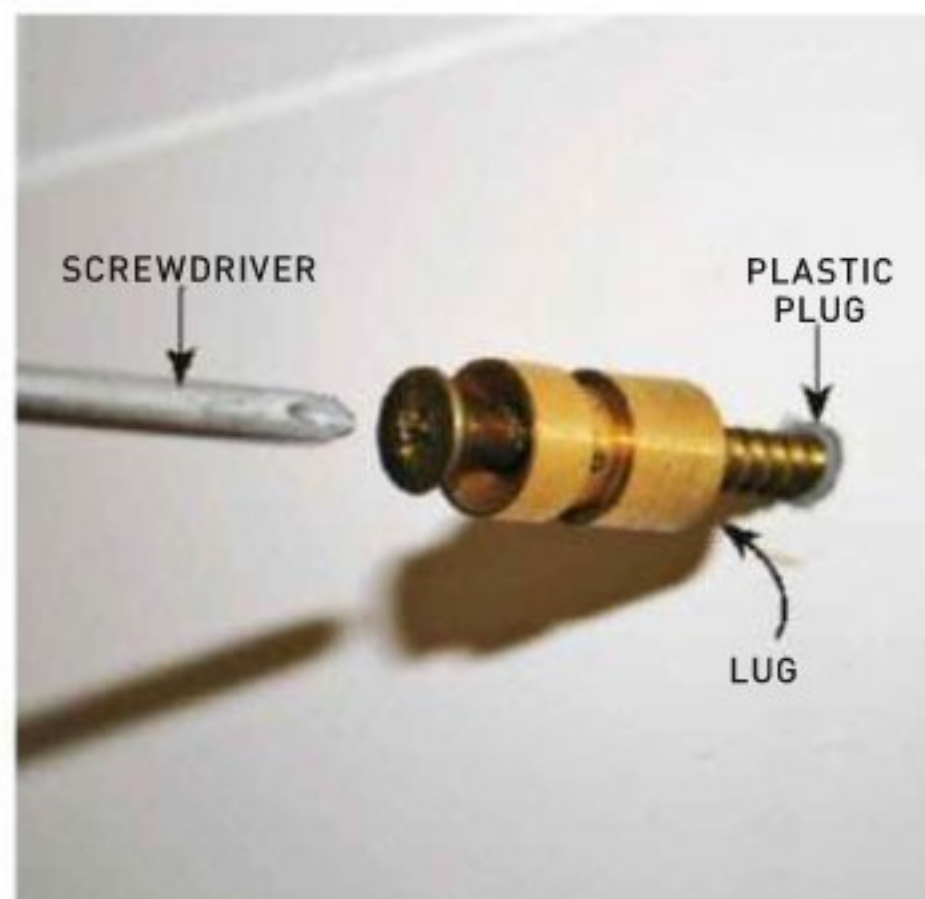


Position towel rails near the bath or shower but out of the splash zone.



## 1 Mark the hanging points

Assemble the towel rail and measure between hanging points. Apply 20mm wide masking tape along the tiles and use a spirit level to draw a straight horizontal line on the tape. Measure and mark the spacing of the lugs on the line using a pencil.



## 2 Attach the lugs

Select a diamond core drill bit that matches the size of the supplied plastic plugs. With the hammer function switched off, apply pressure to slowly drill through the tiles. Tap the plastic plugs into position and attach the lugs using supplied screws.



## 3 Attach the rail

Slide the rail sleeves over either end of the rail and over the lugs. Tighten the grub screws at each end with the supplied Allen key. **TIP** The small hex socket grub screws are hidden from view on the underside of the rail sleeves.

# RegROUT the tiles

Bumps and knocks to tiled surfaces loosen grout over time, allowing water to seep in. This can cause mould behind tiles and eventually compromise waterproofing.

Regrouting is simpler and less expensive than replacing tiles, and it gives old tiles a clean finish.

All old grout needs removing before new grout is applied, and new grout should be sealed to ensure longevity.

Coloured grout can be used to give a bathroom a new look. Matching the grout and tile colours makes the edges of the tile less obvious, while contrasting colours draw attention to the pattern of the tile layout.

**TIP** Avoid using acidic bathroom cleaners, as they can damage grout. ➤



Cemix Flexible Coloured Grout, \$33 for 5kg. [cemix.co.nz](http://cemix.co.nz)



Contrasting grout can make a tiled feature wall stand out.



**1 Remove the old grout**  
Use a carbide grit grout saw to remove loose grout. The angled offset handle lets you apply heavy pressure as the blade is scraped over the gaps. Vacuum out the dust, then wash the surface with a solution of water and white vinegar.



**2 RegROUT the tiles**  
Mix the new grout to the consistency of toothpaste. Move a rubber float or squeegee diagonally across the tiles to push grout into the gaps. Leave it to set for 30 minutes, then use a damp sponge and clean water to wipe away the excess.



**3 Seal the grout**  
Leave the grout to cure for two days. Apply grout sealer with a small paintbrush, using a cloth to wipe the edges of the tiles clean as you go.  
**TIP** The sealer protects the grout and prevents water, dirt and mould from penetrating and leaving stains.

## Seal the gaps

Silicone plays a key part in keeping a bathroom waterproof. It prevents water from getting into gaps between tiles and baths, vanities and fittings, where it can cause damage and mould if left unchecked.

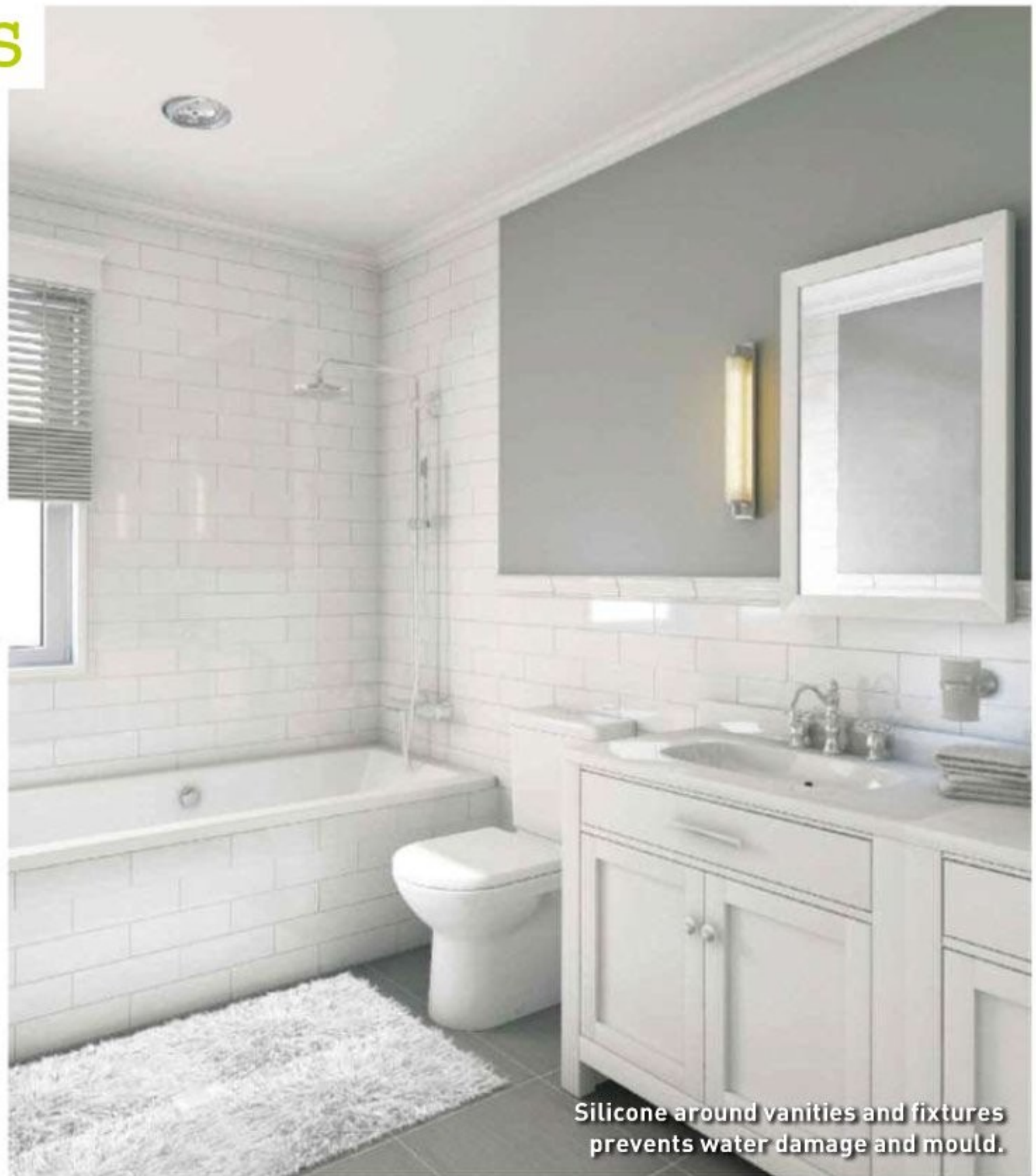
Silicone should be used to seal all new fixtures when renovating or installing a new bathroom.

Over time, it can become worn and mouldy, which makes the bathroom look shabby. It also reduces its waterproofing ability and this can lead to water damage.

Carefully cut away old silicone using a utility knife, then rub off residue using methylated spirits and paper towel. Leave to dry completely before applying new silicone. ➤



Selleys Wet Area Speed Seal Silicone Sealant, \$20 for 300g. [selleys.co.nz](http://selleys.co.nz)



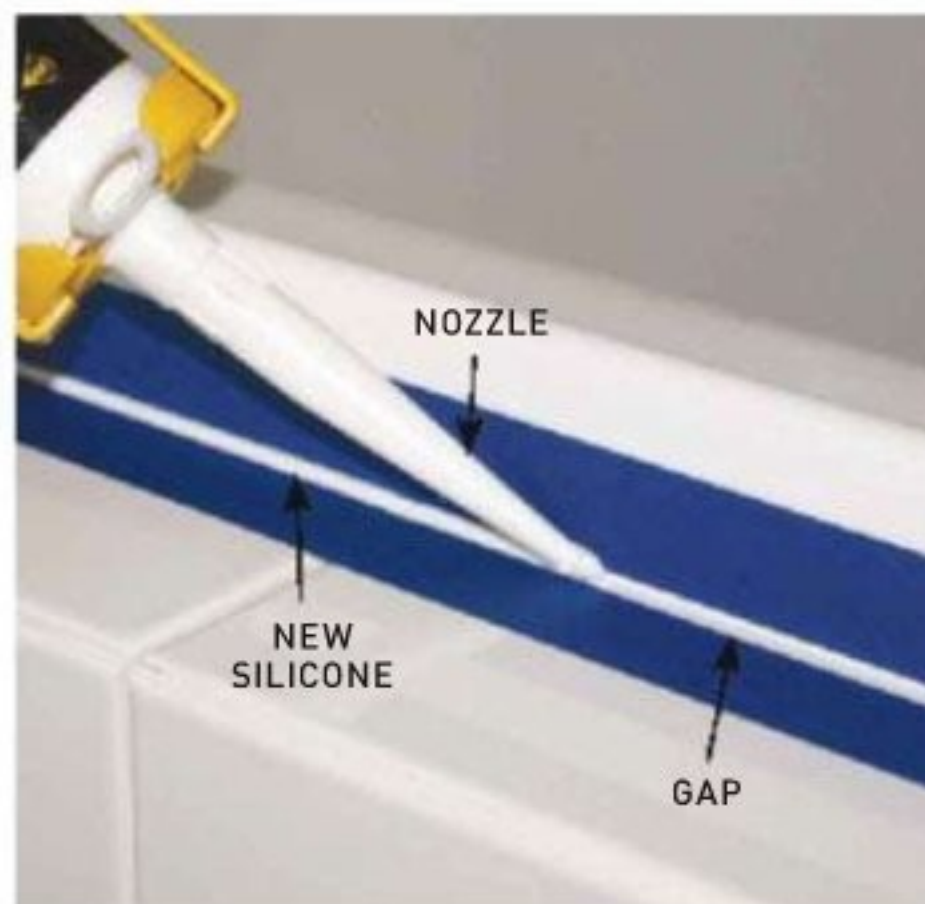
Silicone around vanities and fixtures prevents water damage and mould.



### 1 Protect the surfaces

Apply strips of masking tape to either side of the gap, about 4mm apart. Cut the nozzle from the silicone at 45°, keeping the hole smaller than the gap for greater control.

**TIP** Cut the nozzle neatly, as jagged edges create furrows in the bead.



### 2 Lay an even bead

Start at one end and continue to the other. Pull the trigger slowly and steadily, pushing the caulking gun away from you and adjusting the rate to match variations in flow speed.

**TIP** Lift the gun and release the trigger once you reach the end of the gap.



### 3 Smooth the bead

Run along the bead with a finger dipped in soapy water, continuously from one end to the other, applying enough pressure to create a smooth, even surface. Remove the masking tape and excess silicone immediately, then allow to dry for 24 hours.

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## Cut squares in tiles

Tiling a bathroom is relatively simple until it comes to tricky techniques like cutting squares in tiles for powerpoints and light switches.

Instead of calling in a tradie, cut them DIY to get the professional look on a budget. The best way to cut tiles is with a wet diamond-bladed saw, but if you don't have access to one, you can use an angle grinder instead.

Attach a continuous rim diamond blade to an angle grinder and make the cuts. Score the front of the tile first then plunge-cut from the back.

The key to cutting tidy rectangles and squares in tiles is to avoid cutting beyond the corners. Practice first on spare tiles or broken pieces to avoid wasting expensive tiles. >



Flexovit 115 x 22mm Tile Cutter Diamond Blade, \$21. flexovit.com



Lights and switches often require cutout tiles so they fit in the wall.



### 1 Score the shape

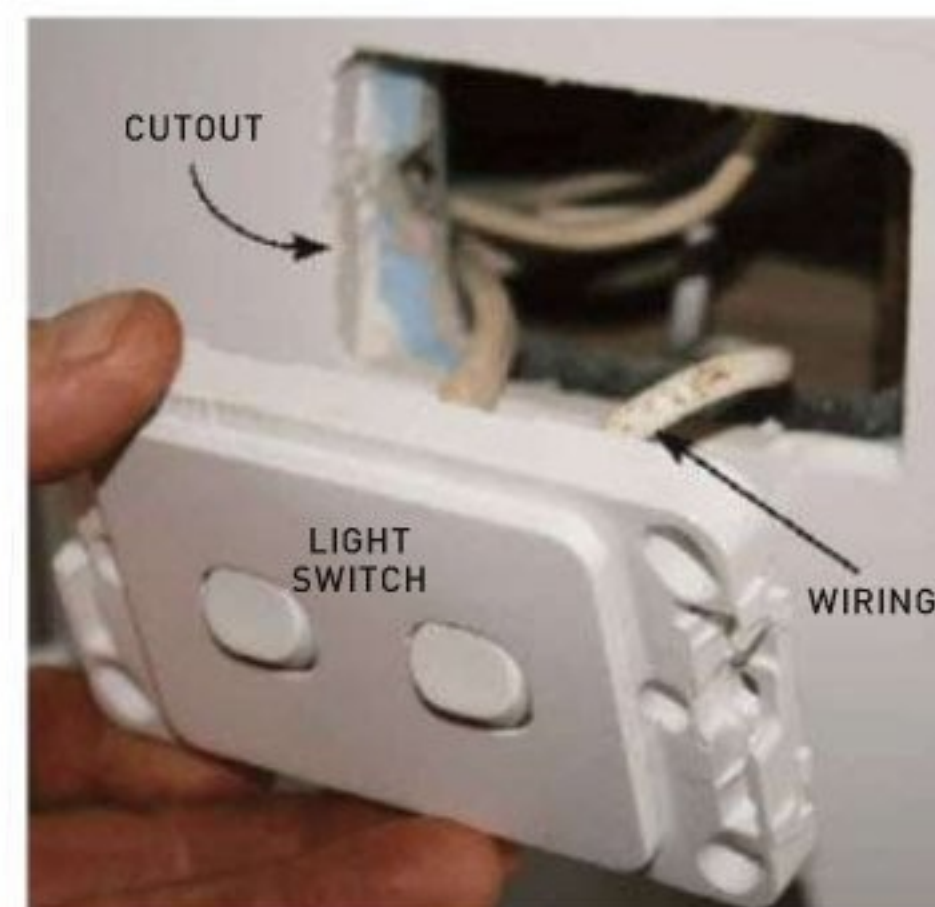
Mark the cutout on the front and back of the tile. Score the front of the tile about 1.5mm deep along the line with an angle grinder, stopping the cut right on the corner of the cutout. Avoid applying too much pressure, as this can crack the tile.



### 2 Finish the cut

Turn the tile over and plunge-cut from the back, checking frequently. Stop when the cut lines up with the marked corners, then plunge-cut the remaining three sides.

**TIP** If the cuts on the front are too shallow, cut deeper from the back.



### 3 Install the switches

Have a qualified electrician wire the bathroom before tiling. Lay the tiles, lining up those that have cutouts with the location of switches and fittings. When the tiling is done, have the electrician connect all powerpoints, light switches and fans.

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## Cut circles in tiles

Most bathrooms require at least one round hole in tiles for a floor or shower waste outlet. Holes may also be needed in wall tiles to accommodate plumbing and lighting, while curved cuts are often required for toilet flanges.

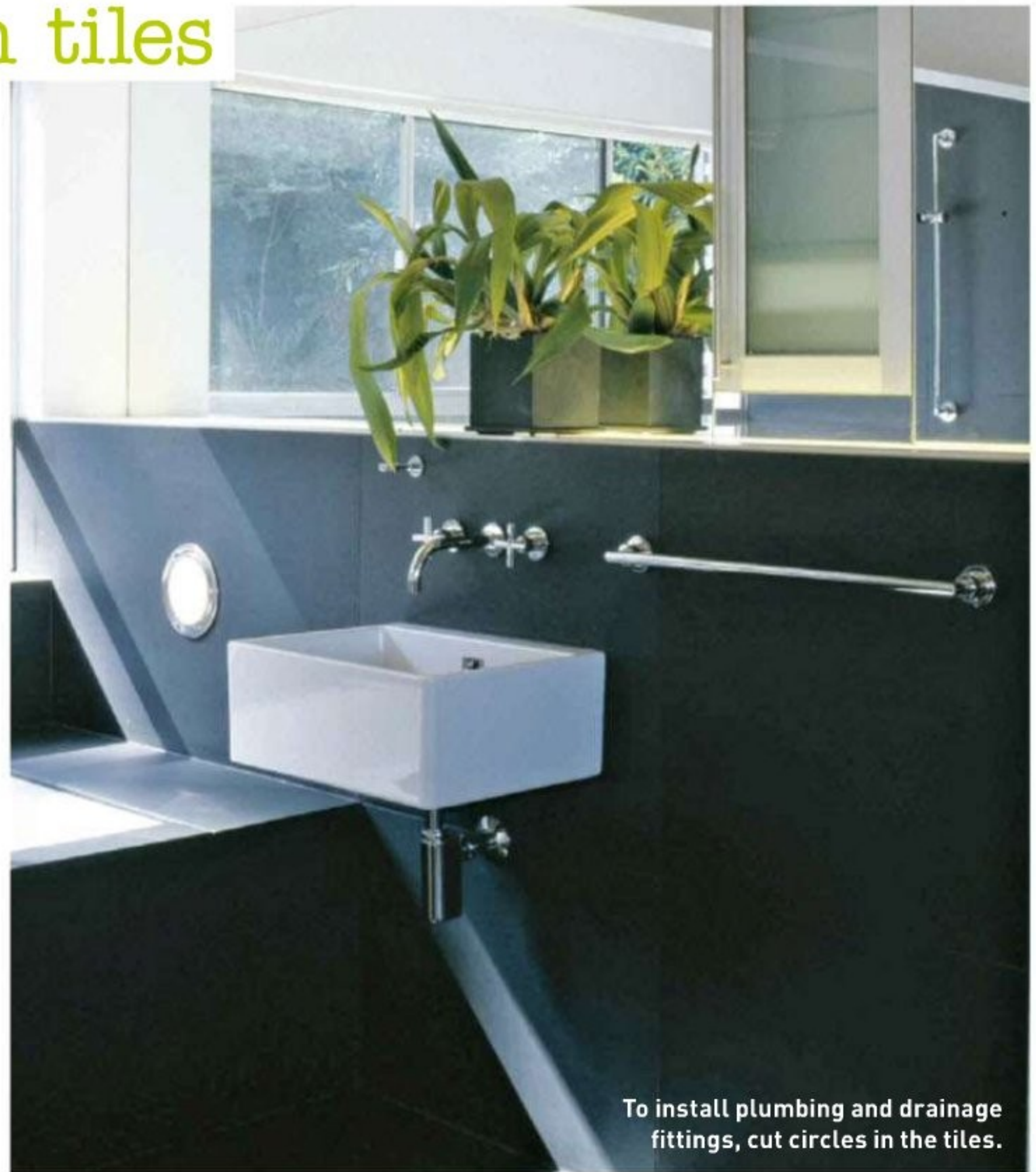
Much like cutting square holes, cutting circles is possible with an angle grinder, which can save you money hiring a tradie or getting a tile shop to do the job.

When laying shower tiles DIY, position the circle at the intersection of two or four tiles rather than cutting into a single tile, to ensure the correct slope for efficient water runoff.

**TIP** Use bar clamps to secure the tile to a workbench while cutting so the area to be cut hangs over the edge.



Ryobi 950W 125mm Corded Angle Grinder, \$99. [ryobi.co.nz](http://ryobi.co.nz)



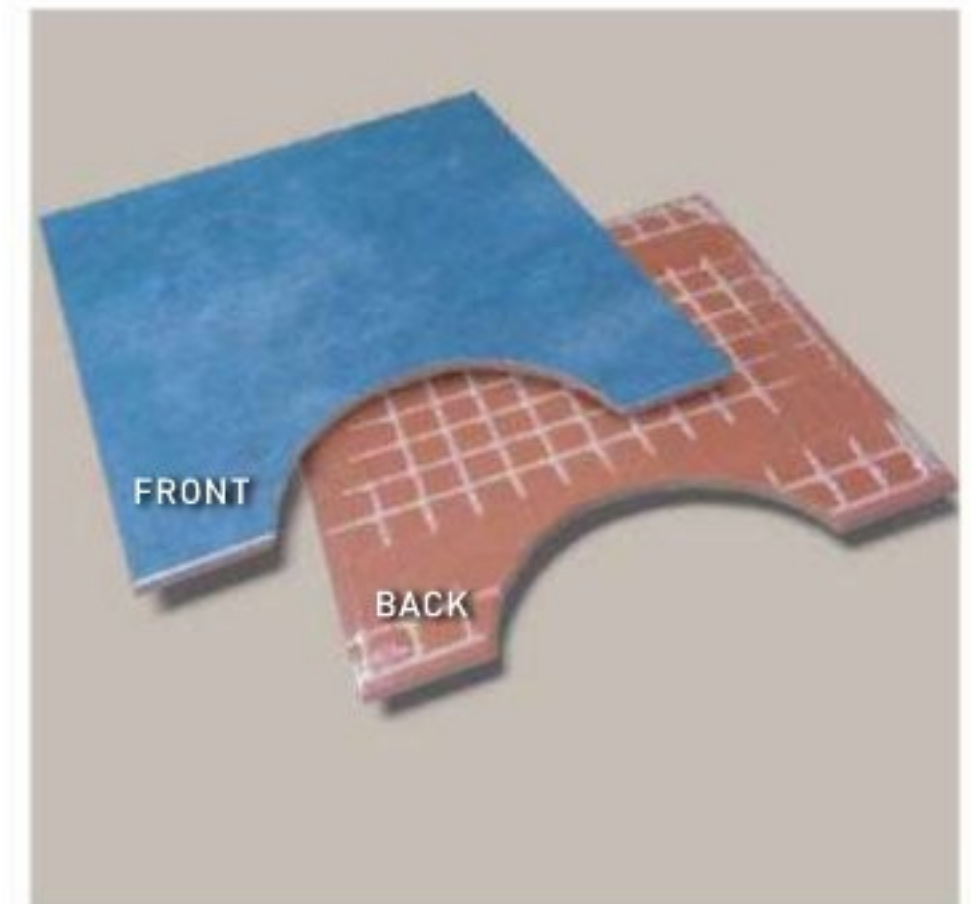
To install plumbing and drainage fittings, cut circles in the tiles.



**1 Score the circle outline**  
Mark the circle on the tiles, then score the profile with an angle grinder. Make short cuts on each side of the semicircle, then connect the cuts by making a series of progressively deeper shallow cuts to remove the waste piece.



**2 Make short radial cuts**  
Complete the semicircle by making several spoke-like radial cuts into the remaining waste areas every 5mm, taking care not to cut beyond the scored semicircle line. Clean up rough edges with a diamond blade or remove tabs with a tile nipper.



**3 Smooth the edges**  
Once most of the waste has been removed, attach a masonry grinding wheel to the angle grinder and grind the edges smooth, working slowly around each curve. Check that the curve matches the fittings, then lay the tiles using adhesive and grout.



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Hard Surface Cleaners, including T-Racers and Power Scrubbers, are the new generation of cleaning. The T Racer surface cleaner simply attaches to the end of the Kärcher Waterblaster gun and is brilliant for cleaning flat surfaces such as driveways, timber decks and patios without splash back, whilst saving you



time by cleaning up to four times faster than a standard lance. This is achieved by the use of two rotating nozzles contained within the T Racer head which enables it to clean a wider surface area whilst eliminating streaky, uneven cleaning therefore providing a professional result.

An alternative to the T-Racer is the Power Scrubber, a high pressure broom that is



especially well suited for cleaning smaller areas like patios, entrance ways, and stairs. The unit incorporates three high pressure nozzles that effectively and quickly remove even stubborn dirt from surfaces.

For effective yet gentle cleaning of other outdoor surfaces such as vehicle paintwork, garage doors, windows and even the boat, use a Kärcher Delta Racer. The revolutionary brush cleans with high pressure, saving energy, water and up to 30% less time. With its practical triangular form, in built rotating jet nozzles and soft bristles, it has no problem cleaning corners and edges whilst being ideal for use on delicate surfaces – the ideal solution for brilliant results all round.

Cleaning those high, hard to reach areas can be difficult, particularly if you want to clean with pressure. The Kärcher high



pressure telescopic lance extends up to 4m long gives you the ability to effectively clean those difficult to reach areas such as high walls and facades in a safe manner. The removable nozzle at the end of the lance also has the ability to take other Kärcher attachments like brushes to aid in the cleaning process.

For other difficult to access areas, there is the angled spray lance, ideal for cleaning hard to reach areas like gutters, tanks or vehicle chassis.



If you've ever wondered how to clean drains and downpipes, then try the Kärcher pipe cleaning hose accessory. This also attaches to your Kärcher water blaster gun and allows the effective cleaning of pipes, drains, downpipes and toilet blockages. Four reverse



high pressure jets forward propel the hose down the pipe which help clear blockages in the process. Consecutive marks and marker rings help to show how far the hose has travelled down the pipe.

With the wide variety of Kärcher water blasting accessories that simply attach to your Kärcher water blaster, the cleaning applications are numerous and make for faster and more effective cleaning.

## Kärcher water blasters are brilliantly effective at tackling any dirty surface.

Grimy driveways, mouldy decking? Try the new Kärcher Deck and Patio Cleaner accessory for faster and easier cleaning of driveways, paths and decks.

Whatever you're faced with, wherever the dirt is, Kärcher water blasters are easy to use but hard on dirt.



 **KÄRCHER®**

**makes a difference**

# Add \$1000s of value to your home

Maximise the return on your biggest investment with these smart strategies

WORDS JOSH MASTERS

**A**nyone who's done a renovation knows well that a one-month project can quickly turn into a year-long affair, with budget blowouts and strained relationships.

With many years of experience as a buyer's agent, Josh Masters has seen countless couples put time and money into upgrades that don't give them the return on their investment they were banking on.

So, if you're looking for quick and inexpensive ways to improve or add to the value to your home, here are seven tips to give you bang for your buck.



# 1 Hit the floor

For dollar for dollar return, you can't beat a fresh coat of paint and simple recarpeting or retiling.

Whether you rent or own a property, paint and flooring account for the majority of a home's surface area. So when you walk into a room, the impact is instant.

Never underestimate the difference a coat of paint and new flooring make. With the right colour and texture choices, you can turn a dark space into a bright, airy room or make a dated living area modern and fresh.



# 2 Go glass

Whether they are bifolds, French doors or sliders, glass doors will open up the rear of the home, creating a connection between the interior and the backyard.

This adds light and space to the living areas and has the double benefit of being both aesthetic and functional.

The buyer appeal for this extra is huge, especially for families, as parents can keep an eye on the kids outside.

# 3 Get decked out

Already got the sliding glass doors at the rear of the house? Create another entertaining space by adding a deck.

While also connecting the rear living areas to the great outdoors, installing a deck is a very affordable option, and the majority of the manual labour can be done by a handyman.

Whether you use it for summer barbecues or family dinners, a deck is a great project that can usually be completed over a weekend or two. ➤



PICTURES: LAMY, THINKSTOCK

## 4 Think top level

Space is at a premium, especially in houses near the city or lifestyle amenities.

So if your roof space is used for storage, it's time to claim your golden goose.

As long as your roof has a steep enough pitch and an access point that doesn't compromise the downstairs layout, you can convert it into a bedroom.

Simply install stairs, pop in an extra window or two, line the space and paint, then you're good to go.



## 5 Show 'em the door

This is often the last thing homeowners think of when considering improvements, but it's the first thing a prospective buyer sees.

First impressions are everything, and you can't underestimate street appeal. Installing a new garage door, or repainting or replacing your front door can make a world of difference.

A current trend is to make your door a feature by painting it glossy fire-engine red, or black. It's a quick, budget-friendly way to tap into positive feng shui.



## 6 Spice it up

The kitchen is often considered the deal-breaker for buyers in the market.

It can either push them into making an offer or send them packing.

But this room is the most expensive to update. One of the best ways to keep costs down is to bypass a demolition and work with the existing carcass.

If the layout is practical, all it takes to modernise an old kitchen is retiling the splashback, revamping the cabinet doors, installing a new benchtop and putting in a new oven and sink.





## 7 Double the bathrooms

These days, most buyers expect any house or unit with more than three bedrooms to have at least two bathrooms.

One of the easiest ways to add another bathroom is to convert the laundry, as it is already fitted out as a wet area and less work is required on waterproofing.

All the best home layouts position the laundry and bathroom next to each other, so plumbing can be easily transferred between the rooms cost-effectively.

While any renovation dealing with wet areas costs that bit extra, the return on investment is significant.

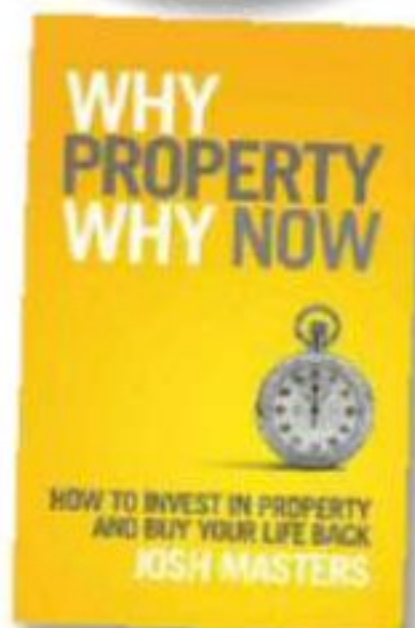


## Investing in property

While full-blown renovations are a costly and time-consuming way to add value to your home, small improvements can greatly enhance the appeal and functionality of your property.

With 15 years of experience in the industry and hundreds of property purchases under his belt, Josh Masters is a well respected buyer's agent.

He's also author of a new book, *Why Property Why Now* (Palmer Higgs, \$28), which is available online at [joshmasters.com.au](http://joshmasters.com.au). It aims to show you how to make property investment work for you.



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Go to [WWW.SMART-TOOLGROUP.COM](http://WWW.SMART-TOOLGROUP.COM) to locate your nearest dealer.

# Gear up for a great summer

There's nothing like being caught short when you're trying to get the house ready for guests and holiday time. So we've put together a collection of new products that we think you'll find useful over the next few months.



## PRETTY UP YOUR HOME

The Lytworx Deluxe Blossom Tree will create a unique feature for your home, garden or entertainment area. It comes with a sturdy construction at a height of 2.5 metres, it is powered by 600 low voltage LED's so is economical to run. Available in Pink or White, it breaks down easily into 3 units when not in use. \$139.



## FREEDOM OF CHOICE

The Ryobi One + Hybrid Line Trimmer Kit gives you all the runtime you need from mains power, plus all the freedom and convenience of a cordless trimmer. Simply plug in when you're close to a power outlet or click on your One+ 18V Battery when you're out of reach. \$229.



## MAKE A STATEMENT

Add classic heritage style to your property with these new Protector Aluminium Spear Top Fencing panels. Made from strong and durable aluminium, in popular Satin Black finish, this fence will set your home apart from the rest of your street. Each 900mm H panel is \$99.98.

## SECURITY LIGHTING WITHOUT THE POWER BILLS

The Solar Magic Twin Security Light with PIR sensor will take care of all your outdoor security needs. The unit has two swivel, dual direction and powerful 80 lumens LED lights that are powered by a remote solar panel with 3 metres of cable. It is rainproof and comes with rechargeable AA batteries. \$36.98.



## DECKS OF THE FUTURE

With its unique design of bamboo and recycled plastic, Ekologix Composite Decking never requires oiling or painting, is rot and mould resistant and has an R11 commercial slip rating. It has the look and feel of natural timber and is available in silver ash, red rock, mountain oak and dark brown. It comes in 88 x 23mm x 5.4m lengths at \$7.98 per metre.





### COOL FOR KIDS

Add some fun to the kids rooms with these At Home Rocket Kids Curtains. The bright, funky design with thermal backing, helps keep out the heat of summer and the cold of winter. They also help keep the noise down! 1.6m drop only \$49.98.

### PLAY SAFE

Install Gym Tile Rubber in your gym at home or under garden swings and other play areas for a shock absorbent surface to help keep your kids safer when they are at play. 1m x 1m x 10mm thick. \$32 each.



### FAN-TASTIC

These popular Arlec Classic 4 blade ceiling fans represent excellent value. With stylish new-look fan brackets and blades, their minimalist design won't look out of place in most settings. It includes a hard-wearing 60W reversible motor that will provide years of solid performance. 120cm 4 Blade Ceiling Fan \$69. 120cm 4 Blade Ceiling Fan with Oyster Light \$89.96. 120cm 4 Blade Ceiling Fan with Oyster Light and Remote Control \$139.

### A POWERFUL LITTLE SUCKER

The Ozito VWD-1220 Wet & Dry Vacuum with its strong 1250W motor and large 20 litre stainless tank has everything you need for big clean ups around the home. It features a 1.5m suction hose with adaptor, crevice tool, floor tool, three extension tubes plus filter, dust bags and foam filter. Great value at only \$75.



### STEAM CLEAN FOR A GERM FREE HOME

The Vax Home Master Steam Cleaner, with its powerful jets of steam, breaks down grease and grime without harsh chemicals or detergents. It will also kill bacteria, dust mites and other allergens making it ideal for upholstery and pet beds. With a large tank capacity, it can be easily moved from cleaning floors to bathroom sinks and showers just by changing one of the 16 accessories stored on board for added convenience. \$199.



### GREAT VALUE

The Espree FLO range of tapware gives you all the quality and good looks you want for today's modern bathroom or kitchen at a great low price. Complete with a 7 year warranty and German ceramic disc cartridges, these Watermark taps are suitable for all pressure systems. Flo Sink Mixer \$82. Flo Basin Mixer \$82. Flo Shower Mixer \$99.



### GREAT LOOKS

Give your bathroom, kitchen or laundry a spruce up this summer with the Foreno range of tapware. Practical and hardwearing, they are all Watermark and Codemark compliant. With many individual features the Foreno range is simple to retrofit. Roulette Basin Taps \$119. Foreno Roulette Bath Mixer \$199. Icon Coil Sink Mixer \$299.95. Shower Rose Widespray \$65. Airdrive Shower mixer \$280.

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Not all products featured are available in all stores, but may be ordered. Shelf prices may be lower than advertised to ensure lowest prices every day. We reserve the right to restrict the purchase of commercial quantities. All prices quoted are inclusive of GST. Prices valid until Sunday 2nd November 2014, or while stocks last.

# Future perfect

A tiny vacant inner-city block becomes an ultra-green, award-winning home

WORDS SITA SIMONS PICTURES BELINDA MASON AND NICK WILSON

**C**ontrary to most families, Australian house designer and builder Chris Knierim and wife Belinda were looking to downsize.

'The decision was really a product of my passion for living in the most effective, sustainable way possible, and you don't need excessive space if your home is properly planned,' says Chris.

'I knew that I needed to build something myself and put into practice all of the experience I had.'

Chris scoured Sydney's inner-city suburbs. What he found wasn't quite what he expected. A 4.9m wide sliver of space in a row of turn-of-the-century terraced cottages caught his eye.

One of the last vacant plots in all the city fringe suburbs, Chris's initial plan was to re-create a house of the period. The council had other ideas though and specified a contemporary design submission for the block.

Surprised but willing, he submitted his meticulously researched plans for the ultimate eco house and waited.

'I don't think they knew what to make of it!' he says.

## Green dreams

While sustainable building and eco homes are catching on Down Under, Chris says that we are lagging far behind European countries.

Having left Australia in 2001 to explore building practices around the world, Chris lived and worked in Frankfurt and was blown away by the German approach to sustainability.

'It's normal practice there, and while you might think eco building is new, it's not. Because the Germans have been doing it for a long time, they have perfected and standardised all the elements,' says Chris.

'A lot of it is common sense, but it takes learning and a shift in perspective to make it work.'

When the local council approved the plans, he knew he was onto something special.

'This was a long-held vision I had, and I wanted to execute it to the best of my ability.'

'Once I had the council on side, and excited about the fairly radical ideas, I couldn't wait to get started.' >

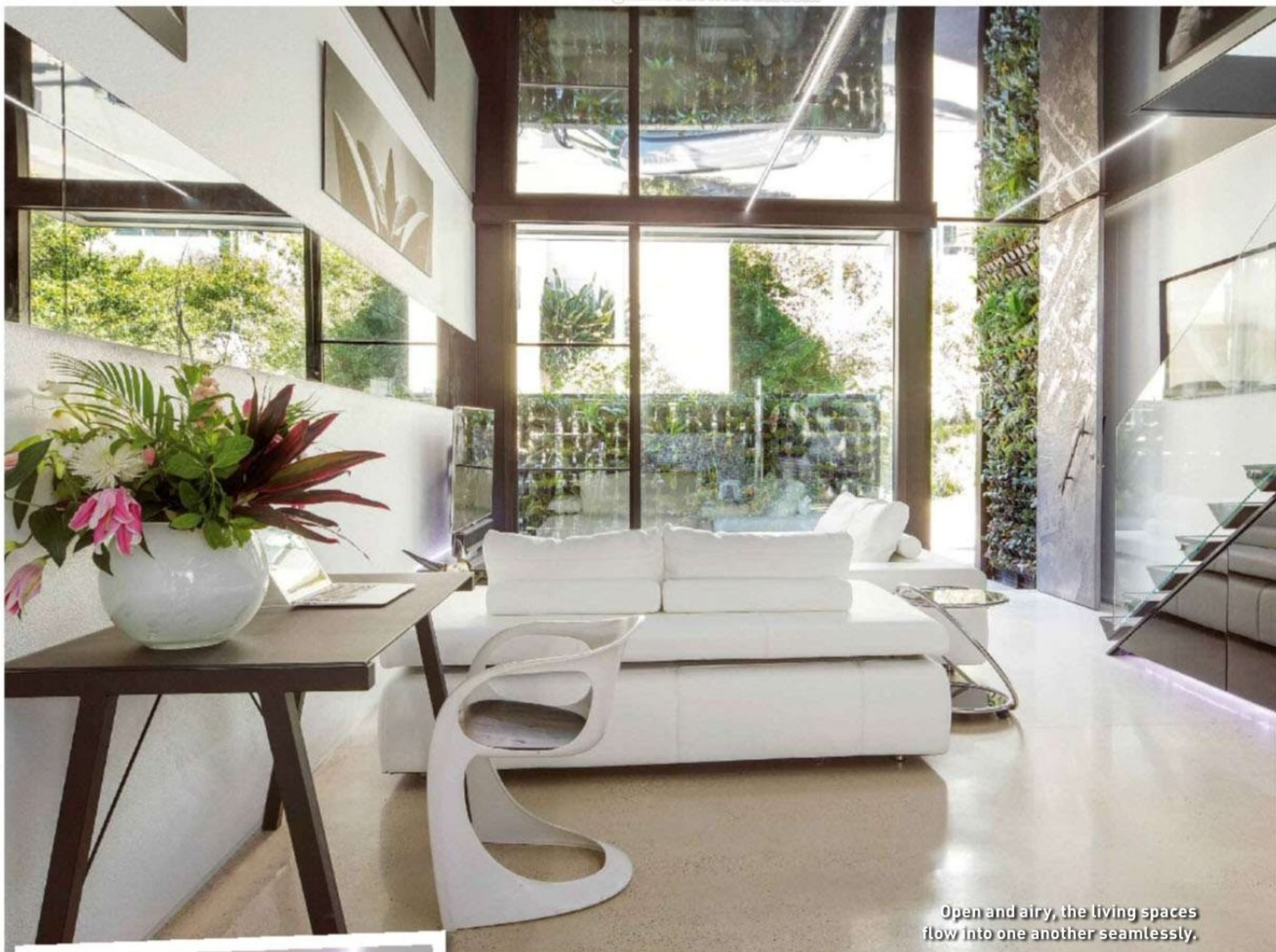


CHRIS KNIERIM



CONTRACTORS DESIGNER CONSTRUCTIONS SUSTAINABLE DESIGN & CONSULTANCY SERVICE CODE GREEN

The ground floor of this eco-terrace is flooded with natural light and the innovative black mirror ceiling creates an illusion of spaciousness.



Open and airy, the living spaces flow into one another seamlessly.

### The grand plan

'Planning, planning, planning. It's all about the plans. I have an advantage in this, being a designer and builder, as I consider the practical how-to elements in the design,' says Chris.

With such a small space in which to work, and located on a narrow street, Chris worked out every factor, such as exactly how trucks could fit down the street and how to manage without a crane because of power lines.

He calculated the number of bricks needed, ute load by ute load, from building site tips, and the time it would take to transport, clean and lay them.

Chris implemented many clever and innovative processes, where nothing was left to chance.

'The first thing we did was dig a hole at the back left of the site and

slope the ground so the runoff went into the hole. About 90% of the water used on site came from this hole, thanks to some good rain,' says Chris.

'This house also had to act as a stabiliser for the two single-skin brick cottages either side, and support its own concrete roof.

'We poured concrete into deep footings and built a steel frame as an anchor, then double-lined it with bricks to support the roof,' he says.

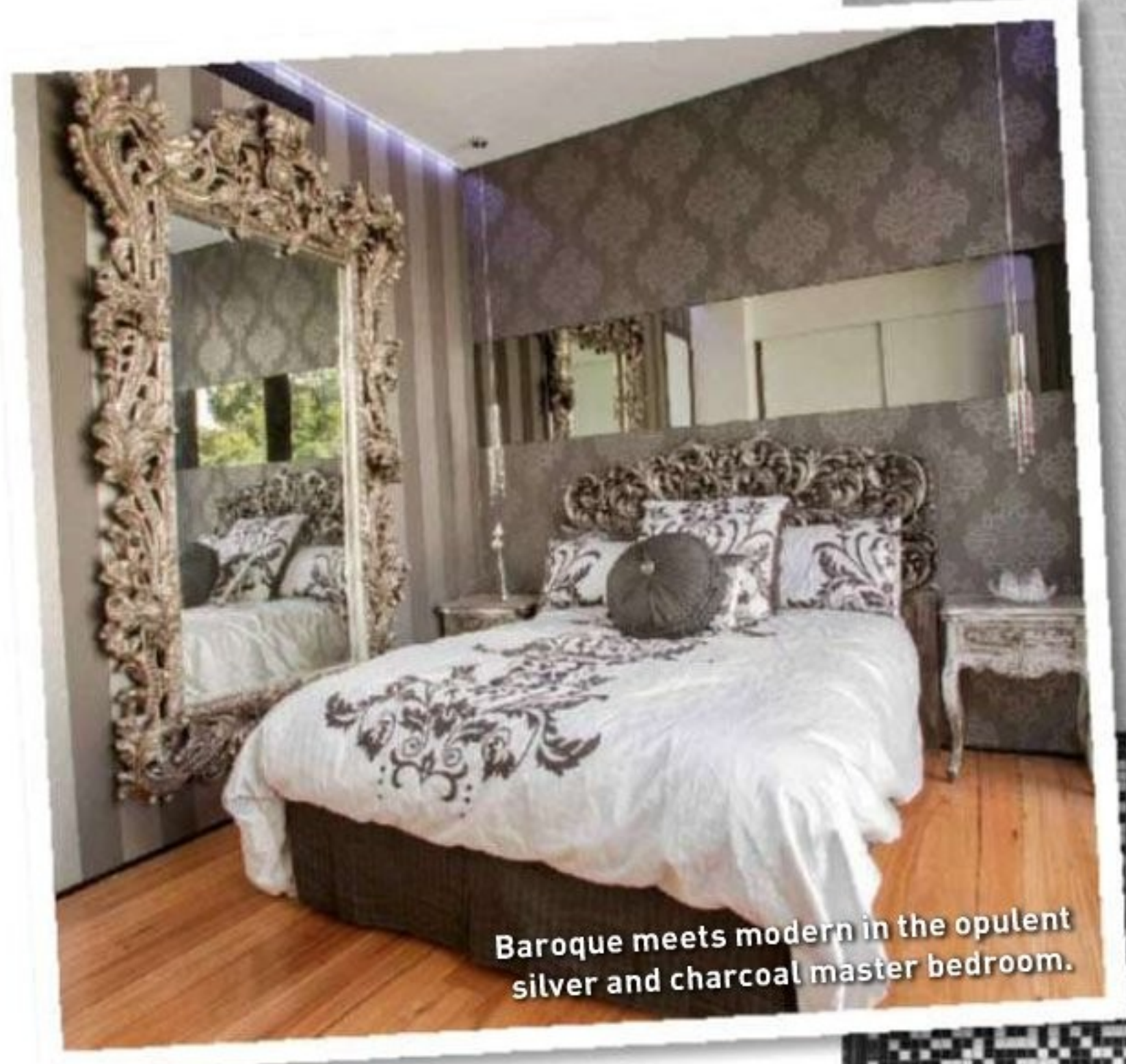
### Great attention to detail

Just as the details and bones of the building were precisely planned, none of the interior design was accidental or generic either. Even the front door is relevant and connected to the whole.

'My wife, Belinda, is a photographer and she went up in a helicopter to take



A floating staircase leads to the three bedrooms, bathroom and rooftop garden.



Baroque meets modern in the opulent silver and charcoal master bedroom.

an aerial picture of the house and the neighbourhood in context. We then had the image laser-etched on the door.

'Even the front door handle is a hand-forged arrow that points to the north,' says Chris.

Inside, the ceiling sets the theme. A latex-type material, dyed black to be highly reflective, was heated in a steel frame, then installed and left to cool.

There was no waste and no seams, as the LED light strips cover the joints.

The living spaces are unhindered by walls and doors, with light and dark used to highlight certain features or make others appear to recede.

'I wanted the kitchen to be unobtrusive in the space, so we went black and kept everything minimal.

'A floating staircase made of fabricated triangular tubes that require no nosing is camouflaged into the space. On the other side, we have white walls with a band of recessed mirrors.'

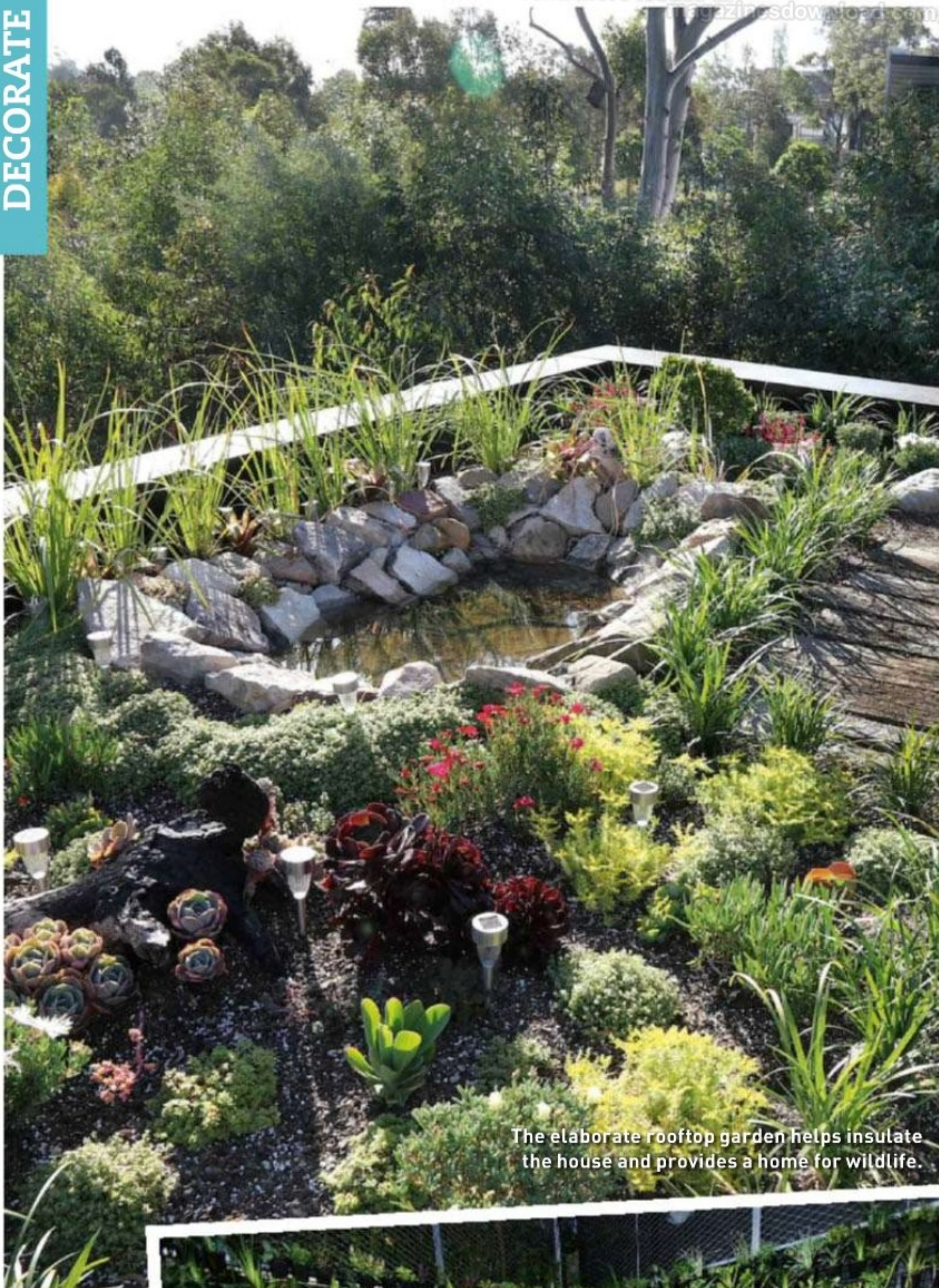
Upstairs, the three bedrooms continue the theme of sophisticated comfort, using charcoal and silver to complement the natural materials.

'Building green is an investment yes. There's a lot to plan, but there are benefits, personally and globally, and huge savings to be made down the line.

'I do think I have created my version of perfect, and this home does make a difference,' says Chris. ➤



Dramatic mosaic tiling evokes a sense of infinity, making the bathroom seem larger.



The elaborate rooftop garden helps insulate the house and provides a home for wildlife.



In the rear courtyard, a glass table with a waterfall makes a striking centrepiece.

### Rooftop oasis

The cornerstone of Chris's philosophy is to utilise sustainable materials wherever possible.

'Everything I used was recycled or sourced as locally as possible to reduce the carbon footprint,' says Chris.

'The concrete contains a high percentage of recycled aggregate and the plasterboard is also recycled.

'In terms of waste, we produced only one tonne from the whole project, most of which could, in turn, be recycled,' he says.

Externally, a 7m high vertical garden is not only visually striking, but also serves to prevent radiant heat bouncing off the masonry wall and back into the house.

A flowering rooftop garden helps insulate the house while providing an environment for bees, insects and birds at the same time.

The house is kept cool by a sophisticated cross-ventilation system, which utilises double-glazed windows and internal blinds to control the flow of heat around the house.

Energy from rooftop solar tubes is used to heat the underground concrete slab that doubles as a storage cell, providing thermal mass heating.

Also underground there is a 3500L tank, which supplies water to the green rooftop and vertical gardens, as well as a water feature at the rear of the house that uses evaporative cooling to duct chilled air into the internal spaces.

Strategically placed skylights and the use of opaque glass inserts in all the doors were added to keep the house light and bright throughout.

'I put in ducted air conditioning because no-one's going to buy a new house in an inner-city suburb without it, but we've never used it. It's never too hot and never too cold,' says Chris.



**+ Get more online**  
 Visit [handymanmagazine.co.nz/mag](http://handymanmagazine.co.nz/mag)  
 for a guide on Installing Skylights.

An aerial photo of the house and surrounds is etched on the front door.

## Treating glass surfaces

A finishing touch to this house's eco-friendly performance was the integration of a state-of-the-art surface treatment that is based on nanotechnology for the vast array of glass surfaces throughout the home.

Enduro Shield is a non-toxic, easy-clean treatment that is perfect for all glass surfaces, both new and existing.

It greatly reduces cleaning time by protecting glass surfaces against staining and etching caused by soap scum, hard water and lime scaling.

Enduro Shield can either be applied with a DIY glass-coating kit or professionally installed by a certified applicator.



Enduro Shield 125ml Glass Kit, about \$72. [opushardware.co.nz](http://opushardware.co.nz)



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Design an aquarium full of colour to liven up your living room.

PICTURE GETTY IMAGES



# Setting up a fish tank

Provide a comfortable environment for these captivating low-maintenance pets

WORDS CARMEL ROMA



**T**hey're easy to keep and an attractive tank full of colourful fish doubles as an eye-catching design feature in a room.

According to Dave Deyermond, manager at Hollywood Fish Farm ([hollywoodfishfarm.co.nz](http://hollywoodfishfarm.co.nz)), looking after fish is relatively straightforward, even for beginners.

'It's wise to buy from an aquarium store or pet shop that has good knowledge about its fish rather than a general pet store, where guidance and advice could be lacking,' says Dave.

'It's important to know the needs of your fish. Also don't add too many at once and don't overfeed them.'

To make things easy, tank systems are available that combine filtration, temperature and lighting.

**TIP** Change a quarter of the tank's water once a fortnight to keep it fresh.

**Tuscan Path Aqua**  
Decorative Glass Pebbles,  
\$5 for 1kg. [horticom.co.nz](http://horticom.co.nz)



## Getting started

Create a safe and comfortable environment for fish to live in and they'll stay happy and healthy.

**POSITION THE TANK** on an aquarium stand with polystyrene under it to absorb unevenness and vibrations. Find a spot away from direct sunlight to prevent excessive algae growth.

**THE QUANTITY OF FISH** should be based on the size of each specimen as well as the size of the tank. The total length of all the fish shouldn't exceed the tank's length. For a 1000mm aquarium, eight 125mm fish are ideal.

Dave advises filling the tank with different types of fish at various layers, with a combination of bottom dwellers and surface fish. Use plants and rocks to create a natural setting.

**TANK LIGHTING** is not essential, but a well-lit aquarium can make brightly coloured fish look their best. Special lights are required if plants or corals are growing in the tank.

**THE WATER TEMPERATURE** depends on the type of fish. Cold water species, such as goldfish, flourish in 12-20°C water.

Tropical freshwater species thrive in water from 23-28°C, while tropical marine fish prefer water from 24-29°C. The temperature should not exceed 30°C.

**WATER ADDITIVES** may be required, and can include water agers, chlorine neutralisers and other conditioners to make tap water safe for your fish. Controlling the pH level is also important for the health of fish. **AQUARIUM FILTERS** remove solid visible matter such as leftover food and waste, absorb toxins and encourage good bacteria.

The type of filter depends on the tank size, with basic sponge filters suitable for small tanks and external filters offering useful flexibility for larger tanks. ➤

### Types of filters

Filters can be mechanical, chemical, biological or a combination of all three. Without a filter, the water in your fish tank will quickly become toxic and can kill the fish.

**SPONGE** filters use an external air pump connected to a sponge inside the tank with tubing. They cost from \$10, and are ideal for tanks with tiny fish, as they won't be sucked into the filter.

**UNDER-GRAVEL** filters, from \$12, consist of slotted plates covering the tank floor, each with inbuilt uplift tubes connected via air tubing to an external pump. Gravel should be vacuumed weekly to clean out waste.

**INTERNAL POWER** filters, from \$20, are quiet, fully submersible devices comprising a sponge filter and pump

that fits inside the tank. They are often used with an external filter in larger tanks.

**HANG-ON** filters, from \$20, sit outside the tank and are usually carbon-filled for chemical filtration.

They're ideal for tanks under 200L.

**EXTERNAL CANISTER** filters, from \$150, provide mechanical, chemical and biological filtration.

These filters require frequent maintenance and are recommended for large aquariums.



### Adding fish to an aquarium

Fish should be gradually introduced to a tank over at least a month, with the largest or most aggressive added last. Float the bag in the water for 15 minutes to equalise the temperature. Slowly let in tank water, then transfer the fish with a net.



#### GOLDFISH

Often kept in backyard ponds, these fish are easy to care for. They need a large tank with good filtration, as they produce a lot of waste.



#### BETTAS

Commonly called Siamese fighting fish, bettas are easy to look after. Males shouldn't be kept together and avoid fast-moving fish and fin nippers.



#### ZEBRA DANIOS

Also known as zebrafish, these small tropical schooling fish are best kept in groups of five or more. They may nip at long-finned species.



#### NEON TETRAS

These small fish with bright stripes are very hardy and should live two to three years. They are active in groups but lone fish will be shy.



#### CICHLIDS

These fish vary in colour and shape, with angelfish being the most common. Some aggressive species aren't ideal for beginners. Research before buying.



#### GUPPIES

Male guppies are brightly coloured while females are duller. These fish breed quickly, so keep only male ones together to avoid overcrowding.

DON'T MISS THE NEXT ISSUE OF

# Handyman

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## Indoor

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## Garden

How to have the best lawn on the street by keeping it green and repairing patches.

**PLUS** how to grow juicy tomatoes.

# On the move

Plan ahead to avoid common pitfalls so your next residential relocation goes without a hitch

**K**iwis are a nation of movers. Statistics New Zealand figures show that in a two-year period almost 800,000 of us shifted to a different residence within the country.

The most common type of move is a local relocation, within the same or a neighbouring suburb.

But no matter how far or even how big the move is, the pressures and pitfalls can be just the same.

## DIY or go pro?

While paying professional removalists to do the job is a stress-free option, it can be expensive, with average costs ranging from \$2500-\$6000 and many variables affecting the final price.

With the pros, you have properly packed boxes, a guaranteed timeline, the right equipment to move large and heavy items, as well as a contract. And it's a lot easier on the back not having to shift all that furniture yourself.

Doing the whole job alone or with a few family members and friends comes with other problems. People making a move often aren't good at

estimating how much stuff they have. Time, effort and physical capabilities are easy to misjudge.

You may have to hire a vehicle that will end up doing multiple trips, plus equipment and packing materials.

## Get organised

Planning and organising properly is vital. Decide how the move will be done, then research your options.

If you do it yourself, start packing at least one month before the move and shop around for the right boxes.

Sturdy well-packed boxes make filling the truck much easier, saving time and money.

Pack and tape each box so they won't crush when stacked, or fill the top with foam or bubble wrap. Put heavy items in the smaller boxes and lighter objects in the larger boxes. ➤

## Avoiding the cowboys

There are lots of good removalists who advertise locally. Use word of mouth to check them out, asking for testimonials from previous clients.

Understand the costing structure and the difference between a fixed price and a by-the-hour deal, getting a quote in writing upfront.

Be wary of a deal that seems too good to be true and ask where they are travelling from, as their charges can start and finish when they leave and return to their base.



PICTURE THINKSTOCK



Be prepared and pack efficiently so moving house doesn't blow the budget and turn into a stress-fest.

## Packing checklist

- ✓ **ORGANISE A SKIP** or a pick-up for junk, and donate or sell everything else you don't want in the new house.
- ✓ **HAVE THE RIGHT MATERIALS** to hand, including marker pens, scissors, tape and bubble wrap. Use greaseproof or baking paper instead of newspaper to wrap items so they won't need washing at the other end.
- ✓ **START WITH STORAGE AREAS** such as the garage, shed, closets and bookshelves, as these don't contain everyday essentials.
- ✓ **LABEL EACH BOX** with the contents and the room it is destined for.
- ✓ **TAPE TOGETHER ESSENTIALS** such as the remote to the TV, the modem with the computer, cables and chargers together, and legs and screws with the sofa.
- ✓ **FILL EMPTY ITEMS** like suitcases and leave drawers full if the contents are lightweight, taping them closed instead.
- ✓ **USE THE CAR** to take valuables and your clothes on hangers laid flat in the back.
- ✓ **PACK A BOX** with essentials such as the kettle, food, drinks, towels, toiletries, toilet paper, soap, light bulbs, chargers and any medications.



### Who's responsible?

If you use professional movers make sure you understand your contract, suggests the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Speak to the company about their liability before you sign up with them.

Depending on your agreement, if anything arrives at the new house damaged, the movers should have to pay for the repairs. You should give them written notice of any damage as soon as possible.

If you don't have a written contract, your goods will be carried at 'limited carrier's risk'. This means the carrier has to pay for any unintentional loss or damage, up to \$1500 for each separate item.

It's a good idea to look over the furniture with the movers before and after the move so you can agree on any damage caused during the move.

If a problem arises, you can make a claim to the Disputes Tribunal.

## Moving and storing

An option for movers who like to take their time is to have a secure storage container delivered to the house.

You pack it yourself at your own pace, then it's collected and delivered to the new address.

It's quite cost-effective, with prices depending on container size and the hire duration.

It's important that a flat area of ground is available, large enough to accommodate the container at both addresses.

There are a few companies offering this service, including [unitedcontainers.co.nz](http://unitedcontainers.co.nz) and [containerrelocations.co.nz](http://containerrelocations.co.nz).



## Storage know-how ▼



### ELECTRONIC GEAR

Laptops, TVs and other electronics need protection from humidity and damp. Remove the batteries, coil and tape the cord to the appliance, then seal it tightly in bubble wrap.

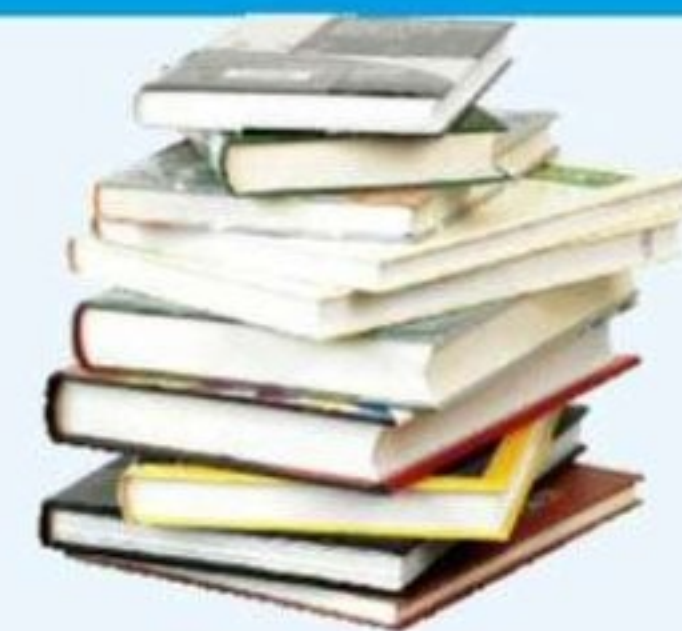
Put the appliance in a cardboard box big enough for it to sit upright, fill with packing peanuts and seal tightly. Label the box with a this-way-up arrow and store off the floor.



### CLOTHES AND LINEN

For long-term storage, clothes and linen need to be spotlessly clean. Fold or roll, then pack in plastic storage containers with tight-fitting lids. Don't overfill, as fabrics need room to breathe.

Add sachets to the boxes to protect against mould, silverfish, dust mites and moths. Look for a recipe online to make them using lavender, bicarb soda and spices like cinnamon and cloves.



### BOOKS AND PAPERS

Paper is susceptible to mould and mites, so use small boxes made of thick cardboard or plastic.

Lie books flat and cover any fragile ones with paper towel and bubble wrap. Use boxes with a tight seal and keep them off the floor.

Don't store paper in plastic bags or old food boxes, as this can attract insects and encourage mould.

# THE MASTERS

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# Shifting furniture

Move heavy items like a pro so you don't damage them, yourself or your home

**W**hether you're just rearranging your living room or moving house, shifting furniture can be a big task.

If it's not done correctly, you can waste a lot of time and energy.

Here are a few simple techniques you can use when lugging heavy or awkward items so you don't wreck your back, your house or the furniture.



**1**



## Hold high and low

Dressers, tallboys, filing cabinets and bookcases are all awkward pieces to handle, so make it a two-person job.

Tip the item sideways at an angle, then one of you hold the top and the

other grip the bottom. This centres the weight and prevents the furniture from swinging out of control.

It also makes carrying it up or down stairs easier, as the angle will roughly match the slope of the steps.

## 3 Use a ramp and a rope

If you have to move heavy items solo, use 19mm plywood as a makeshift ramp to slide the furniture over a doorstep or a few stairs.

Tie braided rope, such as static climbing rope, around an immovable object like the newel post at the top of the stairs to help you control the

speed of descent, and wear gloves to avoid rope burn.

If you have to move heavy items up or down a full staircase, it's best to hire a dedicated stair-climbing hand truck, about \$28 for four hours. Many have an in-built strap to keep your treasures safely lashed on. ➤





### Protect fragile furniture

For safeguarding the items you're transporting, as well as your house, moving blankets are invaluable.

You can rent them from removal and transport companies. Or you can buy them, which means you can use

them again for other tasks. Try an EHI Moving Blanket, \$30, from Bunnings. To avoid damaging the finish and the edges of furniture, wrap pieces in moving blankets, then secure with shrink wrap, available from hardware stores.



### Stand sofas on end

If you have to manoeuvre a couch down a hallway and through a doorway, it's generally not possible to carry it horizontally and make the turn into the room.

Before entering the hall, turn the couch on its end and slide it to the door. You'll then almost always be able to angle it back-first around the door frame and through the door.

If the couch is a bit taller than the door opening, start with the top leaning away from the door to gain up to 100mm of clearance.



### Get on the roll

The problem with using a trolley is that you have to tilt a large, heavy object far enough to put its centre of gravity over the wheels. This can make it difficult to get around corners and through doorways.

A dolly is a small platform with castors mounted under it. On flat surfaces, dollies enable you to move furniture and appliances around in any direction with ease.

Some low-profile systems are barely more than 30mm high, and come with a lever to help you jack up the object to be moved, then slip a mini dolly under each corner. ➤



Move It Furniture Dolly, \$45, from Bunnings.

# 7

## Slide it along

Furniture slides are available in lots of different shapes and sizes at hardware stores.

It's also easy to make your own from plastic container covers, frisbees, moving blankets, towels and carpet remnants. Use soft, padded sliders on hard flooring and hard plastic ones on carpet.



# 8

## Make a mattress sling

Trying to wrestle a heavy, floppy mattress anywhere is hard going.

While many have handles, they're not meant to be used for carrying. They're there to help you position the mattress, so they're not very strong.

An easy way to carry it is to make a rope sling by threading a length of rope through each mattress handle.

Next, slip a 130mm long by 25mm diameter piece of PVC piping over each rope end, then loop and knot the ends to create comfortable grips.

Finally, flip over the mattress so the sling is at the bottom.

Create a simple rope sling to give you and your helper a lot more control.



# 9

## Plan where it lands

When you're moving to a new house, decide beforehand what furniture will go where. Sketch a floorplan with the actual measurements of all the rooms, measure each item of furniture, then design your layout.

This way, as they're moved in, each item can be positioned in its designated spot and won't need handling again.

To make it easy on the movers, tape a copy of the plan to the wall of each room so they can tell at a glance where everything goes.



# 10 Secure with straps

Moving and lifting straps put less strain on your back because they rely on leverage against your skeleton, which enables you to use large muscle groups to do the heaviest lifting.

They also make it easier to move items with sheer sides that don't have convenient handholds. Another bonus is they enable you to get tall items through doors without bending down or crouching, or tipping them over.

Use straps that can be adjusted to carry items of various sizes, and

take extra care on stairs or a steep slope, as most of the weight can shift to the downhill mover.



Forearm Forklift Lifting Strap, about \$52. [cleaningsystems.co.nz](http://cleaningsystems.co.nz)



## H3 Treated Pine

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[www.porta.co.nz](http://www.porta.co.nz)



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# Budget laundry reno

A multi-functional utility room gets an overhaul to keep up with a busy family and maximise the floorspace

WORDS FRANK GARDNER MAIN PICTURES STUART SCOTT

**W**hen they first bought their home, *Handyman* readers Kate and Chad Griffith had already revamped the laundry as part of a total renovation.

But with a growing family, major extensions were on the agenda.

'The laundry isn't my favourite place to be, so I wasn't wasting money or living space on it,' says Kate.

Compact but functional, the laundry is on the middle level of the three-storey house, near the side door for easy access to the clothesline.

It's close to the kids' bathroom and directly below the ensuite of the new parents' retreat on the top floor.

'With three kids generating most of the washing, it seemed sensible to keep it near their rooms, and we plan to install a laundry chute from our ensuite above,' says Kate.

The laundry is a real utility room, housing the fuse box and manhole, and providing access to the upstairs plumbing, electrical and duct work.

The L-shaped room measures 2800 x 1600mm with a 1000mm

return at one end. The long wall was fitted with cabinets and appliances, as well as hamper storage, and the return used to house a freezer.

Working to a tight budget meant recycling the old appliances.

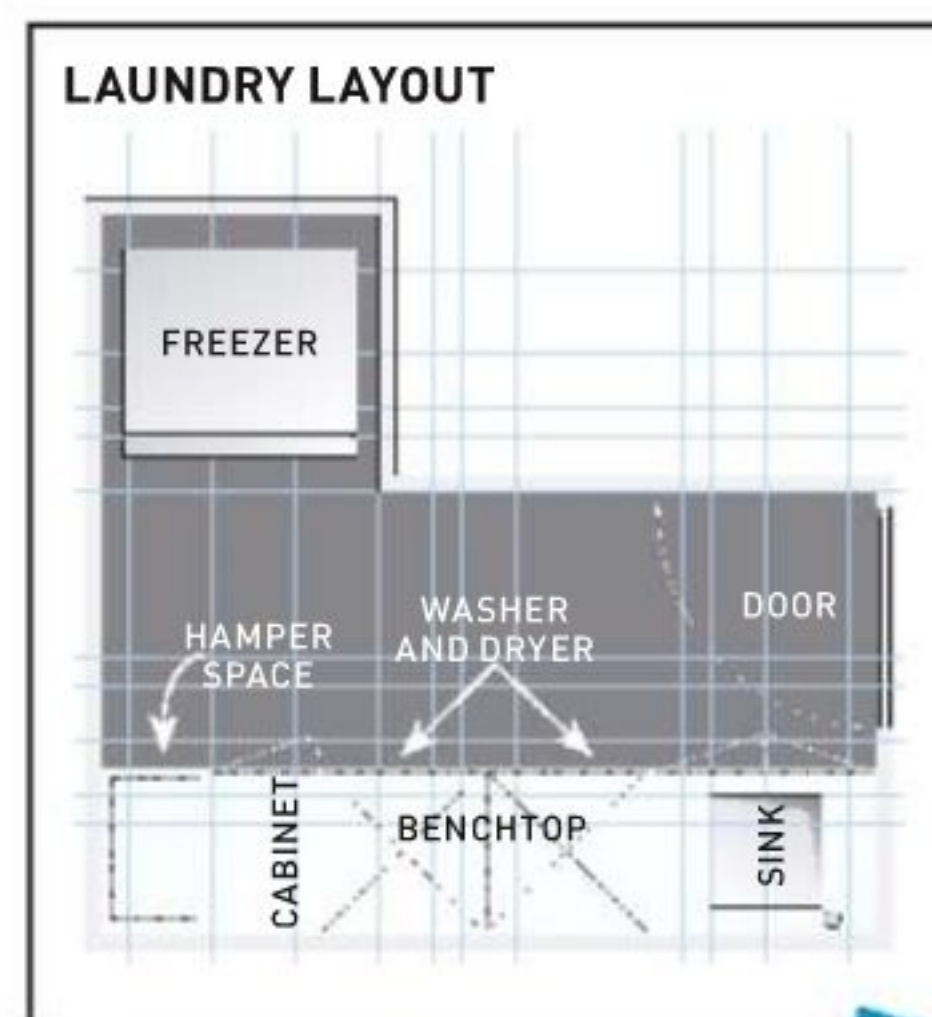
'I liked the idea of fitting the washer and dryer side by side under the bench. The sink was still in great shape, so we only needed a new tap.

'With a family of five, I need space to sort clothes, so the long bench was perfect,' says Kate.

Two powerpoints were positioned above the bench for everyday use and two under it for the appliances.

The double awning windows let in lots of light and air for the drying rack over the sink, and a wall shelf adds extra storage.

After the tradies had finished the wiring and pipework, the room was lined with plasterboard, then the cabinetry and painting done DIY. ➤





What it cost	
Tradesmen	\$1050
Cabinetry	\$457
Benchtop	\$420
Tap mixer	\$69
Tiles and adhesive	\$150
Paint	\$140
Drying rack	\$30
Shelf and brackets	\$36
Lights	\$40
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2392</b>

# After

The revamp took two weeks of plumbing, electrics, tiling and cabinetry installation.

## The flatpack solution

Kate and Chad wanted to do part of the work DIY to save money, so they installed flatpack cabinets and a laminate benchtop from Kaboodle.

The first job was to mark a level line on the wall, 870mm above the floor, for the top of the cabinets.

A stud finder was used to mark stud locations on the height line, so it was easy to see where the studs were even after the cabinets were in position.

'The small space required exact measurements in order to fit two cabinets, the washer and dryer along the one wall,' says Chad.

An 800mm base cabinet for the sink was installed in the corner by the door where the tap plumbing and floor waste outlet were. Chad drilled the plumbing holes in the cabinet.

'The cupboard just fitted into position over the plumbing and we secured it to the wall,' says Chad.

The second 400mm cabinet didn't need plumbing holes but it was secured 400mm out from the corner to leave space for a hamper and to align with the wall stud spacings.

Before being secured, the cabinets were levelled and the height corrected by winding the legs up or down.

## Get the look

Streamline a small laundry space with new floor cabinets, then add wall-mounted storage and update the sink with modern tapware.



**Foreno Espree Watermark Basin Mixer, about \$74.** foreno.co.nz



**Handy Shelf 900mm Style Shelf, \$20, and Brackets, \$20.** handy-storage.co.nz



**Kaboodle Kitset 800mm Base Cabinet, about \$132.** kaboodle.co.nz

A cleat was cut to the correct length and secured between the cabinets to help support the 2800mm long benchtop that would run along the whole wall.

'Getting the benchtop in was a challenge. It was such an exact fit between the walls and there wasn't a lot of room to manoeuvre it, but we managed with a fair bit of wangling and a few helping hands,' says Chad.

The sink was last and because they were recycling their old one, Kate and Chad had kept the original piece of benchtop to use as a template for cutting out the new sink hole.

'Even though it's small, the space is really functional and streamlined, and I absolutely love the big benchtop.'

'It's still not my favourite room, but at least it makes the mountains of washing almost bearable!' says Kate.

## Install the cabinetry ▼



**MEASURE THE TAP** and drain hole positions on the wall and floor. Transfer the locations to the back and base of the sink cabinet, drilling each one with a hole saw slightly larger in diameter than the plumbing holes. Position both cabinets.



**CUT A PINE CLEAT** to length and secure it to the marked height line between the cabinets. Secure the cabinets to the studs using 50mm x 8g timber screws, then attach the benchtop from underneath the cabinet rails and the cleat using timber screws.



**TRACE THE SINK** opening onto the new benchtop using the old one as a template, then cut out the sink hole with a jigsaw. Install the new sink then tile the splashback and have a plumber connect the sink waste, taps and washing machine.

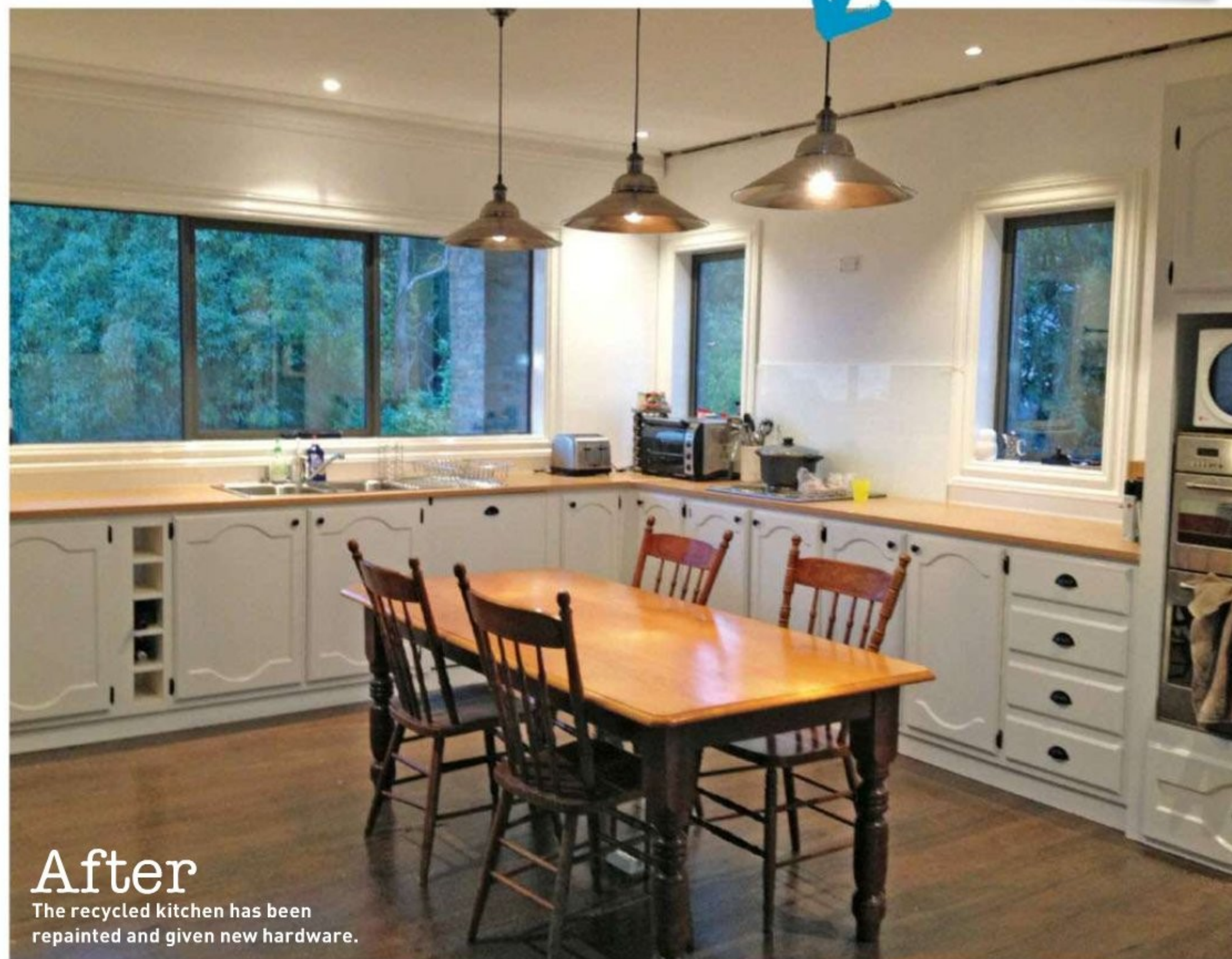
## Recycled reno

Salvaged from a friend's house nine years ago, *Handyman* readers Amy and Hilmar Hoefler's kitchen cost only the labour to remove it. It was meant to be temporary, but grew with the family and became permanent.

The kitchen was later relocated to a different area while the space was being extended, then reinstalled with benchtops made from discarded desks.

The couple then repainted the timber doors and drawers and replaced the hardware to give the cabinetry an instant update.

All the work was done DIY and, because Hilmar is an electrician, the cost of the reno ran into hundreds instead of thousands of dollars.



## HOW TO

# BUILD DECK STEPS

Solve the difficulties of irregular levels on a timber deck by adding full-width steps

**T**he elevated split-level timber decks attached to this house were separated by a 480mm height difference. This distance was too great for even the longest legs to step over comfortably.

Dividing the height by three to install two steps with three risers of equal 160mm increments was the best solution to this problem.

Building the steps across the full 4800mm width of the deck creates easy access to the whole deck as well as providing added seating.

The bearers and joists are made from 70 x 45mm treated pine and the rear base bearer is doubled for extra support.

The timber sizes worked well with the height of the steps. With the bearer and joist totalling 140mm and the pine decking 20mm thick, the riser height was 160mm.

The width of the treads was set at 275mm, accommodating four decking boards with 3mm gaps between them.



The narrow steps that joined the split decks gave limited and inconvenient access.

## How to install



**1 CUT THE BEARERS AND JOISTS** using a circular saw or sliding compound mitresaw. Use a builder's square to set out a 4800 x 530mm rectangle for the base step bearers and set stringlines so they run straight.



**2 POSITION THE BASE BEARERS** using a spirit level, adjusting with packers, then securing them to the joists under the existing decking by skew-nailing either side using 100 x 3.75mm galvanised bullethead nails.



**3 POSITION THE BASE JOISTS** at 450mm centres along the base bearers, securing by skew-nailing either side with 75 x 3.75mm galvanised nails. **TIP** Secure support slats under the top bearer to maintain the step height.



**AFTER**  
With extensive seating in the sunshine and far better access between the decks, the area is now an entertaining haven.



**4 POSITION THE TOP BEARERS** on the secured slats and skew-nail either side into the base joists with 75mm galvanised nails, repeating the setout for the top joists and securing to the top bearers with skew nails.



**5 CUT THE DECKING** for the risers with a 20mm mitred overhang at each end, and mitred scarf joints centred over the joists. Apply construction adhesive in the joints and secure the risers with 50 x 2.8mm galvanised twist nails.



**6 POSITION THE TREAD SLATS** for the steps with square-cut butt joints centred over the joists. Drill pilot holes and secure with twist nails, then enclose the step ends with four mitred slats using adhesive and nails.

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-  
**SAVES HOURS  
OF LABOUR**

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# ARROW DECKING SCREW

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Type 17 tip makes the screw self-drilling, resulting in reduced installation time.

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#### TORX DRIVE ADVANTAGES:

- Stronger driver hold.
- Reduces blow out during installation.
- Prevents cam-out.
- Can reduce fatigue and muscular stress during the manual assembly of fasteners.



# MANUAL AND MULTIPURPOSE SAWS

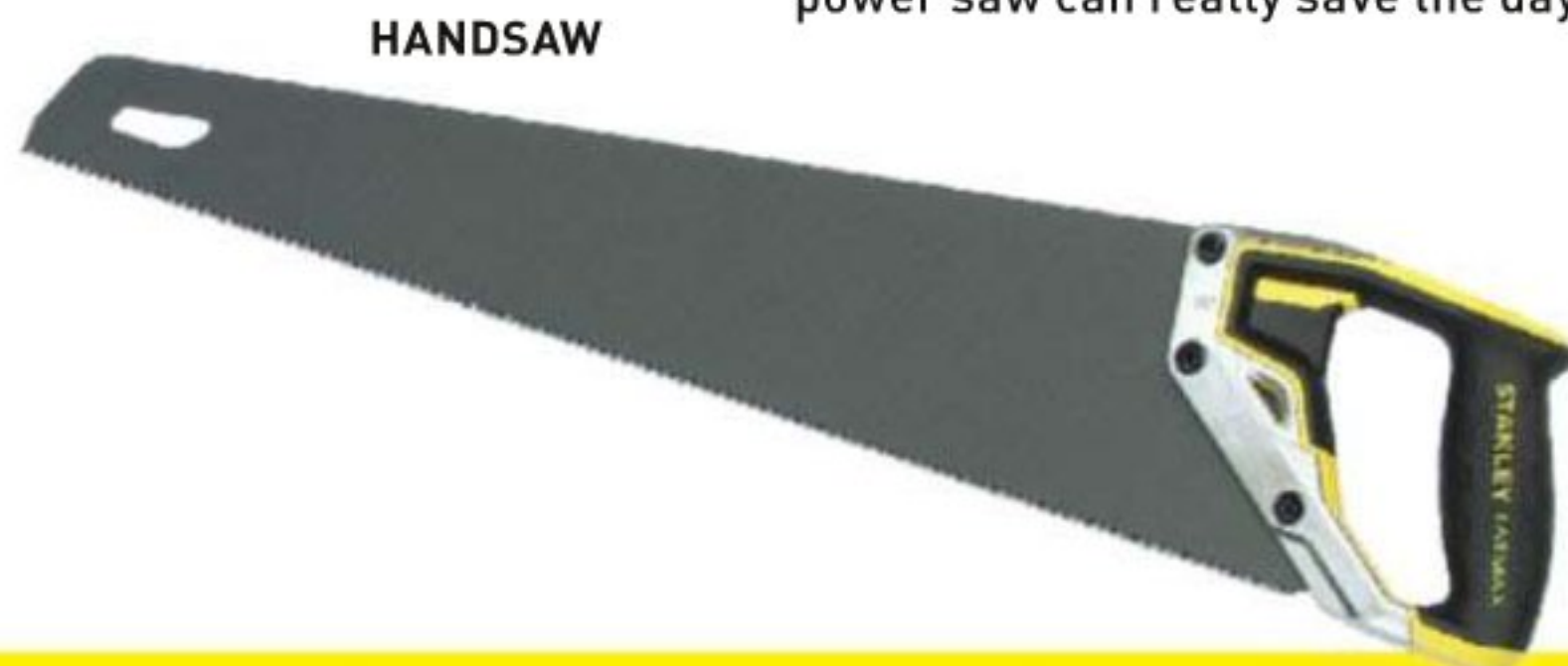
Sink your teeth into any DIY job with tools that span the spectrum from specialised to adaptable



HACKSAW



MULTIPURPOSE SAW



HANDSAW

## \*CUT TO THE CHASE

Even if your workshop is bursting with power tools, a decent handsaw is perhaps the only essential that is as irreplaceable as a hammer.

'Manual tools may not be ideal for big projects, but when it comes to precision and simplicity, they usually win hands down,' says *Handyman* Technical subeditor Gun Arvidssen.

'If you're only making one or two quick cuts, a handsaw is much less of a hassle than plugging in and cleaning up after a power tool.'

But when it's time to bring out the heavy artillery, especially for jobs that involve awkward angles or unusual materials, a multipurpose power saw can really save the day.

## IN GOOD HANDS

Choose a reliable handsaw and other quality tools that will let you cut accurately and efficiently, as well as a heavy-duty power saw that will slice through many different materials with ease.

**MANUAL SAWS** vary greatly in shape, size and structure, and also whether the blade is held

under tension, is self-supporting or is reinforced along its back edge.

They take effort to use, so choose one that is comfortable to hold, as it will be so much more tedious if it gives you blisters.

**MULTIPURPOSE SAWS** are power tools that often go where others can't, while also being capable of

cutting an incredibly wide range of materials. Their adaptability is the result of clever design features or the many accessories and blades available for them.

This class of tool can be used for anything from heavy demolition jobs to cutting pavers and even cleaning a barbecue. ➤

Ranging from general purpose tools for making straight cuts in timber, to those designed to cope with tight turns or materials including tile, metal, plasterboard and plastic, there's a manual saw for almost every DIY application.

## \*GENERAL PURPOSE HANDSAW

This classic design, also called a panel saw, has stood the test of time. The distinctive angled shape of the hand guard makes it easy to quickly mark cut lines at 90 or 45°.

Many mass-produced handsaws have induction-hardened teeth that



hold a sharp edge much longer than untempered saws. The downside is that such saws are impractical to sharpen.

This type of saw has a rigid blade that cuts on the push stroke, usually about 500-560mm, and a pitch that is rarely much coarser than 8tpi.

## \*COPING SAW



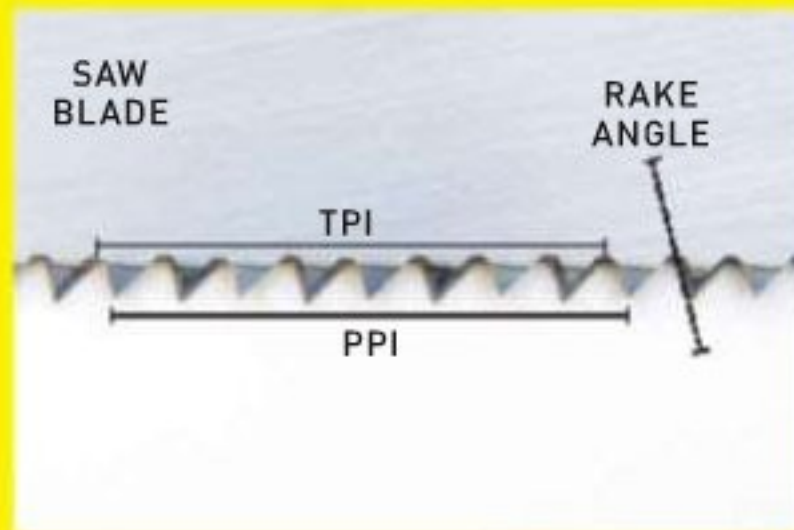
This is still the tool of choice for fine detail work, ranging from cutting the inside corner of a skirting profile to negotiating tight turns.

A scroll saw can often be used instead, but it's more expensive and less manoeuvrable if a workpiece needs to be cut in situ.

The blade is held between a pair of slotted pins that can be turned to enable cutting at any angle relative to the frame. The pin at the handle end is threaded to wind in and out of the handle, tensioning the blade.

## SAW JARGON

Manual saws differ greatly in structure and function, but almost all of them feature a toothed cutting edge with several common properties.



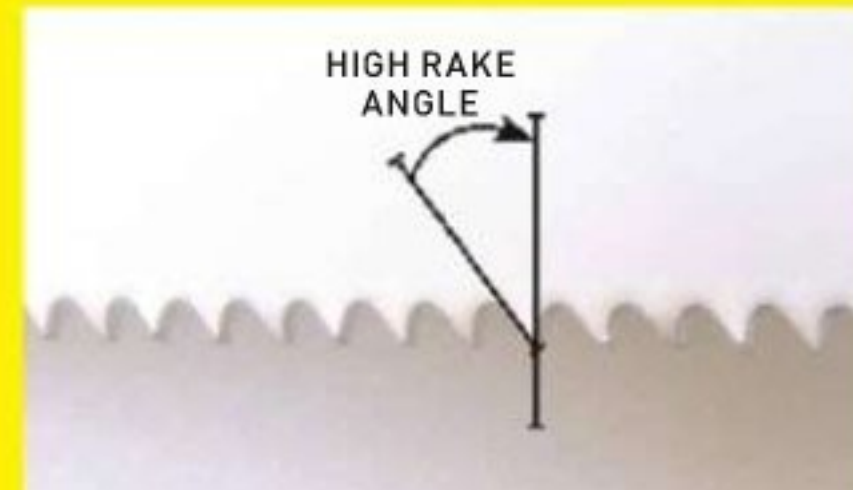
**PITCH** of a saw is the spacing of the teeth, described in teeth per inch (tpi), or points per inch (ppi). The tpi count is calibrated from the valleys between the teeth, while ppi is from point to point.



**KERF** is the width of the cut. The teeth of a saw are splayed outwards slightly, ensuring the kerf is wider than the thickness of the blade itself. This prevents the material being cut from pinching the blade.



**STROKE** relates to the action of moving the saw towards you and away from you as you cut. Saws can cut on the push stroke or the pull stroke, or both, depending on how the teeth are machined.



**RAKE** is the angle between the leading edge of each tooth and a line drawn at 90° to the row of teeth. Pull saws have a high rake angle of up to 45° while saws that cut on the push stroke are raked about 15° at most.



## \*TENON SAW

As sliding compound mitresaws have become more affordable and popular, tenon saws have largely fallen out of favour as the tool used to make the joints they are named for.

They are usually about 12tpi and feature a reinforced back, making them easier to use for precise sawing and a smoother finish.

This makes them perfect for cutting tenons, but the same qualities are valuable when cutting mitre joints, especially from intricately shaped mouldings.

### \*KEYHOLE SAW

With a narrow, rigid blade that can be mounted either vertically or horizontally, a keyhole saw is designed to cut in confined or awkward spaces, and is usually sold with blades for timber and metal.

It is used for similar applications as a jigsaw, but in situations where a power tool would be too unwieldy or finer control is needed. It's great for cutting openings in sheet materials after a starter hole is drilled.



### \*PULL SAW

Traditionally, this type of tool was favoured by Japanese carpenters over saws that cut on the push stroke. It's an extremely versatile saw that comes in a variety of shapes and styles.

The razor sharpness of a pull saw is chiefly the result of how thin the blade can be manufactured.

It is kept straight by tension, rather than relying on the steel's thickness to resist pushing the teeth through the timber fibres.

### \*TOOLBOX SAW



This is the shortened version of a general purpose handsaw. It's small and light enough to be taken anywhere while offering a similar tpi count and other benefits of its full-length relative.

It's a popular backup saw that can be taken to worksites or kept for special occasions when a brand-new, factory-sharp edge is needed.

### \*JAB SAW



Also known as a wallboard saw, this has a short, rigid blade designed specifically for cutting plasterboard.

To start the hole, punch the sharp tip through the plasterboard, slightly away from the cut line, by striking the back of the handle.

Saw to the cut line, then along it, and finish by trimming the cut edge of the paper with a utility knife.



### \*DOVETAIL SAW

Similar in form to a miniature tenon saw, this tool is also most commonly used for traditional joinery.

Although routers are now often used to make dovetail joints, doing it by hand is something of an artform.

Some variants feature a modified blade that allows them to cut flush with a surface, but without the flexion that a pull saw entails. >

### \*HACKSAW



A hacksaw consists of a steel frame holding a narrow, disposable blade under tension by means of a wing nut or a quick-release lever, or both.

Hacksaws are primarily used for cutting metal, but the fine pitch of the teeth also makes them suitable for sawing brittle materials, such as plastic, that can be easily chipped.

A hacksaw blade commonly has a pitch of 24tpi and is sold in lengths ranging from 250 to 400mm, with 300mm being the most popular.

Several frame types are available, including a junior version and a mini hacksaw. This is a handle that grips the blade from the back instead of both ends and should only be used for light jobs.



# MANUAL SAWS



## \*ROD SAW

You may not need to cut a curved shape in a tile often, but a rod saw is about the only tool that can do this.

Standalone rod saws usually have a blade about 150mm long, but blades compatible with 300mm hacksaws are also available.

The carbide-grit blade's round cross-section allows it to cut in any direction relative to the frame.

## \*MULTI-BLADE SAW

The Swiss army knife of the toolbox, this usually comes in the form of a straight handle that can hold a range of different blades. Some types even have the blade mount on a pivot that allows it to fold into the handle.

They are usually designed to be compatible with reciprocating saw blades, offering a more portable and less heavy-handed way of cutting the same range of materials.

It's the perfect way to switch from timber to metal to carbide grit in a matter of seconds without carrying around a whole toolbox.



## \*PLASTIC SAW



Plastics are often brittle and have low melting points that can make them a challenge to cut neatly and without chipping or cracking.

This saw is designed with the properties of PVC, ABS and other plastics in mind. It has a coated-steel 10tpi blade that resists binding, and teeth that cut on the pull stroke.

## \*LAMINATE SAW

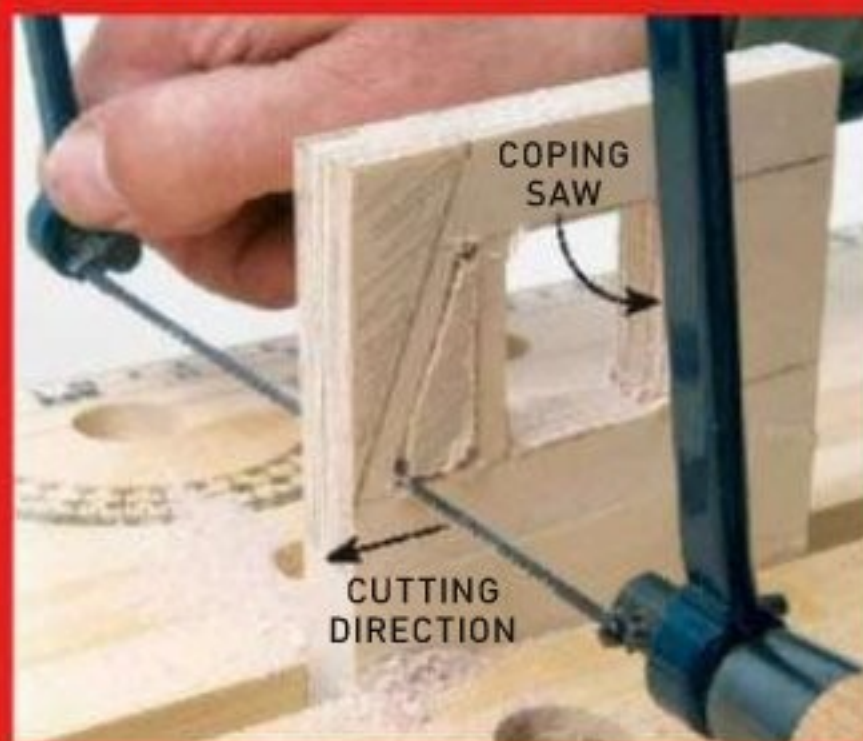


With a fine pitch and short, stout blade, this tool is great for cutting veneered or laminated materials, ranging from flooring to melamine.

The distinctive nose has its own row of teeth, so you can make plunge cuts by hand. This is invaluable for making cutouts in kitchen cabinetry if a jigsaw is impractical to use.

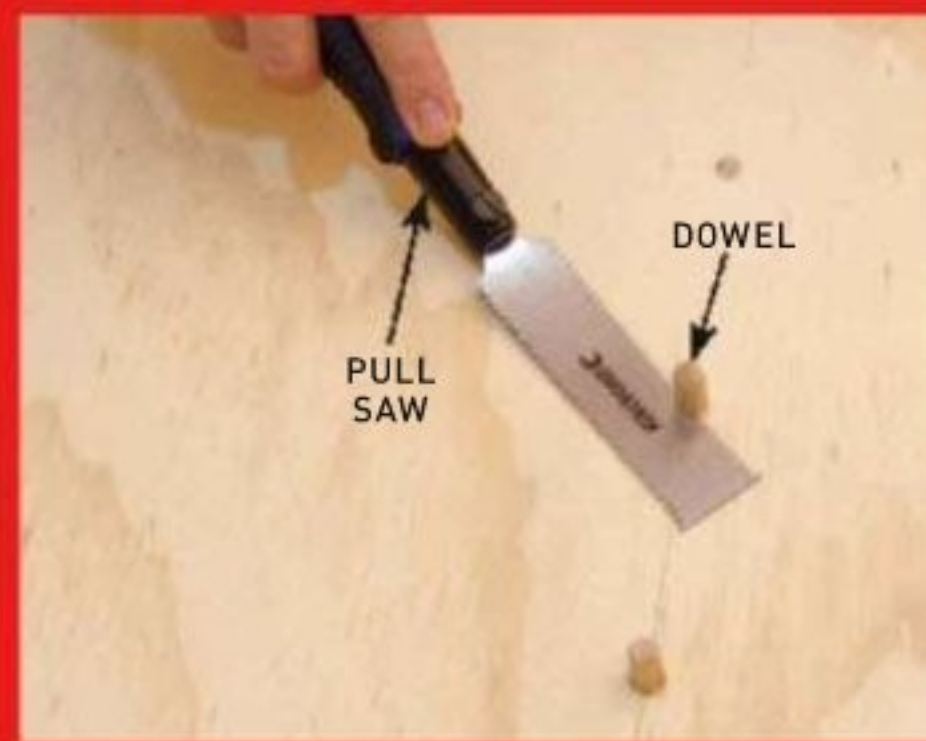
## MANUAL SAW TECHNIQUES

Power tools are convenient for larger jobs that involve a lot of cutting. But for old-school craftsmanship, nothing beats the satisfaction and accuracy of sawing by hand using a tool that was developed for a specialised task.



### CUTTING AN ENCLOSED SHAPE

Drill a 3mm starter hole and unhook the blade from the frame. Feed the blade through the hole, then replace it and wind in the tensioning spindle. Cut out the shape, adjusting the pins to turn the blade as needed.



### MAKING FLUSH CUTS

Pull saws are perfect for trimming pieces of timber that are too bulky to cut with a chisel. Press the blade to the surface, bending it as little as possible to keep it under tension, then saw off the dowel using short, gentle strokes.



### CREATING A TENON

Clamp the timber firmly, then saw down to the shoulder line, cutting diagonally into the corners first, then sawing parallel with the shoulder line. Saw away the waste at the shoulder and clean up with a chisel.

# MULTIPURPOSE SAWS

You will soon notice the limitations of ordinary power saws, especially when attacking a major reno. Arm yourself with a tool that can handle diverse materials and unusual working conditions, and you will be prepared for any contingency.

## \*WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH



Reciprocating saws are not tools that are famed for subtlety. Their trademark qualities are power, speed and adaptability, as well as how manoeuvrable their blades are in awkward spaces.

The reciprocating action is similar to that of a jigsaw, except

that the blades are usually longer and tougher, and the tool is designed to be grasped using both hands.

Even with the shoe pressed firmly against a workpiece, the kickback from a reciprocating saw can be formidable.

Cutting a perfectly straight line using a reciprocating saw can be a real

challenge, so if accurately sawing along a ruled line is a high priority, clamp a straightedge to act as a guide for the shoe wherever possible.

### EXTENDED-RANGE SAWING

With a rigid blade that is well-suited to plunge cutting, a reciprocating saw can be great for jobs such as creating openings in floors or cladding during renovations without the overshoot typical of a circular saw.

The blade's reach usually exceeds that of an oscillating tool or jigsaw, allowing you to cut through fasteners such as framing nails with ease.

Most reciprocating saws feature tool-free blade change, an extendable shoe, variable speed and a trigger lock.

In addition to blades designed for cutting a wide range of materials, they are also compatible with various attachments, including scrapers, brushes and even files.

## RECIPROCATING SAW TECHNIQUES

Famous for being able to cut in awkward spaces where other tools can't reach, a reciprocating saw has countless uses ranging from renovations to garage maintenance, and switching blades to suit the material being cut takes only seconds.



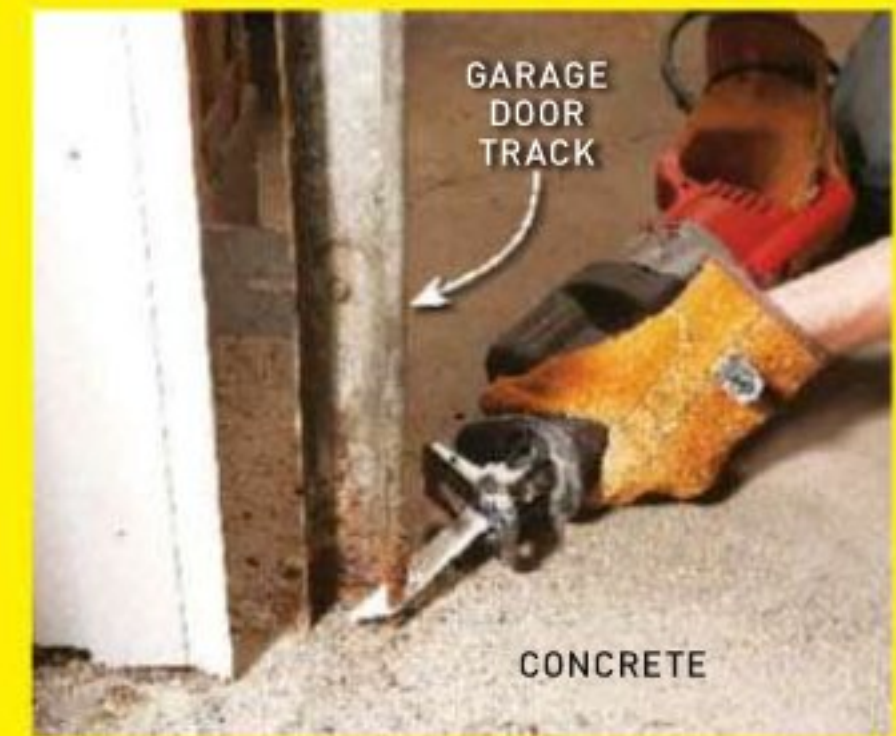
### CUT THROUGH FASTENERS

Use a metal cutting blade to saw straight through fasteners when making modifications to plasterboard walls during a reno, allowing studs, noggins and other framing members to be easily knocked free.



### PROTECT THE SURFACE

Reciprocating saws are notorious for heavy vibration, even when used correctly. To protect floorboards or other quality timber, cut a piece of pipe insulation foam or polystyrene and attach it to the shoe with masking tape.



### TRIM A GARAGE DOOR TRACK

If the end of a garage door track is in contact with damp concrete, it can begin to rust. A reciprocating saw is ideal for cutting about 10mm off the end of the track before applying rust converter and metal paint. ➤

# MULTIPURPOSE SAWS



A wax stick feed system lubricates the blades when cutting through metal.

## \*TWICE THE SLICE

With two circular blades that turn in opposite directions, a property called contra-rotation, the Ozito X2 Twin Cutter stands out from the crowd in function as well as looks.

A contra-rotating system has unique advantages, the main one being that the forces from two blades spinning in opposite directions cancel each other out, making the tool surprisingly agile even at full speed.

Unlike a circular saw, whose design hinges on pushing it forwards to cut, the X2 cuts in a backwards direction just as effectively as forwards.

There is also a shearing component to the cutting action, the same as the principle by which scissors work.

Despite a more complex gearbox, changing blades is straightforward, with the only extra effort being to lock the discs together using a supplied pin.

## SAFETY FEATURES

Contra-rotating blades reduce the risk of kickback almost to zero. The X2 also features a retractable blade guard like the one on a circular saw.

The rear/side handle configuration allows it to be held like a small angle grinder, while still cutting similarly to a circular saw. This makes it perfect for major reno jobs, as it can safely be used on walls and at unusual angles.

## TWIN CUTTER APPLICATIONS

The benefits of contra-rotation have long been utilised in the design of coaxial helicopter rotors and torpedo propellers. Now the same technology is available to DIYers for sawing metal just as effortlessly as timber without changing blades.



### MAKING CUTS IN TIMBER

If cutting from an edge, the blade guard will retract automatically, as it does on a circular saw. Plunge cuts can be made by retracting the guard manually and keeping the tool at an angle of about 30° to the surface.



### SAWING THROUGH METAL

The carbide-tipped teeth can cut metals ranging from copper pipe to steel roofing. When cutting metal, the blades need to be lubricated using supplied wax sticks that are pushed against the cutting edges by rotating the feed knob.



### DEMOLITION DUTIES

The X2 can cut timber and metal with the same set of blades, making it great for demolition or a major reno. Its plunge-cutting ability also lets it saw openings in a plasterboard wall more quickly than using a jab saw.

# MULTIPURPOSE SAWS

## \*VERSATILITY TO THE MAX

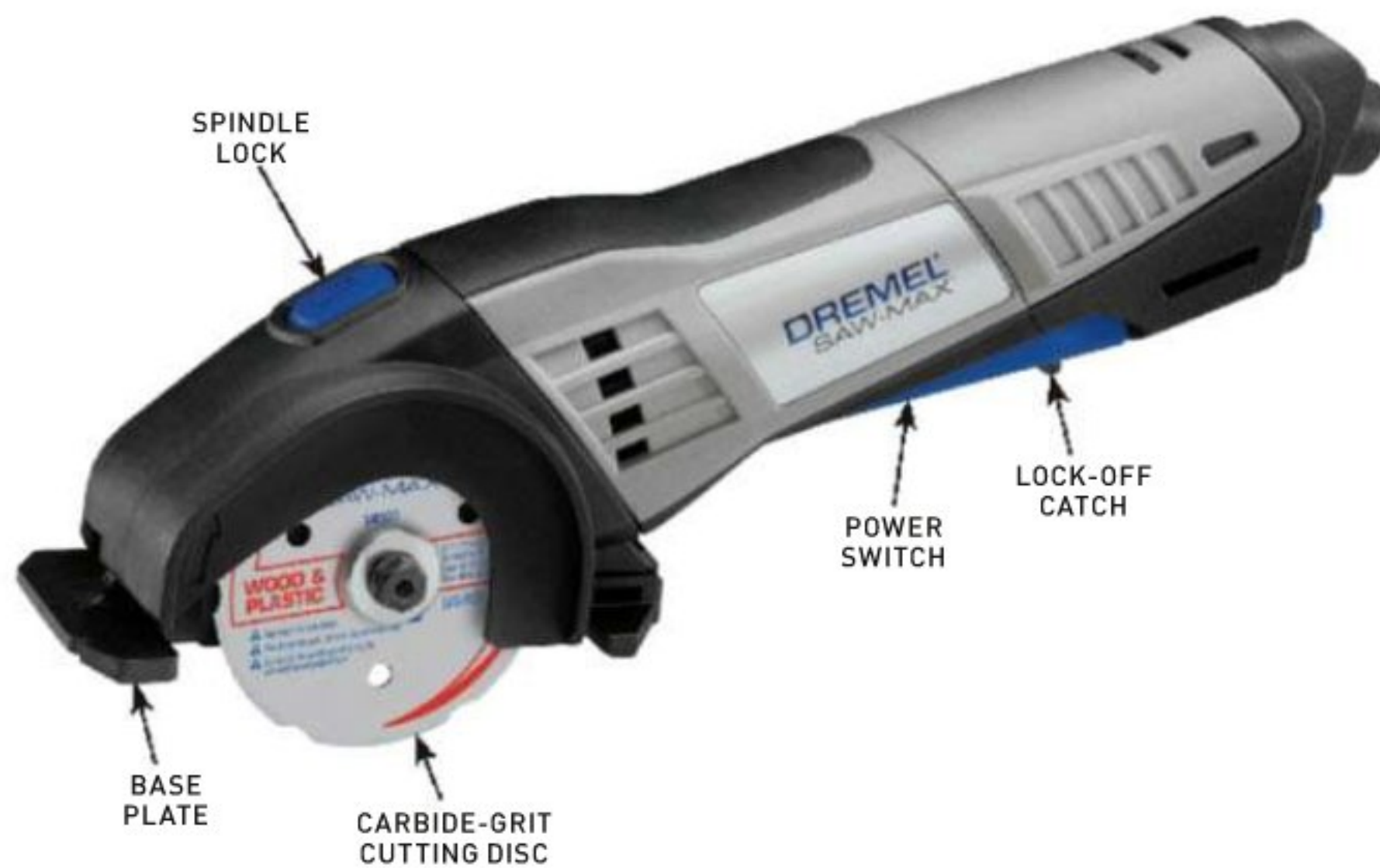
This tool is in a class all its own, but like other multipurpose saws, it does not have a single specialised role to play. The sheer versatility of this saw has the potential to give other power tools inadequacy issues.

The Saw-Max's name may seem ironic considering its compact size, but it packs a lot of guts into a small package, being capable of sawing through virtually any material from timber and metal to ceramic tile.

Similar in shape to the highly specialised power saws used in the operating theatre, this tool is just as lightweight and designed to be safely used one-handed, with a lock-off catch on the power switch.

Like a cross between an angle grinder and a circular saw, it has a base plate that allows the depth of cut to be controlled, and can also be used with a straightedge guide.

The base plate is small enough to ensure excellent visibility, making it easier to cut accurately.



## A SAW FOR ALL SEASONS

Arguably the biggest advantage of the Saw-Max is that it lets you cut all the materials you are likely to face in a bathroom renovation or similar project using only the one tool.

In addition to a carbide-grit cutting disc for timber and plastic, the Saw-Max

comes with reinforced cutoff discs for metal and masonry, similar to angle grinder wheels.

A diamond blade for cutting very hard materials, ranging from marble to tile, is also included, and the many optional extras available extend the possibilities of this tool even further.

## \*ONE TOOL, MANY ROLES

The Saw-Max is not intended as a replacement for a circular saw when cutting large expanses of sheet materials, but it will get into places where a circular saw can't.

It can also make cuts that no other power tool is capable of, such as cutting wall trim in situ before installing a new floor.

Using the optional flush-cutting disc, it can simply be run along a length of the new flooring material to give the perfect clearance without having to remove the wall trim.

Other optional accessories include a mitre guide and rip fence.

Partnered with the masonry cutoff disc, these make it possible to cut pavers and similar objects with a degree of accuracy that is difficult to achieve without using bulky and expensive machinery. ➤



The masonry cutoff disc makes short work of bricks and pavers, while the diamond disc will even cut stone.

Designed for one-handed use, the Saw-Max makes it easy to cut materials that are tricky to handle.

# BUYING GUIDE

Even if you do not have a passion for fine joinery, a few basic manual saws will always come in handy, while a multipurpose power saw is invaluable for all those tasks that are beyond the abilities of your other tools.

## MANUAL SAWS



This 500mm saw has triple-ground teeth, a low-friction coating and reinforced handle, enabling it to cut surprisingly fast for an 11tpi tool.

**Stanley Fatmax Tri-Material Hand Saw, \$40. stanleytools.com**



For quick, clean cuts in plasterboard, this 8tpi saw has double-ground teeth that cut on both strokes, plus a sharp point for starting a cut.

**Fuller 150mm Jab Saw, \$13. bunnings.co.nz**



This tool is built tough without compromising on precision, with a 120mm throat depth, tempered blade and soft-grip handle.

**Stanley Fine Woodworking Fatmax Coping Saw, \$20.**



Featuring onboard storage for up to five blades, this high-tension saw has a conversion slot allowing it to mount reciprocating saw blades.

**Lenox High-Tension Hacksaw, \$55. lenoxtools.com.au**



Perfect for use with a mitre box, this 13tpi tenon saw has a 300mm blade made from premium cold-rolled steel with a cutting depth of 80mm.

**Irwin Tenon Saw, \$25. irwintools.co.nz**



Styled after traditional Japanese pull saws, this double-sided tool has an extra-fine blade and a 23tpi edge for razor-sharp accuracy.

**Stanley Fatmax 115mm Flush Cut Pull Saw, \$20.**

## MULTIPURPOSE SAWS



This reciprocating saw features variable speed, tool-free blade change and comes with blades for cutting both timber and metal.

**Ryobi 800W Reciprocating Saw, \$158. ryobi.co.nz**



With 125mm contra-rotating blades that can cut timber, plastic and metal, this heavy-duty all-rounder is just as effective for demolition as for building.

**Ozito 1200W X2 Twin Cutter, \$137. ozito.co.nz**



Able to saw through everything from plastic to pavers, this nifty tool can also make flush cuts and plunge cuts, and comes with four blades.

**Dremel Saw-Max, \$199. dremel.com**

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TOOLS TABLESAW,  
DRILL, BRAD NAILER

This traditional structure defines the boundary between garden zones while adding charm and character.

### Exterior timber ▼

The garden arbour is built from 90 x 90mm treated pine posts rated H4 for in-ground use, with the rails, beams and slats cut from H3 rated treated pine.

Use a tablesaw to cut the slats to size from 70 x 45mm timber stock, getting three 20mm thick sections from each length. Cut the battens from 90 x 45mm timber, getting two 40mm thick sections from each length.

If the arbour is to be painted, you can use pre-primed, H3 LOSP finger-jointed treated pine in 42 x 18mm and 42 x 42mm sizes.

# CLASSIC TIMBER ARBOUR

Frame a path with a decorative landscape feature built from treated pine in just a weekend

**G**arden rooms are popular in landscape design and you can bring the trend home with a custom-built timber arbour.

Large enough to span a path and act as an entranceway, it's made from treated pine for durability with no special tools required.

Most of the cutting and joinery can be done in the workshop, then it will take about half a day to assemble the arbour in its final location.

Save time by using a brad nailer when building the latticed sides, and a tablesaw for cutting the timber. If you don't have these tools, a hammer and circular saw will still do the job.

Allow a full weekend to build the arbour, applying an oil-based stain to protect the timber, then plant climbers to train over the lattice.

## A simple structure

The arbour is made of four posts concreted in the ground and joined by rails, then slats attached to make the latticed sides. The top consists of beams and battens.

The rails are secured in shallow housings called stop mortises in the

posts, with matching timber plugs on the other side to create the illusion the rails go the whole way through.

A drill press is the best tool for drilling perfectly vertical holes in timber and will speed up cutting the stop mortises, or you can use a drill guide with a depth collar.

A Forstner bit is designed to cut wide, shallow holes with a flat base, so it is the best type to use when cutting the stop mortises. Drill pairs of holes to remove most of the waste, then square up the corners with a chisel.

Unlike a spade bit, it has a short central spur and sharp, level blades mounted on a flat disc to make it easier to control and more precise. ➤



Ryobi One+ 18V Cordless Brad Nailer, \$249, excluding battery. [ryobi.co.nz](http://ryobi.co.nz)



## Cutting the beams

For the decorative tapers at the beam ends, use a circular saw or mitresaw to cut 100 x 100mm triangles off the base corners.

Round over the edges slightly using a block plane or trim router with a 6mm roundover bit.

Mark the positions for the bolt hole centres 295mm from the ends, and 30 and 100mm up from the base edge of the beams.

Bore the 13mm deep recesses for the bolt heads and nuts on one face of each beam using a drill and 25mm spade bit. To drill the bolt holes the rest of the way through, use a 10mm twist bit.

## Build the arbour



### 1 Cut the stop mortises

Position the posts side by side then clamp, using a builder's square to mark the locations of the stop mortises for the rails and plugs. Use a 35mm Forstner bit to drill overlapping holes 20mm deep at each marked location, cutting away the waste with a 25mm chisel.



### 2 Secure the rails

Insert the rails into the stop mortises between two posts, stand the assembly on edge and tap the pieces together until the inside measurement between the posts is 720mm. Secure with pairs of screws through the stop mortises. Apply a coat of sealer or paint to the stop mortises.



### 3 Attach the slats

Square up the frame, then make 200 x 82mm spacers from offcuts, with 50mm wide stop blocks. Use a brad nailer to secure the vertical slats to the rails with 50mm overhang. Turn over the assembly to attach horizontal slats to the vertical using construction adhesive and brads.



### 4 Erect one side panel

Lay out the arbour dimensions on the site and dig four post holes, 200mm in diameter and 650mm deep. Tamp the base of each hole and add 100mm of gravel for drainage. Erect one side panel, checking for plumb and bracing the posts to pegs hammered into the ground.



### 5 Concrete the posts

Stand the second side panel in the holes, clamping supports to the posts at ground level if needed, then attach temporary braces to hold it plumb and evenly spaced from the first panel. Measure the diagonals to ensure the structure is square, then concrete all four posts in position.



### 6 Install the beams

Drill 10mm bolt holes centred 30 and 100mm from the top of the posts, clamp the beams in position and bolt them to the posts. Secure the battens across the top of the beams with twist nails, using spacers for equal gaps, then attach the plugs in the stop mortises using adhesive.

# Classic arbour

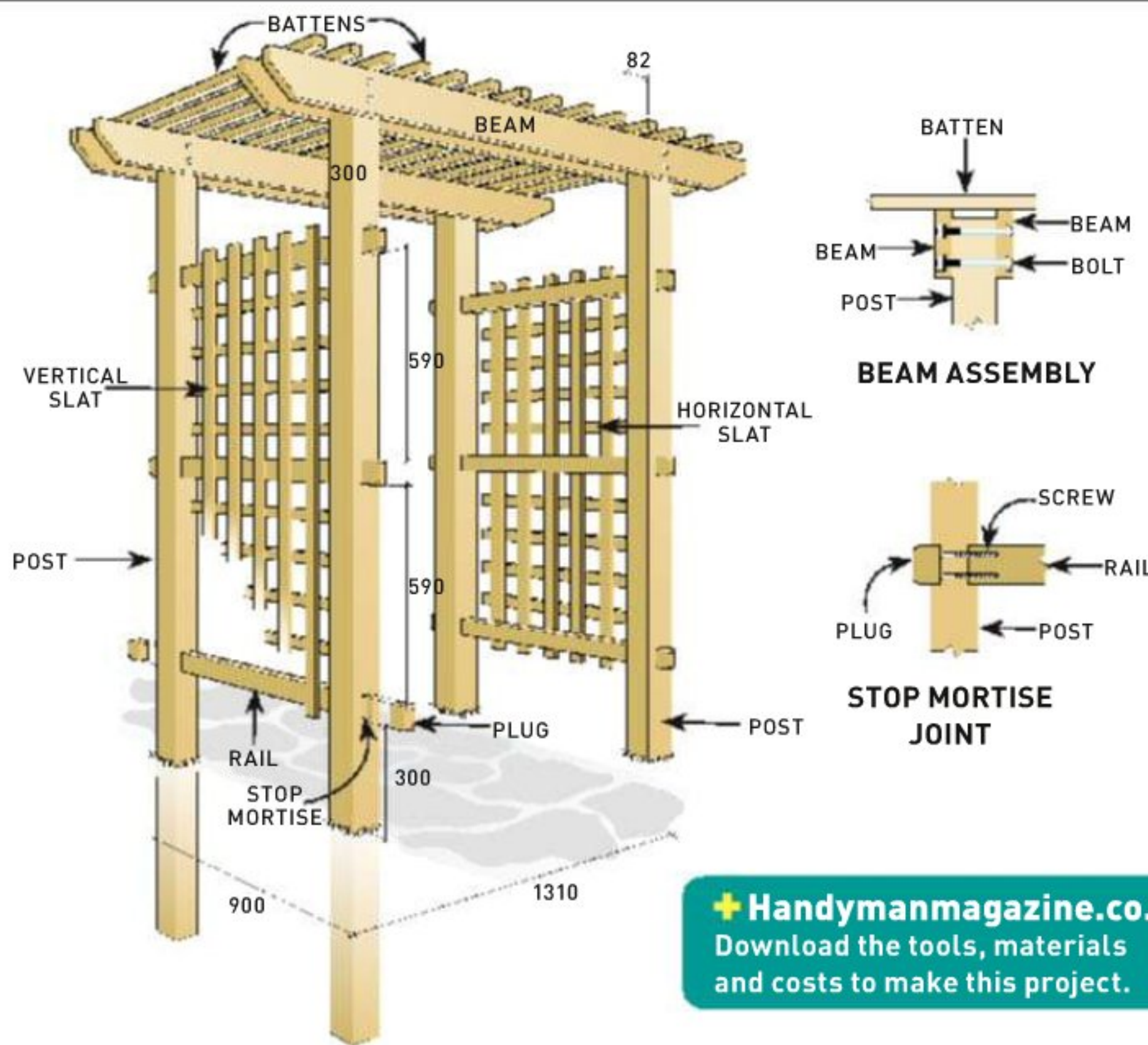
measurements in mm

## CUTTING LIST

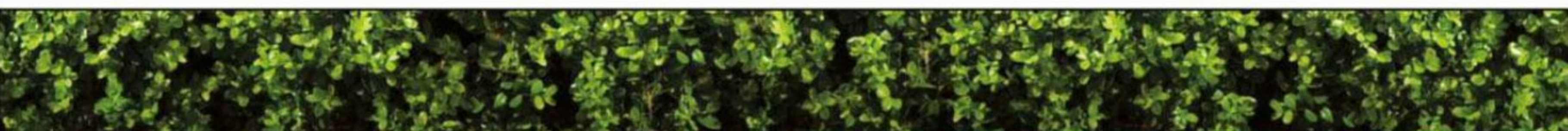
PART	SIZE	NO.
<b>Treated pine</b>		
Posts	2700 x 90 x 90	4
Rails	760 x 70 x 35	6
Beams	1850 x 140 x 45	4
Vertical slats	1490 x 45 x 20	10
Horizontal slats	650 x 45 x 20	16
Battens	1090 x 40 x 45	14
Plugs	70 x 70 x 35	12

## FASTENERS

TYPE	USE
Treated pine screws, 75mm x 10g	Rails
Brad nails, 32mm	Lattice slats
Tech-shield cuphead bolts, M10 x 170mm	Beams
Galvanised twist nails, 65 x 3.15mm	Battens



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## Garden arch

This rough-sawn timber arch has just six parts and can be built in a day using a drill, circular saw and jigsaw.

Simple but versatile, it has many landscape uses, including as a gateway in a fence, an opening in a hedge or a frame for a paved walkway.

Made of treated pine, the posts are sunk in the ground using quick-set concrete and the timber is finished with a penetrating oil, to deepen the natural pine colour and protect it from weathering.

With the treated pine, fasteners, timber oil and concrete, the total cost for the project comes to about \$400.



Feast Watson Natural Wood Shield Oil, \$139 for 4L. [feastwatson.co.nz](http://feastwatson.co.nz)



To add a landscape feature in a day, build a rustic timber arch.

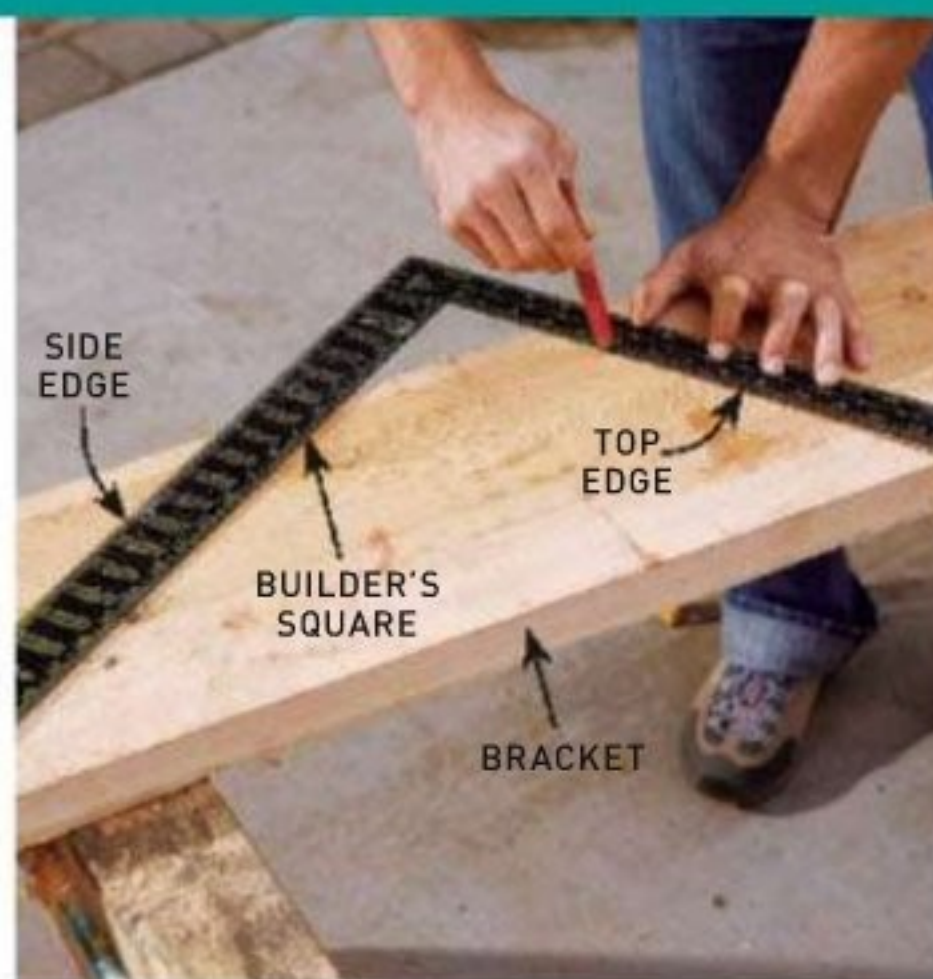
### Build the arch ▼



#### 1 Cut the notches

At the top of each treated pine post, make crosscuts for 190 x 45mm notches, using a circular saw set to full depth for the vertical cuts, then finishing with a handsaw.

**TIP** Use a circular saw to cut straight edges and a jigsaw for the curves.



#### 2 Mark up the top pieces

On the two headers, trace around a bucket with a 280mm diameter to mark the curved ends. Set out the top and side edges of the brackets using a builder's square, then tap a flathead nail into a sawhorse for use as a pivot point when drawing the curves.

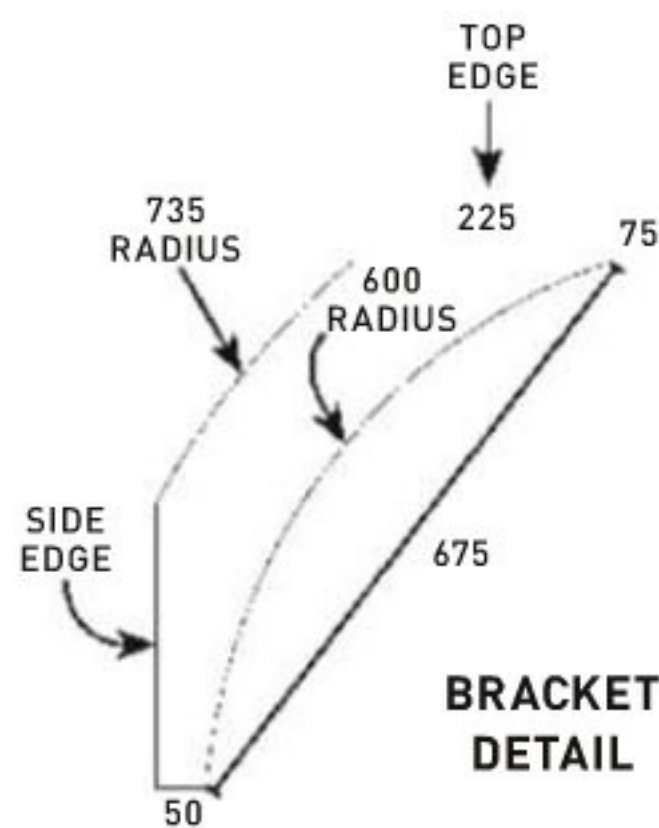


#### 3 Cut the brackets

Hook the end of a tape measure over the nail head and use it as a guide to draw the inner arc of each bracket with a 600mm radius. Mark a second arc 735mm from the nail, then cut out the brackets and curves on the headers with a jigsaw and circular saw.

## Garden arch

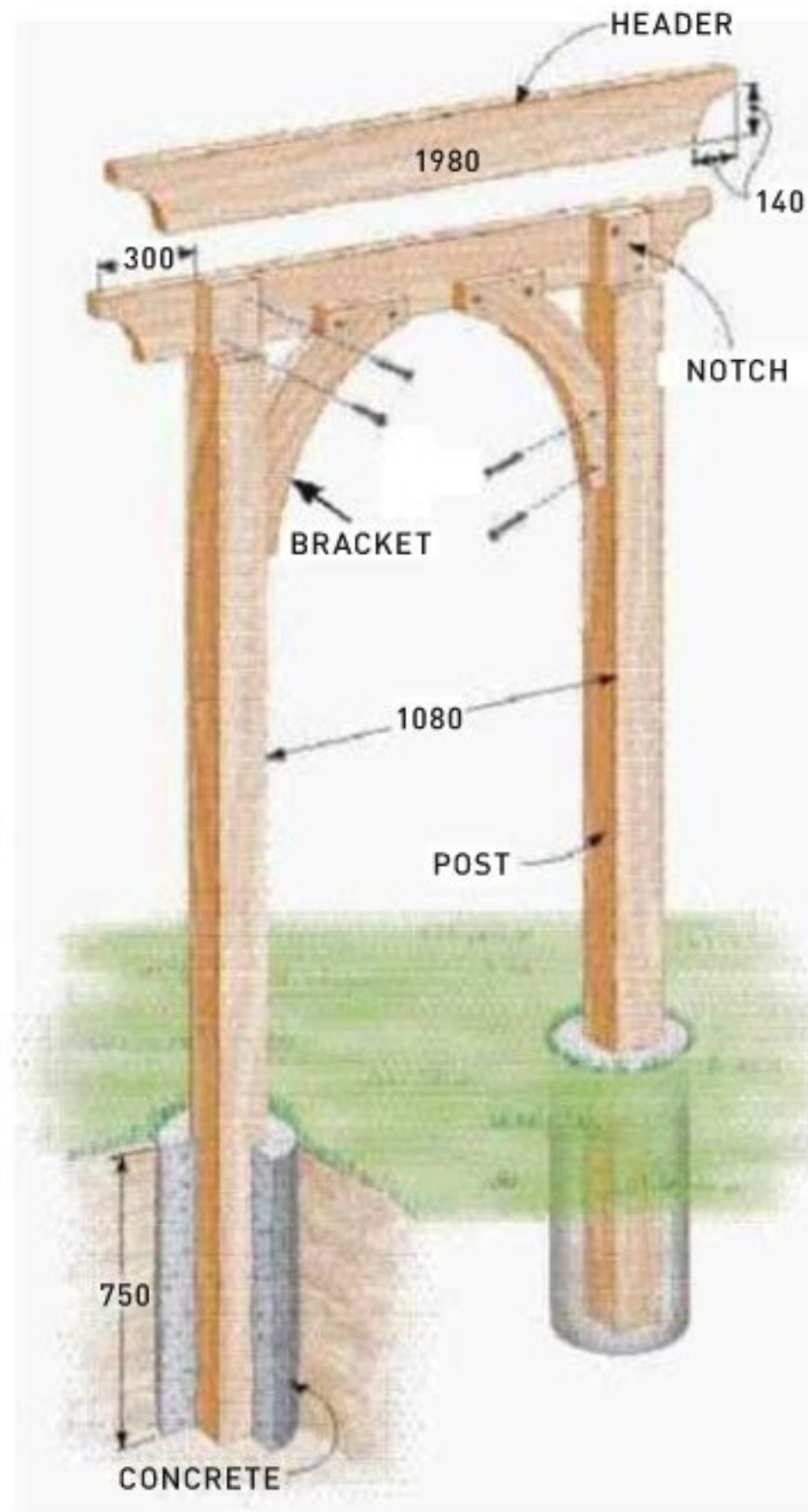
measurements in mm



### CUTTING LIST

PART	SIZE	NO.
Treated pine		
Posts	3000 x 150 x 150	2
Headers	1980 x 190 x 45	2
Brackets	800 x 240 x 45	2

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### 4 Assemble the arch

Drill 3.5mm pilot holes, then use 90mm x 14g screws to secure the posts to a header 300mm from the ends. Attach the brackets to the header with 75mm x 14g screws and to the posts using 90mm screws. Secure the second header with 90mm screws.

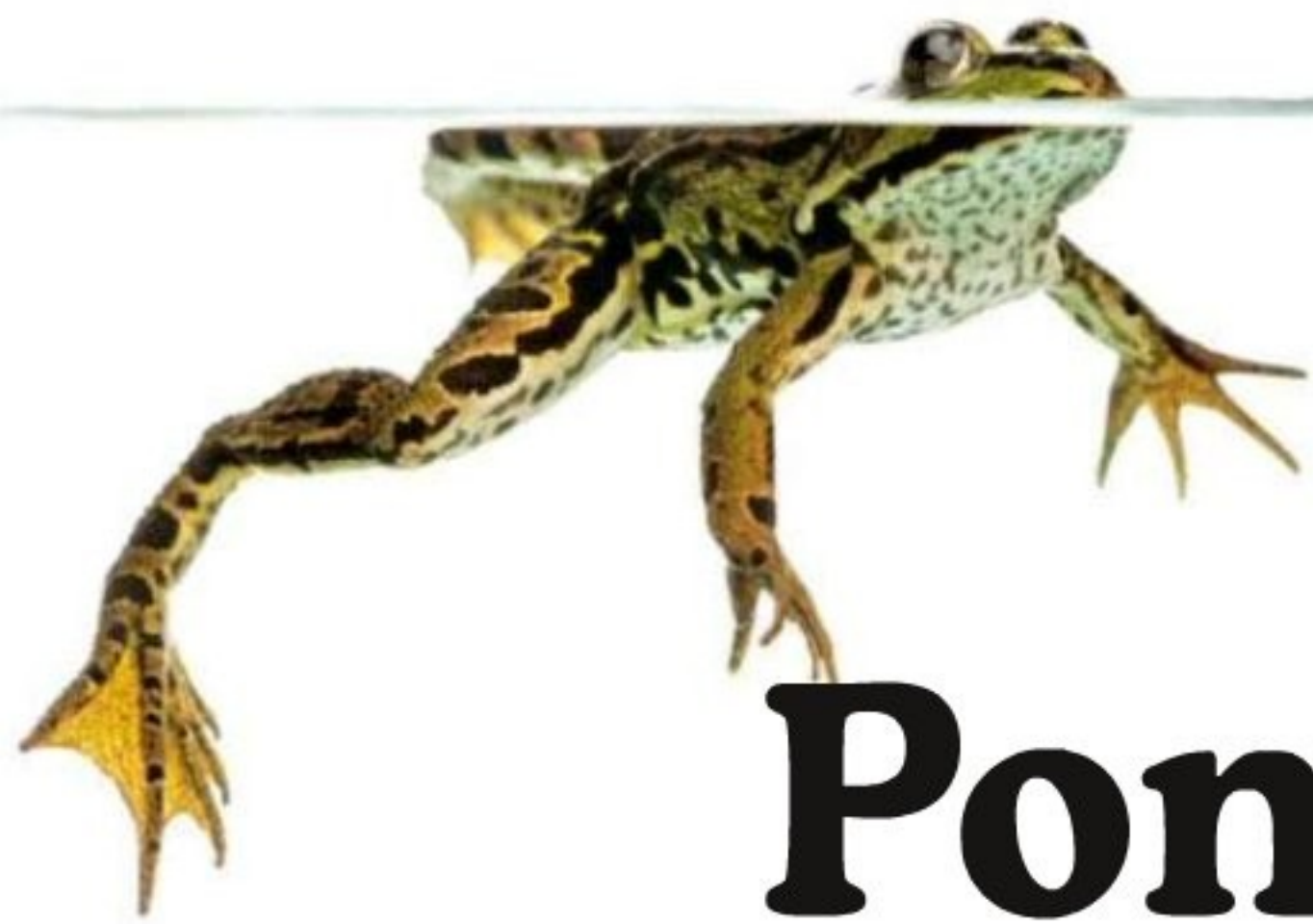


### 5 Raise the arch

Secure a 90 x 38mm spacer 750mm from the base of the posts. Dig two 250mm holes to 750mm deep, then plumb the posts using a spirit level and brace in position, securing with pegs. Pour in quick-set concrete, removing the spacer and braces when it is cured.

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# Pond in a pot

Make an eye-catching water feature complete with a mini fountain in an afternoon

WORDS AND PICTURES ADAM WOODHAMS

**W**ater features are on the garden wishlist for most homes, but what do you do when you only have a small space or you need something portable?

The simple answer is to turn a pot into a pond. Using readily available supplies, you can convert virtually any pot or container into a fabulous mini fountain.

The greatest advantage of this type of water feature is that you can match the look of it to any style of landscape just by selecting a pot that suits.

You'll find the hardest part of this project is waiting for the paint to dry.

All you need is a pot, pump, sealant and waterproof putty, then simply seal the pot, fill it with water, add the pump and switch it on.

We created a unique fountainhead by adapting an old sandstone grinding wheel and added a pond light for extra atmosphere at night-time. >



**Nelson 12V Superbright LED Pond Light, \$24. [hpmlegrand.co.nz](http://hpmlegrand.co.nz)**

## Preparing the pot

Thoroughly clean the interior of the pot, following the surface preparation instructions on the tin of waterproofing paint, then seal any drainage holes with putty.



**1 SCRUB THE POT** using a suitable outdoor cleaner and a stiff-bristled brush or broom. Rinse thoroughly, then leave to dry completely.

**TIP** We used 30 Seconds Outdoor Cleaner to wash the pot interior.



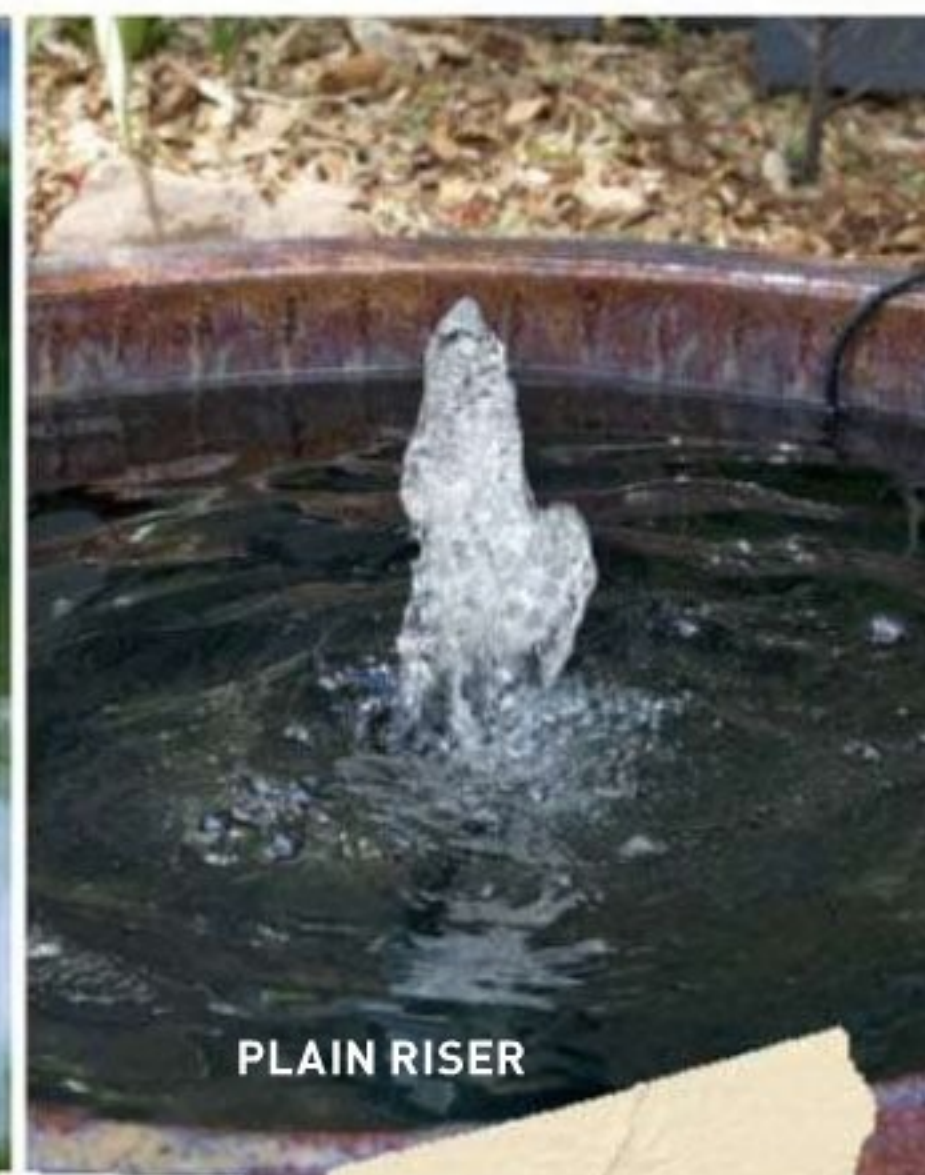
**2 SEAL THE DRAINAGE HOLES** with epoxy putty by kneading a small piece until blended to a consistent colour. Push the putty firmly into the drainage holes, leaving an overlap on the inside of the pot. Leave it to cure.



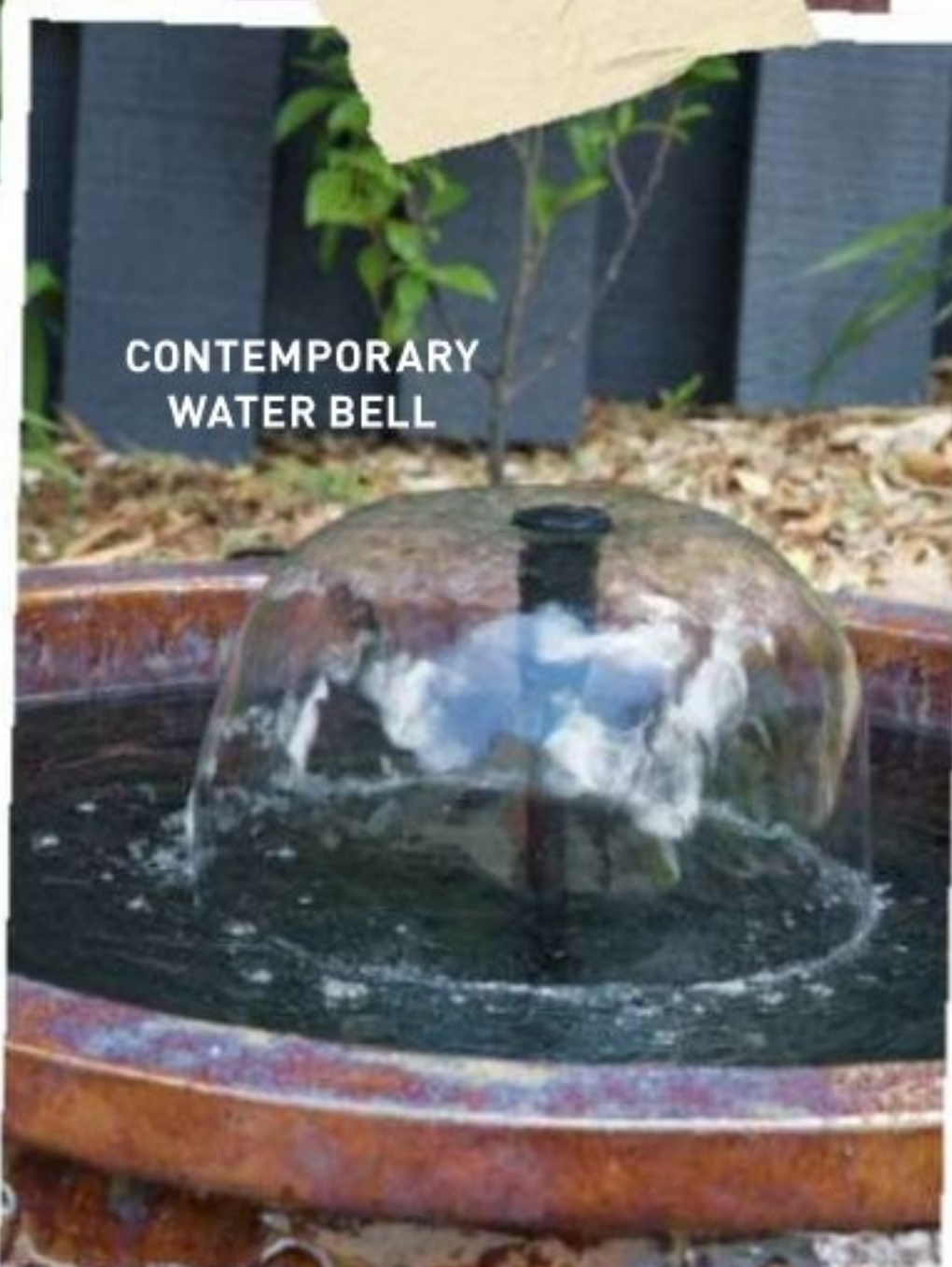
**3 APPLY WATERPROOFING PAINT** to the interior with a roller, allowing it to cure between coats. Position the pot in its final location and check for level from side to side, then back to front using a spirit level.



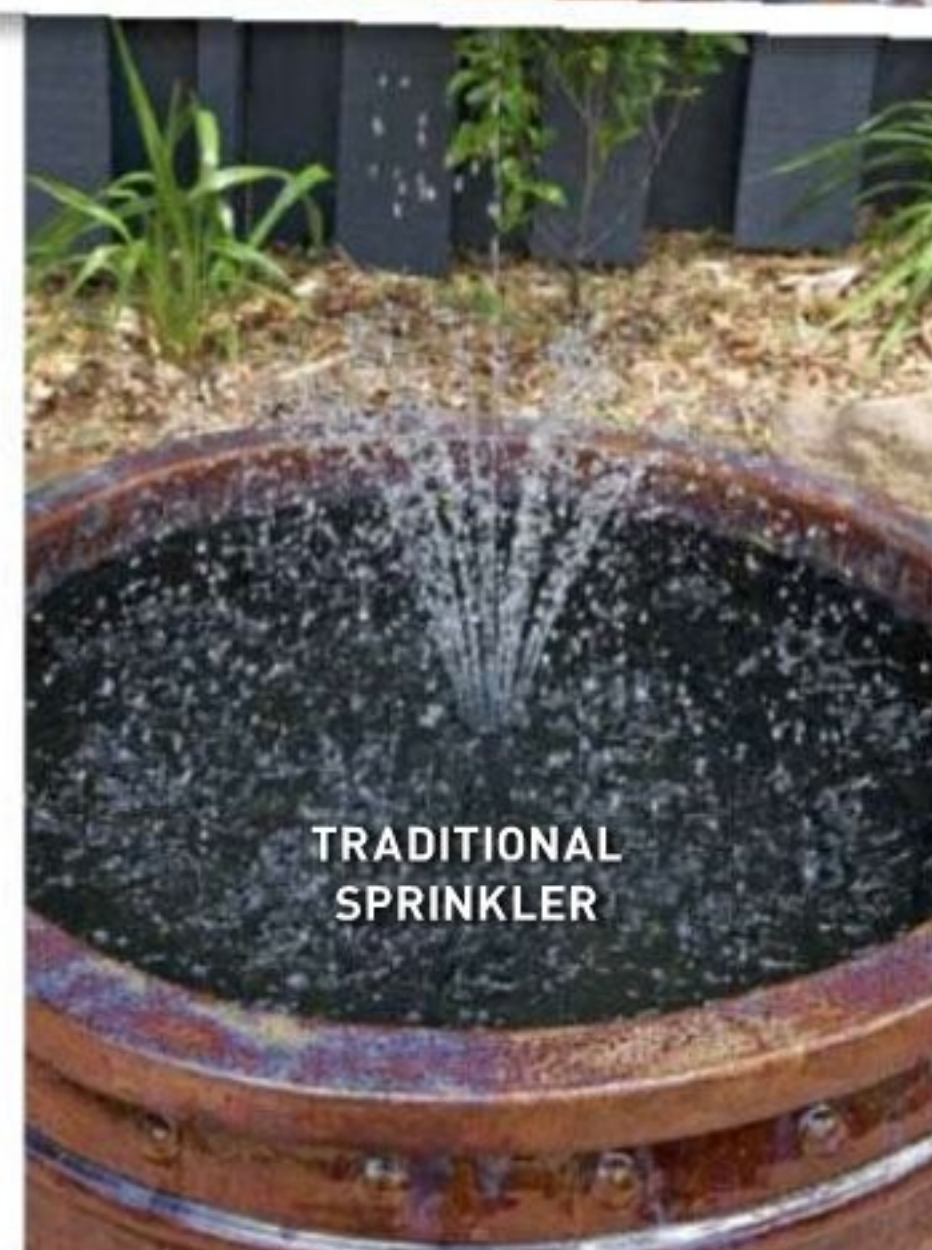
A large cauldron pot was used for this pond, but almost any shape or size will work well.



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### Select the pump

When it comes to pumps, the key is to get one that can push an appropriate volume of water to the required height.

This is expressed as the volume flow rate at the height of the output above the water level of the pond.

The volume of water flowing decreases with the height of the output. Check the pump packaging, as it should have a graph showing the pressure drop-off with height, to help you to select the right pump.

Position the pump in the pot and decide on the fitting needed for the output or fountainhead. It comes with

a variety of fittings, but extra riser pipe may be required for a deep pot.

You can decide on the output or fountainhead after the pot has been filled, allowing you to compare the different styles.

Instead of choosing a pump that will run flat out to meet demand, opt for one with a slightly higher capacity than needed, adding an in-line tap to adjust the flow rate.



**Hozelock 33W Cascade Pond Pump, about \$171. [horticom.co.nz](http://horticom.co.nz)**

### Checking the weight

Where you locate your finished pond requires careful consideration, not only in terms of aesthetics but also due to its overall weight.

To work this out, add together the weight of the pot, pump and water, plus any extras such as a waterspout.

One litre of water weighs 1kg and there are 1000L in a cubic metre. Work out the



volume by multiplying depth by height by width, taking 15-20% off the total if the pot is very curved.

Convert the cubic volume to litres. So if the volume is 0.125m<sup>3</sup> that equates to 125L or 125kg.

Don't position a filled pot that weighs more than 100kg on the outside edge of any cantilevered balcony or on a timber deck unless it's directly above a bearer and a pier or post.

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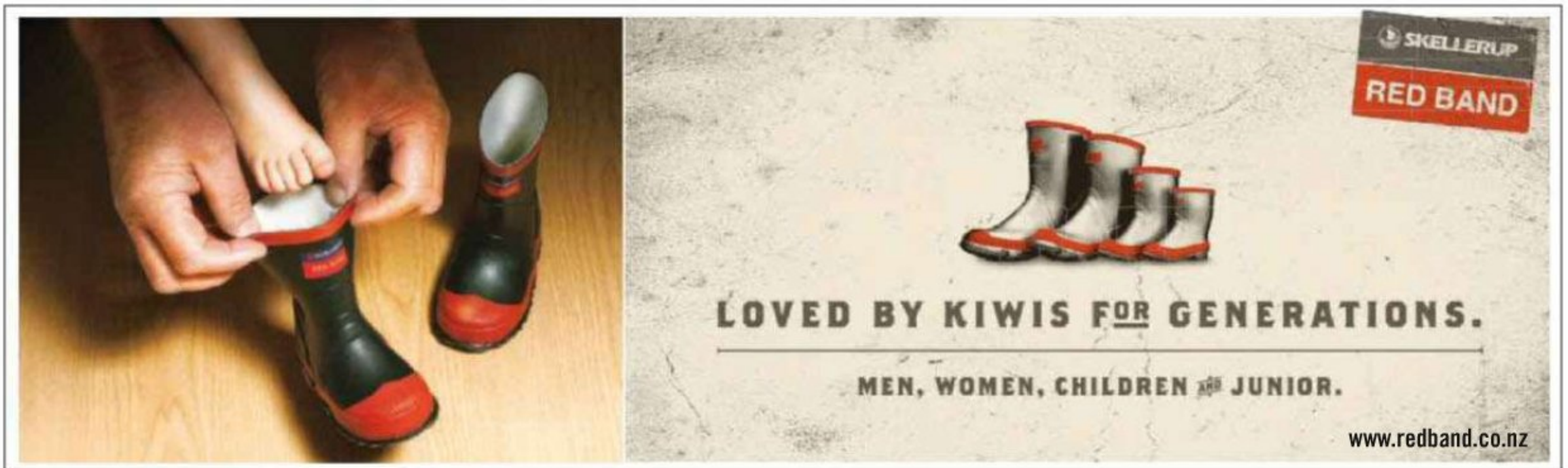
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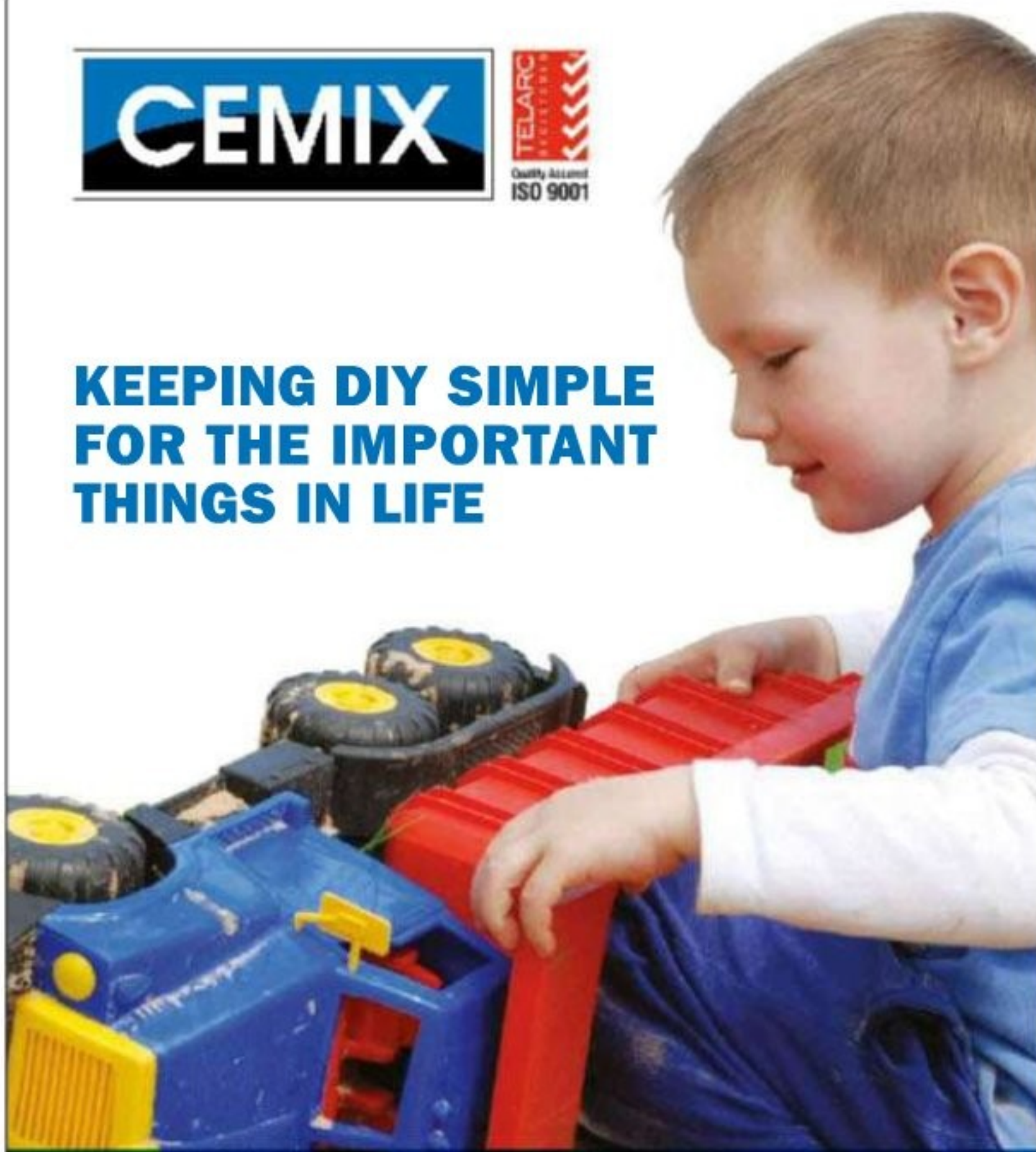
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BRIAN,  
TEAM MEMBER

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## Did you know?

Smokin' Ed's 'Carolina Reaper' chilli holds the Guinness World Record title for the hottest chilli in the world. Grown and harvested by Ed Currie and the Puckerbutt Pepper Company in the USA, it rates 1,569,300 on the Scoville Scale. This could be too hot for even the most ardent chilli lover!

If you find yourself with a fiery mouthful of chilli, the most effective remedy is yoghurt or milk, especially when combined with cucumber as in raita, the Indian condiment.

Don't reach for cold water or beer, as they can actually increase the heat.



# Some like it hot

Easy to grow, good for you and boasting a multitude of culinary uses, chillies are a great addition to your diet

WORDS CHERYL MADDOCKS

**T**hey bring tears to your eyes, make your nose run and burn your mouth, but chillies are still loved by millions of people worldwide.

Chillies belong to the *Solanaceae* or nightshade family, which also includes potatoes, tomatoes and eggplants. Native to South America, they have been part of our diet for centuries.

About 6000BC, the inhabitants of Brazil and Peru began eating wild chillies, known as aji. Traces from this period have been found in Peruvian burial sites, so they were cherished enough to be carried into the afterlife.

They're good for your health, too. As well as being high in vitamin C, eating them in a meal helps control insulin levels, according to university research.

Regular consumption of chillies is also reputed to be beneficial for inflammatory diseases, and they have long been used in herbal medicine to stimulate the circulatory and digestive systems.



## Handle with care

A chemical in chillies, called capsaicin, gives them their heat and therapeutic value. And the more a chilli contains, the hotter it will be.

Chillies are rated on a heat scale known as the Scoville Scale, which is divided into heat units. It is based on the dilution of ground chillies in sugar water to measure their pungency.

Most of the capsaicin is contained in the seeds and white ribs inside the fruit. Removing both from the chilli will reduce the heat.

Capsaicin levels in chillies are affected by the climate and environment, as well as by the cultivar. Cool weather and too much nitrogen in the soil can slow the production of capsaicin.

**TIP** Wear gloves or wash your hands after handling chillies, and don't rub your eyes or other sensitive areas. ➤

**Grow chillies in pots for eating and for decoration.**



## Storing chillies

Chillies can be dried and stored or frozen fresh, whole or chopped. **DRY** in the sun outdoors or on a windowsill, then cut in half lengthways and place on baking paper. Turn every day until dry.

Or thread the stalks on cotton and hang in a well-ventilated, dry spot for at least three weeks.

**STORE** chillies when dried in an airtight container for up to a year. **FREEZE** fresh chillies in freezer bags for about six months.



## Grow your own

Chillies come from the same wild species as the capsicum, and there are more than 200 varieties of these short-lived perennial plants. In many parts of the world they are known as hot peppers.

Chilli fruit follows white flowers and comes in lots of shapes and sizes. Depending on the variety, they can ripen from green to shades of yellow, orange, brown, purple or red. The more mature a chilli is, the hotter it will be.

These warm-season plants can be grown in tropical and subtropical climates all year round.

If you grow your own, you will be rewarded with a bountiful harvest.

The seeds can be sown from August to December in temperate areas and from September to mid-November only in cold climates. They are also available as seedlings from nurseries.

**SOW** seeds 6mm deep in punnets, gently pricking out the seedlings and

transferring them to 100mm pots, giving them a sunny position. Plant them in the garden in a sheltered spot in full sun when they are 150mm high.

The soil should be free-draining and enriched with either compost, cow manure or Daltons Premium Extend Complete Fertiliser before planting.

**TIP** Chilli seeds can also be sown directly into garden beds.

**MULCH** around the plants using either lucerne hay or pea straw.

**FEED** when flowers appear with Yates Dynamic Lifter Plus Fruit Food.

Avoid fertilisers high in nitrogen, especially when the plants are young, so there is not too much leaf growth at the expense of fruit.

Decorative and edible, chillies will grow well in pots.

Use a premium potting mix, water regularly and give them periodic feeds of a soluble complete fertiliser.



**McGregor's Sow Simple Pepper Chilli Seed Mat, about \$4. [mcgregors.co.nz](http://mcgregors.co.nz)**

### Choose a variety ▼



**HOT**

**HABANERO** This chilli has small tangerine-coloured bell-shaped fruit.  
**BHUT JOLOKIA** The orange-red fruit is one of the hottest in the world.  
**THAI** The fruit of this variety change colour through shades of green, cream, purple and red.  
**RED SCORPION** Fruit can be eaten at immature green stage or when red.



**MEDIUM**

**JALAPENO** This variety has green medium-sized fruit that mature from purple-black to red.  
**ANCHO ST LUIS** The heart-shaped fruit is blackish-green turning to red.  
**ANAHEIM** This variety has thick-fleshed fruit that are ideal for stuffing.  
**SERRANO** Turning from green to red, the fruit of this chilli are thin-skinned.



**MILD**

**TAM JALAPENO MILD** Great for pickling with green to red fruit. Delicious flavour with a mild heat.  
**CACHUCHUA** A mild-tasting chilli with globe-shaped fruit that turns bright red when mature.  
**HUNGARIAN YELLOW WAX** The long fruit of this chilli change from green to yellow and light orange.



Grow your own chillies so you have a ready supply of spicy fruit to add to your meals.

## Chilli prawn and pea stir-fry

**PREPARATION TIME** 10 mins

**COOKING TIME** 6 mins

**SERVES** 4

### INGREDIENTS

25g fresh ginger  
 1 fresh red chilli  
 300g white cabbage  
 1 tablespoon oil or canola oil  
 1 teaspoon sesame oil  
 300g frozen peas  
 350g peeled cooked large prawns  
 4 tablespoons chopped fresh coriander

- 1 **PEEL** and finely grate the ginger. Chop the chilli into slivers and discard the seeds. Slice the cabbage into thin strips, about 3mm wide.
- 2 **HEAT** the oils in a large frying pan over high heat. Stir-fry the ginger and chilli for a few seconds, then add the peas. Stir-fry for 2 minutes or until they are completely thawed.
- 3 **ADD** the cabbage to the pan and stir-fry for 3 minutes. Add the prawns and cook for 1 minute to heat them through. Toss in the coriander, stir, then serve immediately.

### COOK'S TIPS

- **SELECT** the chillies according to how hot you want the dish to taste. The strength is usually stated on the packaging. Mild to medium are good with light ingredients, and starchy accompaniments, such as noodles and rice, will absorb the heat.
- **USE** ordinary or baby frozen peas in this recipe. Both work well, but baby peas are sweeter.
- **SWAP** the prawns for small fresh scallops, and use them whole or slice large ones.

# Take home healthy plants

Head to the nursery with the know-how to pick the healthiest plants and get your garden growing

WORDS AND PICTURES JECCA BLAKE

Spring is here and most of us are keen to get growing and pop a few plants in the ground.

But it's disappointing to bring home an armful of pot plants only to have them curl up and die a week after getting them in the ground.

The problem could have started at the nursery. Most potted plants are treated with care, but some may get overlooked and become unhealthy.

## Big isn't best

It's tempting to buy the tallest or biggest plant, but equating size with potential can be a waste of money.

The same applies to those bursting with blooms. A better option is to go for tight, compact growth with buds and avoid any plants in fruit.

Look for a weed-free, sturdy young plant with lots of new shoots and buds, and a healthy root system that will flourish.

Don't buy one that's twice the size now, as it may end up spare, feeble and gaunt. If you give a sturdy young plant a good start, it will soon thrive.

This advice applies to climbers as well, because while the plant with the longest stems could end up producing the most vigorous growth, it equally may not. >



Fiskars Aluminium Trowel, \$9. [fiskars.co.nz](http://fiskars.co.nz)



Look for hardy plants that are weed-free.

VINE WEEVIL LARVAE

## Avoiding pests and diseases

When buying from a nursery or garden centre, it's unlikely you will encounter many plant problems.

At other outlets, unless you check that a plant has a clean bill of health, you risk buying an ailing specimen and spreading pests and diseases around your garden.

To check for signs of pests, hold the plant up to the light and examine both sides of the leaves and the stems, particularly the new growth.

Black deposits on the leaves indicate fungi growing on the excreta of sap-sucking insects, so look for aphids. Discoloured leaves may be

due to nutrient deficiency or another disease.

The best way to test for vine weevils in the soil is to give the stem a gentle pull. If the roots are being eaten, the plant will easily come away from the soil.



PICTURE THINKSTOCK

Make sure your spring garden beds flourish by buying only the best plants.

## Planting in the garden

Growing from seed is rewarding, but for an instant seasonal garden bed, transplant potted specimens from the nursery.



**1 CHOOSE A SITE** with the right amount of light and type of soil for the plant. Dig a hole as deep as the pot and twice as wide using a trowel.



**2 WATER THE POTS** thoroughly to drench the mix with a watering can, then gently lift the plant, slightly breaking up the rootball by hand.



**3 ADD A SMALL HANDFUL** of slow-release fertiliser, then position the plant in the hole so the top of the rootball is level with the soil.



**4 BACKFILL THE HOLE** using the trowel, then firm down the soil using your fingers, but don't compact it. Water the plant in well.



## Checklist

When you're searching for the right plant for that empty spot in your garden, look for these signs and symptoms. If you have any concerns, talk to the nursery staff.

### Read the label

Only buy plants suited to the planting site. You don't want a bougainvillea against a south-facing wall, as it won't flower. And a clivia planted in full sun will get leaf burn and flower poorly.

**TIP** If the soil is too acidic, dig over the garden bed and add lime or dolomite to raise the pH level.

### Inspect the roots

Lift up the pot and look underneath it. If roots are growing through the drainage holes, the plant could be root-bound.

When it is planted out, the roots grow in circles around the rootball rather than spreading out.

This eventually leads to the death of the plant, as it can't take up enough air, water and nutrients.

If you buy a root-bound plant, tease out the roots before planting.

**TIP** Watch for problems such as root rot, caused by overwatering.

### Measure the soil level

If the plant is potted very high in the pot, the water will flow over the side when it is watered, resulting in dry, stressed plants. The soil should stop about 25mm below the pot's edge.

### Look for growth

If an established plant shows poor growth there's a good reason for it, so make sure it isn't stunted.

It may come from weak stock, so it will probably never amount to much, or it may have been badly neglected.



The fact that it has been well watered on the day you see it doesn't mean it hadn't gone without a drink for days beforehand, or that it hadn't been lying on its side in a shady corner.

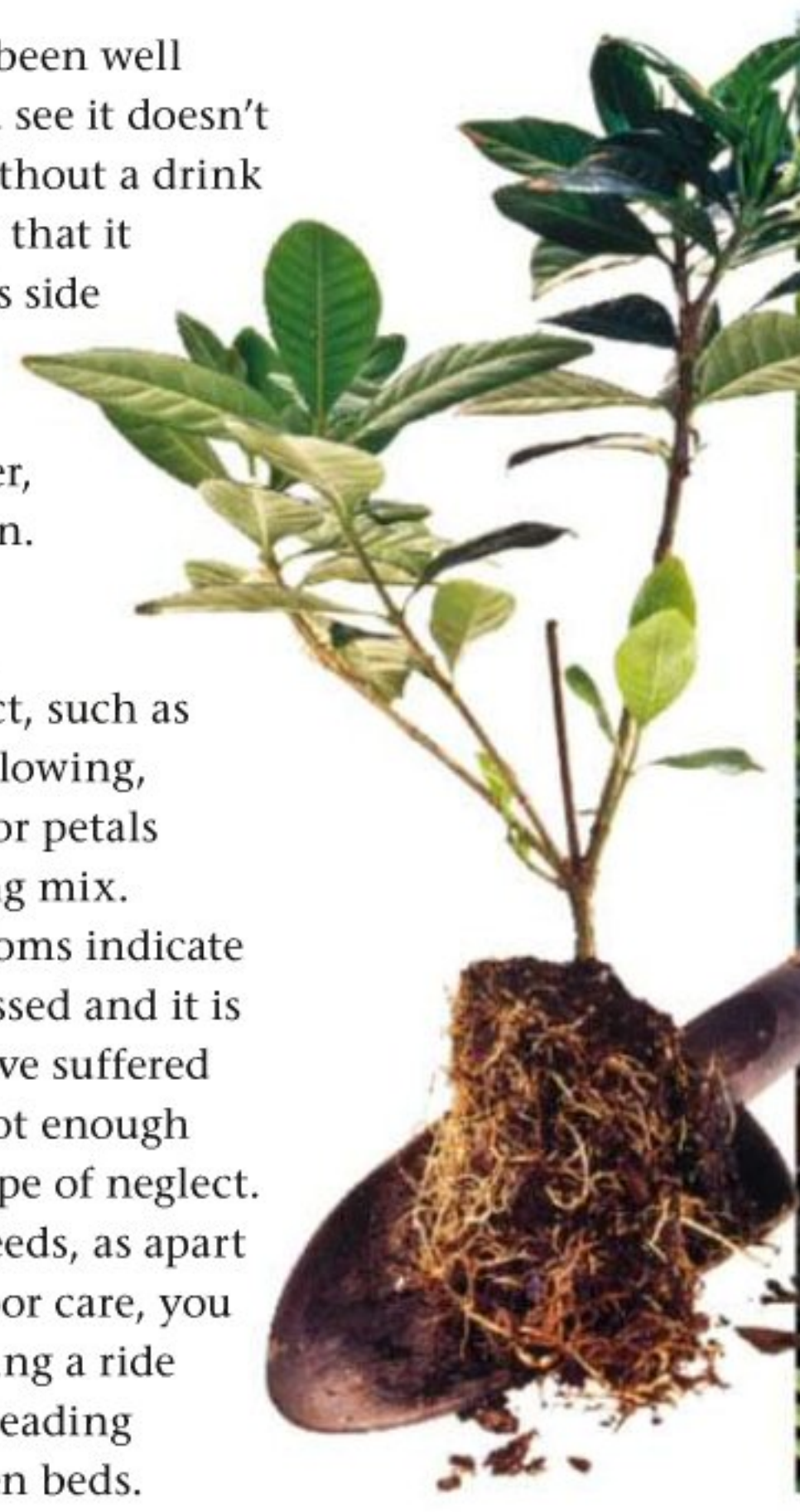
Don't buy until you've found a healthier, more vigorous specimen.

**Do a health check**

Look for signs of neglect, such as green foliage that is yellowing, leaves with brittle tips or petals collecting in the potting mix.

Any of these symptoms indicate the plant has been stressed and it is best avoided. It may have suffered from too little water, not enough nutrition or another type of neglect.

Also look out for weeds, as apart from being a sign of poor care, you don't want them catching a ride home with you and spreading to other pots and garden beds.



To avoid a costly mistake, look for lots of healthy buds, not stem growth.

PICTURE (NEAR RIGHT) GETTY IMAGES



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# Fun plants for kids

Show junior green thumbs how easy it is to grow a tree from a seed, pip or cutting

**T**he best way to get kids into gardening is to go for fast results and maximum enjoyment.

It's easy to grow a mini pineapple, date or lemon tree in a pot indoors, but don't expect too much in the way of fruit from your new house plants.

Growing from a seed, pip, root or top using grocery items or leftovers is simple. The seedlings usually emerge in just weeks but fruit can take years.

A great way to teach budding gardeners, it's also rewarding and a top way to create lots of free plants.

## **Sprout tops and roots**

Try growing pieces of carrot top, ginger root or a sweet potato tuber from the supermarket.

The leafy part of a pineapple can be sprouted into a plant, as well as beetroot and parsnip tops.

**CARROT** Cut off a carrot top just below where the leaves grow.

Sit it in a shallow saucer of water or push it gently into the surface of a small pot of damp potting mix.

Ferny leaves will soon appear, and eventually small white flowers.

**GINGER** Fill a seed tray with potting mix and push in a piece of fresh ginger root, making sure the knobby eyes are facing up. Half-cover the root with moist mix and leave in a warm spot.

It will soon start to produce shoots and roots, but for the ginger plant to thrive and flower, it will need high temperatures and humidity.

**SWEET POTATO** Buy a sweet potato tuber and bury it in a grow bag or a tub filled with potting mix.

Keep the bag or tub indoors in a warm, well-lit position, such as on



Sweet potatoes and pineapples will sprout on a sunny windowsill.

PICTURE (TOP RIGHT) THINKSTOCK

a windowsill. The sweet potato will gradually produce shoots and roots.

Earth up the shoots as they develop and when the stems start to wilt, dig up the plant and harvest the sweet potatoes buried in the mix.

**PINEAPPLE** Choose a whole fresh pineapple that has a medium-sized, healthy-looking green top.

Cut off the top using a sharp knife, then strip off the small basal leaves to reveal a clear stump of about 25mm. Leave the stump to dry until roots develop around the base.

Rub off any dead tissue and leaves, then gently push the stump into a small pot filled with an open, free-draining potting mix.

Position the pot in a sunny spot with temperatures of at least 18°C.

New foliage will develop through the top. As the plant grows, replant it in a larger container and within a few years, it should produce a baby pineapple from a central shoot. ➤

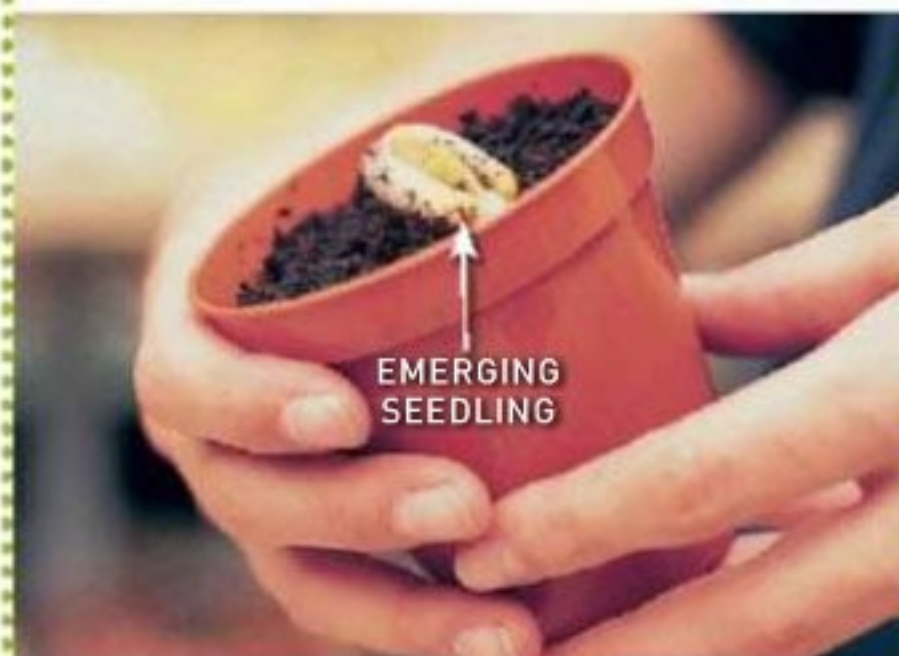


## Planting peanuts

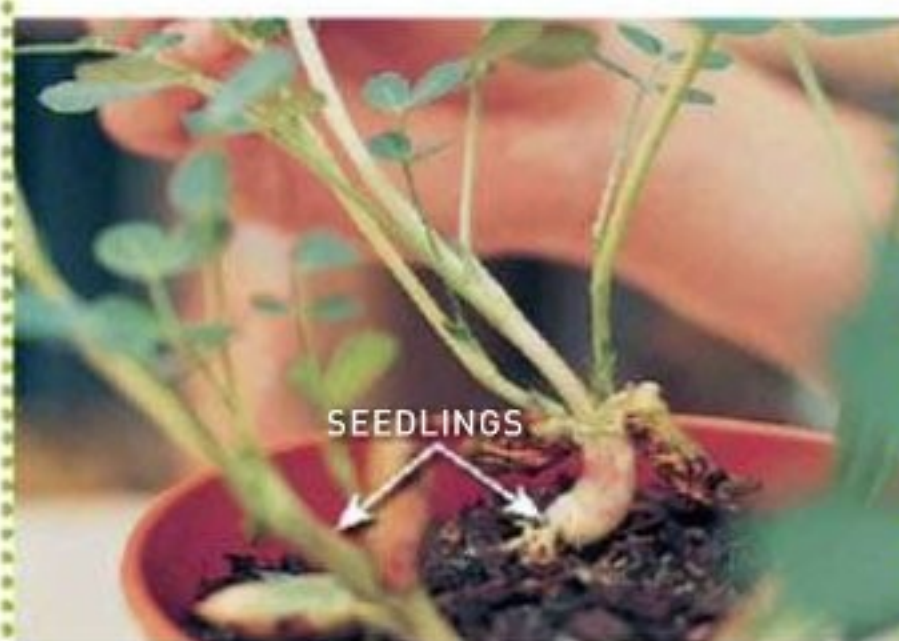
Use shelled, raw nuts, as salted or roasted ones won't germinate.



**1 PUSH THE NUTS** 25mm deep into a pot of moist seed-raising mix. Seal the pot in a polythene bag and leave in a dark place for one to two weeks to germinate.



**2 REMOVE THE BAG** and position in a well-lit spot with at least 75% humidity and a temperature of 20-30°C. Water well and mist daily to maintain humidity.



**3 WHEN THE SEEDLINGS** are 150mm tall, transplant each one to a 300mm pot. Reduce the humidity levels while the plants are flowering to aid pollination.



Get the kids to save their apple pips and pot them up for gardening fun.

### Pips and seeds

Seeds from store-bought vegies and fruit, such as tomatoes, capsicums, eggplants and melons, will germinate easily on a sunny windowsill.

You can also try growing seeds from apples, citrus and more exotic fruits you've just eaten.

Any fruit from your seedling tree will be different to the original fruit, but the results are often interesting.

The exceptions are nectarines and peaches. They can produce true to the original fruit on a tree grown from a stone and trained against a sunny wall.

**TEMPERATE FRUIT TREES** For apple, pear, plum, cherry or peach trees, plant three pips or stones into seed-raising mix in a small pot.

Seal the pot in a polythene bag, put it in the fridge for a few weeks to speed up germination, then position it in a cool, light spot indoors, keeping the potting mix moist.

Separate the seedlings once they are big enough to handle and plant them individually in larger pots.

Water regularly and feed during the growing season with a liquid high-potash fertiliser.

**CITRUS TREES** Some of the prettiest plants can be raised from the pips of oranges, lemons and grapefruit.

Citrus plants eventually form bushy shrubs and produce flowers and then edible fruit, but it may taste sour.

If the plants become large, prune them to a manageable size, although this will affect fruit production.

**TROPICAL TREES** The stones of a few exotic fruits like avocados and dates develop into interesting house plants.

Date palms can be enjoyed indoors for a few years and the seedling tree of an avocado plant grows tall and looks like a rubber plant.

An avocado grown from seed may mature fully and produce fruit if it is grown in a heated conservatory.

Remove an avocado stone and cut 10mm off the pointed tip.

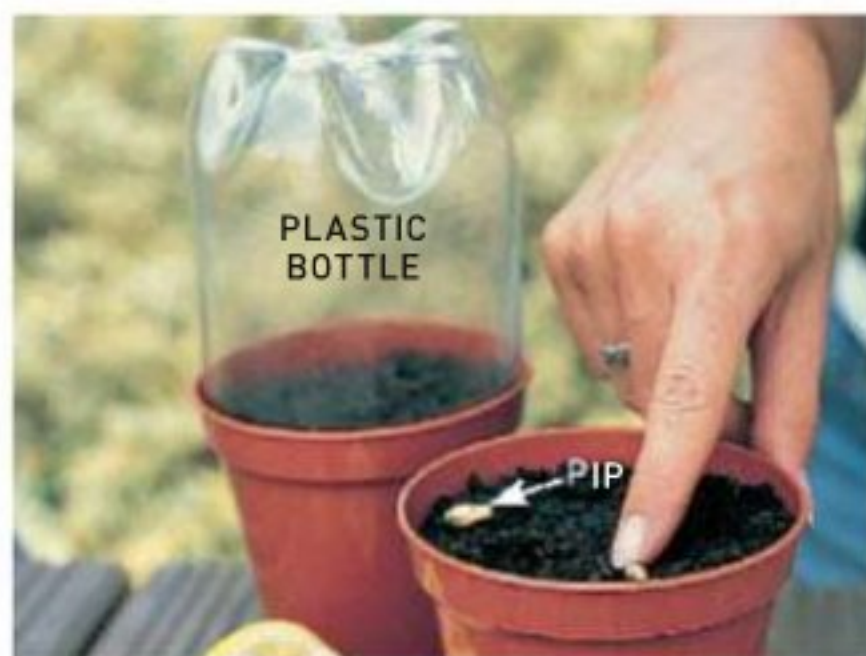
Push the stone into potting mix with the cut tip just showing. Add gravel to the pot to improve drainage and keep the soil moist, not wet.

**TIP** For a bushier shape, pinch out the growing tip of the seedling.



## Growing a lemon tree

Citrus pips germinate easily at any time, but they will produce better plants if sown in spring or early summer. **TIP** Feed lemon trees in spring and summer with a citrus plant food.



**1 PLANT SIX PIPS** about 10mm deep and spaced evenly in a small pot of seed-raising mix, then water well. Cover the mix with the base of a clear plastic bottle.



**2 SEPARATE THE SEEDLINGS** when they're big enough to handle. They should appear after about a month. Transplant them into individual small pots filled with lime-free potting mix.



**3 POSITION THE POTS** in a cool spot in bright but indirect light. As the plants grow, replant them into larger pots. Pinch-prune for a bushy shape or trim to size in late winter.

## Sow a date stone ▼

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**1 SOAK THE STONES** in water for 48 hours, then plant vertically in a pot filled with potting mix. Cover with a polythene bag, then leave the pot in a warm cupboard.

**2 UNCOVER THE POT** as soon as the seeds sprout. Position in a sunny spot and repot the shoots when 100mm tall in individual pots in a peat-based mix. Don't overwater.

PICTURE (MAIN) THINKSTOCK

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## 5

ways to enrich  
garden soil**Add compost**

A well-rounded source of goodness, compost allows water to penetrate the soil. It provides slow-release nutrients, attracts worms and encourages a healthy root system. Best of all, you can make it from kitchen scraps.

**Use bark**

These mulches take longer to break down, so they don't need applying as often. They shade the soil, help retain moisture, repel weeds and look decorative, but don't add many nutrients to the plants.

**Spread grass**

Grass clippings add nutrients as they decompose. They also provide shade, keeping roots cool and reducing water loss in hot weather. Mix them with leaf litter or dig into the soil to avoid them forming a mat that will repel water.

**Use manure**

Cow manure improves soil micro-organisms and chicken manure, which is high in nitrogen and phosphorus, is great for the lawn and vegie patch.  
**TIP** Don't use manure from carnivores, such as dogs and cats.

**Lay straw**

Lucerne hay and pea straw strengthen the soil, so they're highly recommended. They also break down fairly quickly, which gives the soil a quick nutrient injection, and can be dug in to speed up the process.



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The goal of this App is to help you to know what chemicals you require, and in what amounts, so that you can keep your pool looking great and safe to swim in.

The App works hand in hand with the Aquachek test strips sold in store, and uses the results they give you to guide you through the step by step process. It also has very handy pages that explain the different types of pool chemicals and why you may use them, what to do to fix a green or cloudy pool, and answers to other common questions.

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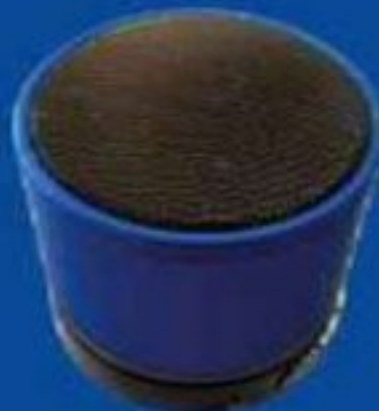
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