

Great *(do-it-yourself)* Goofs



By The Family Handyman
magazine editors and readers





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Introduction

Truth is stranger than fiction, you need go no further than the pages of this book to verify that. Over the past 5 years, the readers of The Family Handyman magazine have sent us stories of their do-it-yourself mishaps—and they've sent them by the thousands. Whether it's cutting the dining room table in half while using it as a sawhorse, hanging wallpaper upside-down or tangoing with a gone-beserk floor sander our readers have bravely revealed their most embarrassing moments. Here's some of the greatest of 'em.

P.S.—Got your own do-it-yourself goof? Send it to Great Goofs, 2915 Commers Dr., #700, Eagan, MN 55121. If we use it in the magazine or book we'll pay you 10 bucks.

Cleared for takeoff

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As I reached the end of the countertop with my belt sander, the cord came unplugged. Then the phone rang. After answering it, I plugged the cord back in and watched helplessly as the high-powered sander took off across the countertop and crashed through a large window. While on the phone, I'd forgotten about the switch I'd left locked in the "on" position.

— Dan Rouse



Autumn rain

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While winterizing our summer cabin, I couldn't find the hose to drain the water heater. I was in a hurry, so I rushed to the store and bought the cheapest hose I could find. I hooked it up to the heater, which was in the corner of a bedroom, opened the drain valve and left. An hour later, I returned home and found the bedroom and kitchen floors flooded. It turns out that in my haste I had bought a perforated soaker hose. Next time, I'll look at more than the price tag.

— Joseph A. Breen





Ladder launch

After a near hit by Hurricane Floyd, I decided to trim the deadwood from our live oak tree. One particular 15-ft. limb was just within reach of my extension ladder, so up I went. I decided to cut off about 8 ft. on my first cut. As that portion hit the ground, the remaining portion, on which my ladder rested, suddenly rose up, relieved of the weight of the end of the branch. My ladder was no longer “just within reach.” On my way to the ground (without injury, thank goodness), I knew I had just experienced Great Goof material!

— Howard Crech



Carpet backlash

When we decided to move the large TV in our rec room to another spot, I figured I could run the antenna wire through the basement and up through the floor directly beneath the set. I carefully measured from each end of the wall and then drilled up through the flooring. But I couldn't pull out the drill bit. Imagine my horror when I discovered that the drill bit had snagged one of the carpet threads and pulled it the entire length of the room, leaving a gap right down the middle. That was a tough one to live down.

— W. D. Watterson

Super Glue follies

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In the middle of a bathroom repair, I left a bottle of Super Glue uncapped while I answered the phone. My husband went into the bathroom and disrobed for a shower—but first, he sat on the commode. An inveterate bathroom reader of anything and everything, he picked up the glue bottle and started to read the label. A few minutes later, I heard this muffled cry for help. I immediately hung up the phone and went to investigate. My husband had somehow glued his chest to his thighs. I got him backed out of the bathroom, onto the bed and tried to pull his legs free from his chest. We couldn't get him unstuck! I decided he must be rushed to a hospital emergency room, but he refused to go there naked. I mean, how do you get pants on a naked man glued to himself? I brought in a plastic lawn bag to wrap him in, but he refused to go like that. Panic was setting in, so I called a nurse friend, who, after 20 minutes of uncontrollable laughter, suggested I dribble fingernail polish remover onto his chest and then work the polish remover into the glued area with cotton swabs. The technique worked, but to this day, any mention of Super Glue brings a look of indescribable terror to my husband's face.

— Connie Neuberg



Bonus fun warmer

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After living with reversed hot and cold faucets on our bathtub for years, I decided to fix them. As the tub has no plumbing access, I devised a plan that didn't require breaking into any walls. I would switch the hot and cold water lines to the bathroom in the basement where I had easy access. And I would then switch the lines under the vanity so the sink faucet still worked properly. Great plan. I completed the job in less than an hour. Later that day, my wife mentioned a vague warm sensation during her last visit to the bathroom. A quick investigation uncovered the reason—hot water in the toilet!

— Michael McGroary

Doing the wave

I recently remodeled my living room and had to install a new ceiling. Because of the cost and weight of drywall and my lack of experience, I decided to use 3/8-in. thick drywall instead of the 5/8-in. stuff my friends recommended. After mudding and prepping the seams, I finished the ceiling with a “wet” blown-on ceiling texture. Much to my surprise, before the plaster could dry, the drywall warped and created a roller coaster effect on the ceiling. So much for the thin-drywall shortcut!

— Tim Lee





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125 Ridiculously
Real, Stupid and Gut-
Splitting Tales of
Do-It-YOURSelf Woe

“And we thought only car owners did amazingly stupid things! Great Goofs is a tour through the fun house of hammer and nails misadventure.”

CLICK AND CLACK
THE MAZERINI BROTHERS

“Half the stories in this book are mistakes I’ve made myself, then tried to cover up. I applaud the brave (and feeble-minded) homeowners who dared bare their souls in this book”

BOB VILA

