

Hints *For* Homeowners

Taking On Home Renovations

(NAPSA)—Tackling a major home improvement project can seem like less of a chore if you follow a few tips.

First, if you plan to hire a little outside help, do some homework. Get estimates from a few contractors and make sure the company you hire is fully insured, bonded and can supply references.

If you're a DIYer, plan your project wisely. Start by listing materials that you'll need and give yourself a concrete time frame in which to complete the job. Next, take a tool inventory. If you're short on tools, you could save yourself a little cash by renting what you need, rather than buying it.

You can rent tools for a day, the weekend or as long as it takes to finish the project. For example, The Home Depot Tool Rental Center, which is located in more than 1,175 locations around the country, provides homeowners with up to 325 different types of tools to complete most any type of project. The center also provides hands-on training on most rental equipment, as well as a list of tips on most frequently rented tools.

Just remember that when operating rented equipment and tools, it's crucial to make sure all safety gear and equipment is properly worn, including recommended gloves, safety glasses and ear protection.

For more information, visit homedepot.com or call (800) 430-3376.

Ten Tips For Tiling Floors

Step 1: Measure area to determine how much tile you will need. To ensure that you have enough to finish the job, add on an additional 15 percent of tile.

Step 2: If laying tile on concrete or wood, ensure the surface is even or level by using a self-leveling compound.

Step 3: Use backerboard sheets when laying tiles over wood or uneven surfaces.

Step 4: Find your center point and snap chalk lines to create your perpendicular starting point.

Step 5: Spread adhesive by pressing the mortar into the backerboard or cement with a trowel at the appropriate angle. Comb it out into straight lines, holding a trowel at a 45-degree angle to the floor and pushing the trowel teeth into the floor.

Step 6: Lift the first tile and check the mortar on its back. Dry areas mean the mortar needs to be scraped and reapplied. Set the remaining tiles by butting edge against edge. Place spacers on ends so you can easily remove them.

Step 7: Cut tile as needed, using a tile cutter or tile saw.

Step 8: Mix the grout and spread it in sweeping arcs with a rubber grout float. Press the grout into joints, filling them completely. Remove the excess.

Step 9: Wipe the tiles with a damp sponge to remove excess residue and remove the haze immediately with a dry cloth.

Step 10: Damp cure the grout by misting it twice a day and apply tile and grout cleaner with a sponge.

Note: Tile cutters and tile saws can be rented at The Home Depot Tool Rental Centers.

