



Be equipped for anything

Make sure you've got these versatile, problem-solving tools and products on hand

Kee your house stocked with the right equipment, and small tasks like hanging a picture, removing a stain and mending a hem will be a breeze. Review these three lists and jot down what you don't already have; then take a quick trip to a store such as Target or Wal-Mart, where you're sure to find what you're missing. You'll never again have to tear the house apart looking for stain remover when someone spills or a screw for your sunglasses when you sit on the frames.

By Arianne Cohen

Tackle minor maintenance tasks

Fix nagging household problems in an instant.



✓ **Felt pads:** Keep chairs from damaging your hardwood floors by sticking felt pads on the bottom of each leg.

✓ **Krazy Glue:** Fix cracks in plastic, metal or rubber with a multipurpose adhesive.

✓ **Goo Gone:** Remove anything gummy—like price tags, bumper stickers, gum or tape—from just about any surface.

✓ **Scotch Magic Tape:** Have at least one roll handy for present wrapping.

✓ **Batteries:** Buy batteries in bulk and make sure you have the sizes you need for baby monitors, smoke alarms and toys.

✓ **Afta:** Take care of greasy stains left by food, oil or even lipstick on clothing, upholstery or carpet with a hardworking stain remover like Afta.

✓ **Screen patch:** Don't replace the whole screen if there's a tear—patch it.

✓ **Twine:** Bundle paper recyclables and tie down tarp outside with the right twine. Keep both indoor and outdoor twine or rope on hand.

✓ **Packaging tape:** Stock up on it for everything from taping up boxes to putting together science projects.

✓ **WD-40:** Silence a squeaky hinge or make a lock turn more easily with a spray of WD-40.



Dispose of hazardous items

Safely get rid of the supplies you've used up and make room for the tools and products you really need.

⚠ Alkaline batteries (AA, AAA, C, D and 9-volt):
Toss these in the trash. Batteries made after 1994 don't contain mercury.

⚠ Nickel-cadmium rechargeable batteries:
Cadmium is toxic, so contact the local recycling center for a drop-off site.

⚠ Watch batteries:
Contact your local recycling center to find a drop-off site near you.

⚠ Lithium batteries (AA, C and 9-volt [used in cameras]):
Get rid of them on the hazardous-waste pick-up day in your town.

⚠ Aerosol cans:
Wear rubber gloves and spray the leftover product into a deep cardboard box in a well-ventilated area. Throw out the box. Remove the plastic lid and recycle the can.

⚠ Adhesives, glues and small amounts of paint:
Leave them open in an outdoor location away from kids and pets. Once they dry up, close and throw the containers in the trash.

⚠ Paint and toxic liquids:
Anything that contains toxins such as cadmium or chromium should be tightly packed and either discarded on a hazardous-waste pick-up day or brought to a hazardous-waste facility.

Reach for the right tools to make quick repairs

Keep these items in a drawer in the kitchen.

- ✓ **Box cutter:** Make breaking down boxes easy with a box cutter—get one that has a safety function to avoid accidental injuries.
- ✓ **Level:** Get your pictures in line with a mini level.
- ✓ **Extension cord:** Keep an extra extension cord around so your lamps and clocks can always be where you want them.
- ✓ **Flashlight:** Shed light on dark corners and even sore throats with a mini flashlight.
- ✓ **Hammer:** Don't waste time getting out the toolbox for a small job like hanging a mirror—keep a hammer in a more accessible spot.
- ✓ **Tape measure:** Accurately measure the dimensions of your rooms with a tape measure before you start any decorating or home-improvement project.
- ✓ **Screwdriver:** Purchase a multihead screwdriver—you'll always have the right tool for the job.
- ✓ **Letter opener:** Avoid paper cuts by using a letter opener on all your mail.

Avoid a fashion or personal-care faux pas

Find a spot near the front door where you can stash these items.

- ✓ **Needle and thread:** Keep needles plus black and white thread on hand so you can sew buttons back on right away and mend holes before they get worse.
- ✓ **Bug repellent:** Spray down the kids with bug repellent before they head out to play.
- ✓ **Safety pins:** Don't show off too much cleavage—secure low-cut necklines in place with a safety pin.
- ✓ **Lint roller:** Go over furniture with a lint roller to get rid of pet hair before company arrives.
- ✓ **Sunscreen:** Check the expiration dates and replenish the supply if needed.
- ✓ **Hem tape:** Try a no-sew technique for mending a hem—stick a length of hem tape to the garment and apply pressure.
- ✓ **Nail file:** Fix a broken nail fast—store files and clear polish in the kitchen and family room, too.
- ✓ **Eyeglass repair kit:** Avoid trips to a professional; purchase an inexpensive eyeglass repair kit.