

## DIY plans for homeowners over Easter weekend

Tuesday, 07 Apr 2009 18:08

By Sarah Garrod

As Easter weekend approaches, many of us are considering a spot of DIY during our four work-free days, according to researchers.

Insurance brokers, price comparison sites and DIY retailers have all said the Easter weekend is a key time for home improvement, with homeowners using the time to make long-awaited changes to their property.

While [moneysupermarket.com](http://moneysupermarket.com) have said 43 per cent of people cannot afford to pay for improvements so will be Doing it Themselves, insurers AXA have said DIY accidents will peak on Saturday, with paint spillages topping the list of mishaps.

With Easter being a traditional DIY holiday for many, the recession is tempting more homeowners into taking on the work for themselves, and are using the time off over Easter to save some money and get the job done; rather than employing a professional tradesman.

But a number of home insurers have warned the ambitious DIYer to know their own limits, and to check their policy before they take on anything too drastic. According to AXA, this Saturday (mid-morning), will see the peak of the DIY weekend, with a quarter of the estimated 17 million DIYers brushing the dust from their hammers and starting their work then.

However, AXA warn one in five have had accidents over the past Easter weekends, with over 40 per cent of those spilling paint. With the average cost of a DIY accident standing at around £900, the company is warning you check your home insurance policy before you start.

Nick Kidd, head of household at AXA says: "We're a nation of enthusiastic DIYers, but people need to be careful. As well as all the other preparation that's essential for a good DIY job, it's worth checking out whether you've got suitable insurance in place."

Yorkshire Bank have also noted some 71 per cent of Brits are planning some DIY over the long weekend, with 61 per cent being "prudent" and taking on the work themselves.

Gary Lumby, Yorkshire Bank's head of retail, says: "Easter is the start of the DIY season as people start to repair and renovate their homes for the summer. However it would seem that in the current economic climate, it would seem many homeowners are planning on saving cash by putting in some hard graft themselves.

"Unfortunately, sometimes accidents do happen and that's why homeowners should ensure they have adequate insurance before starting any major renovations or DIY projects."

Moneysupermarket.com's regional data found those living in the north-west and Northern Ireland were feeling the effects of the recession most, with over 25 per cent saying they cannot afford to improve their homes. The research also found those in their thirties was hit hardest, with 33 per cent unable to afford to DIY.

Steve Sweeney, head of home insurance at [moneysupermarket.com](http://moneysupermarket.com) said: "As the recession continues to bite, people are looking for more ways to keep spending down. It is sad so many people cannot afford much needed improvements for their beloved homes.

"However, with others planning to roll up their sleeves and get on with the job themselves, or more enterprisingly, rope family or friends into helping them do up their house, it seems Easter could be a busy period."

But [DIY Doctor](http://DIY Doctor) says Easter is actually no busier than any other time of the year, with the majority of people interested in DIY because it will save them money. Quite surprisingly [DIY Doctor](http://DIY Doctor) found that six per cent of their users had taken up DIY because they didn't trust their local contractors.

Director of [DIY Doctor](http://DIY Doctor), Mike Edwards, says: "What we have found is that our users over Easter weekend tend to be more interested in larger projects that take time, such as decking.

"What we suggest is that you remember that DIY is building done by amateurs; and building regulations are law, you can't ignore them. Especially if you want to start knocking down walls, because you have a duty of care to the people who come into your home, and if you don't do it right, you're the one that's liable.

"I suggest before you start you have a look at websites and forums for advice and post your questions on them.

"One of the biggest questions we get asked is about light fittings, with people having no idea about how to fit them; and that's really dangerous. Every builder will tell you any job is only as good as the preparation you put into it. Asking advice is the key, and perhaps getting a builder in for an hour to check the work you want to do, before you do it."

Wilkinsons have found nine in ten of us are doubtful of our skills when it comes to DIY, so asked 'Handy Andy' Kane for his DIY tips.

Handy Andy says: "DIY is only as hard as you make it, and you don't always need an expert carpenter or interior decorator to do a good job. The most important thing is to plan in advance and make sure you have the right tools for the job.



"It's not about being an expert carpenter or painter, but about good project management."

Handy Andy offers the following advice for any enthusiastic Easter DIYers:

1. Plan what you need and how much. Nothing disrupts a project like running out of paint or realising your step ladder doesn't reach the tops of your walls. Make a list before you go to your local store to make sure you get everything you need.
2. Don't get disheartened if your project doesn't look how you imagined it half way through. Keep going and stick to your plan, and trust that when you put everything back together it will look good.
3. Be precise, and don't cut corners. A millimetre here and there may not sound like much, but when you are staring at a wonky shelf it can mean starting all over again.
4. Before you start any DIY or decorating, give the room you are working on a thorough clean. Wipe down walls and skirting boards to be painted, and clean and cover any furniture. This will make the final result look better, and minimise problems later on with flaking paint or uneven wallpaper.
5. Be safe. Make sure you wear gloves and protective goggles where necessary, and tie back long hair. If you start to get tired take a tea break, and don't rush jobs.

And [Buildstore](http://Buildstore), who specialise in the home building and renovating sector, have offered the following tips for any budding Easter builders:

**Polish up your skills:**

If you are going to undertake a home improvement or home building project, you could



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