



Did you know you can find energy smart home improvement ideas online that can save you energy and money?

With online ENERGY Tools, you can:

- learn how and when your home uses energy,
- compare your usage to similar homes,
- identify where you are using the most energy, and
- get personalized recommendations to reduce your energy costs.

To access Energy Tools, go to idahopower.com/energyefficiency and click on the “tools” tab, then “ENERGY Tools.” Once there, you will need the latest copy of your Idaho Power bill to sign up to be an Account Manager, if you’re not already.

For detailed information on energy use in your home, complete the “Home Profile.” You will be prompted to answer a few questions.

In the “Savings Center” you can access common ways to save energy and specific tips based on the information you provide in your profile. You will also be able to see your historic electric usage information and how energy use in your home compares to similar homes and businesses. You can also learn about energy in the Energy Smart Library, an online source for information about energy topics and technologies.






In addition, a personalized ENERGY Tools graph displays a breakdown of your annual energy costs for major appliances. Click on “Detailed Analysis” to access in-depth profiles of various aspects of your

7 home, such as weatherization, heating, cooling, hot water, kitchen and lighting. In each of these areas, specific suggestions for energy efficiency improvements are provided. Many require little or no investment.

The “Energy Calculators” area provides additional information on costs to run equipment, such as small and large appliances, and gives you tips for making changes that save energy. Business customers also may use ENERGY Tools to understand how business equipment uses energy and affects electricity costs.

Final thoughts....

Winter is soon to be in full force. Have you....

-  Blown out your sprinklers, rolled up the hoses, and put away all the garden tools and hose end sprayers?
-  Lubricated and winterized all your outdoor power equipment? Protect stored fuel with Sta-Bil fuel additive.
-  Put away any patio furniture cushions or decorative items that could be damaged by snow and ice?
-  Checked the weather-strip around your doors? You should not be able to see any daylight around the door, but you should be able to open the door without extra pull force.
-  Cleaned the gutters for the last time? Verify that the downspouts are clear of clogs and that the extensions or splash blocks are ready for melting snow.

Check out www.joeprin.com Today!

The HOMEFIX Club!

**Issue #5
November 2009**

An Elite Club Open To Anyone Interested In Making Their Homes Better And Having More Fun Doing It

This Ad Was Posted to Craig's List Personals received from a friend.

"To the Guy Who Tried to Mug Me in Downtown Savannah night before last. (05-27-09, 1:43 AM EST)"

I was the guy wearing the black Burberry jacket that you demanded that I hand over, shortly after you pulled the knife on my girlfriend and me, threatening our lives. You also asked for my girlfriend's purse and earrings. I can only hope that you somehow come across this rather important message.

First, I'd like to apologize for your embarrassment when I drew my pistol after you took my Jacket. The evening was not that cold, and I was wearing the jacket for a reason. My girlfriend had just bought me that Kimber Model 1911 45 ACP pistol for my birthday, and we had picked up a shoulder holster for it that very evening.

Obviously you agree that it is a very Intimidating weapon when pointed at your head, wasn't it? And I know it probably wasn't fun walking back to wherever you'd come from bare footed since I made you leave your shoes, cell phone, and wallet with me. [That prevented you from calling or running to your buddies to come help mug us again].

After I called your mother, as you had her listed in your cell phone, I explained the entire episode of what you'd tried to do. Then I Went and filled up my gas tank as well as four other people's in the gas station on your credit card. The guy with the big motor home took 150 gallons and was extremely grateful!

I gave your shoes to a homeless guy outside Vinnie Van Go Go's, along with all the cash in your wallet. [That made his day!]. I then threw your wallet into the big pink "pimp mobile" that was parked at the curb, after I broke the windshield and side window and keyed the entire driver's side of the car.

Later, I called a bunch of phone sex numbers from your cell phone. MaBell just now shut down the line, although I only used the phone for a little over a day now, so what's going on with that? Earlier, I managed to get in two threatening phone calls to the

DA's office and one to the FBI, while mentioning President Obama as my possible target. The FBI guy seemed really intense and we had a nice long chat (I guess while he traced your number, etc).

In a way, perhaps I should apologize for not killing you, but I feel this type of retribution is a far more appropriate punishment for your threatened crime. I wish you well as you try to sort through some of these rather immediate pressing issues, and can only hope that you have the opportunity to reflect upon, and perhaps reconsider the career path you've chosen to pursue in life.

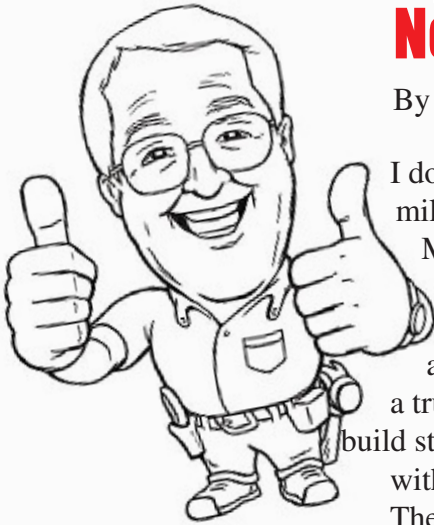
Remember, next time you might not be so lucky.
Have a good day!
Thoughtfully yours,
Alex



Available
Online
\$39.95

"Makes a great gift!" I am hearing stories of how this book is helping sons and daughters of some of the HomeFix listeners. Books have been given as gifts to help future home owners make the right choices. If you know of someone who could benefit from the information in "I Want A New House", place your orders now! Personal inscriptions available on request.

Order "I Want A New House" online
at www.joeprin.com



November Newspaper Column

By Joe Prin for the Eagle and Star Independent Newspapers

I don't know why I am so happy about this but my truck just turned 200,000 miles.

My truck is a tool. I didn't pick it out because it was maroon. I didn't pick it because it was a Ford. I picked my 1997 Ford F-150 off the used lot because it had only 30,000 miles on it, was an extra cab, it was very clean, and it had an 8 foot bed. An 8-foot bed! Big deal! Yeah, it was. I had a hard time finding a truck with a sort of back seat if you had too, with an 8-foot bed. I build stuff. I build stuff out of 4 x 8 sheets and I wanted something that could haul a 4 x 8 sheet, with the tailgate closed.

The sales guys on the other lots couldn't understand why I didn't want their trucks. Nice trucks, yes, with 6 and 7 foot beds. Worthless to me.

So here is my current dilemma. Other truck guys told me the transmission would blow up by 120K. The 4.6L engine is too small and would only make it to 160K. Hasn't happened. 200K Baby!

I have however put new heavier leaf springs on it as the original half tons were too squishy and I had to have the rear end rebuilt. But I bet if you had to yank a 3500 pound tool trailer around for 170,000 miles, your rear end would be worn out too.

Oh, and the brakes have always sucked. The other truck guys were right on that one. I just put in louder horns. So the dilemma? What to do with this "Clunker"?

I couldn't get anything for it on a trade. I have beat the body pretty good, lots of little dings and dents, and I think I washed it... When did it last rain? Not really, I do try to keep it clean. Banged up, but clean. And besides, I just put \$800 worth of 10 ply tires on it. That and a full tank and I doubled the value of it.

I did go out and look at the new F-150's. The last one was pretty good, I'll give them a chance to impress me again. But wait, when I flip down the back seat on the new ones, where's my metal tool platform? What happened to my second drivers side sun visor? And now the killer... What do you mean I can't get an 8' bed with that cab! What the heck do you use these trucks for without one? Build houses with 6' tall walls? Carrying half sheets of plywood from places trying to be real lumberyards?

Heck, it is a tool. When a tool breaks, you fix it. Those are not dings and dents taking away from it, they are adding to it. They show that this truck contributes to my life and income, not takes away from it. Each whack is a badge of honor where the truck did it's job for me. This truck is worth it. I'm gonna' drive it till it cant go any more. Then I'll fix it and drive it some more. It's not emotion, it is like my other favorite tools, it is comfortable and I know how it will perform. Oil every 3000. Maybe that was the secret. I'll let you know how the next 100k turns out. At this rate, should be about this time 2015.

**Read Past columns
from Joe as well as
get past issues of the
HomeFix Club Newsletter
at www.JoePrin.com !**

**HomeFix Club!
WINNERS!**

Congratulations to:

**Hal Broadhead, Jim Forrer, Dick Knight,
Hart Beal, Wayne Baures, Terry Martindale**

Prize pack winners from October! Do I have your mailing address? You could be next! -- Joe



FAILURE!

I ran into this deck problem a little while ago and thought I would pass this on so you do not have happen what took place here.

This deck had it's composite lumber walking surface boards butted up side by side tight. If you can tell in the picture, there are major puddles after even the smallest rain. The boards are not letting the water pass through the deck.

Also, to make things worse, this deck was built at ground level and because the top boards were

so tight together, moisture below the deck was not allowed to "breathe off" or ventilate out of the soil and the supporting structure, although redwood, has rotted and collapsed.

This deck is scheduled for a total tear out and rebuild. Original installed cost- \$8500. Removal and replacement cost- \$12,000. Following manufacturer recommendations as to proper spacing and gapping?-- Priceless.



You figure it out . I got a headache

Product Review

Smart Straps Retractable Ratchet Tie Downs

Have you ever done something for so long that you never even considered a better way of doing it? This was the epiphany that hit me as I first started playing with the Smart Straps Retractable Ratchet Tie Downs as I unloaded them out of the box. It is one of those forehead slappers. Duh! This is a much better way.

What I am talking about are the tie down straps you all probably have rattling around in a coffee can in the back of your pick up. If you are an over the top organizer like me, they are in 2 separate metal containers in my bed rail box. One for the straps, one for the ratchets.

Regardless of your storage method, the same problem plagues all of us. You have to untangle them every time you use them, feed an end through the ratchet, and then have to figure what to do with the extra footage of strap. My straps are 10 footers, but when I think about it, I usually only use about 5 feet of them. So, somebody did some good research at Smart Straps because the ones I tried out are 6'.

What makes these things so cool is that the strap is permanently attached to the ratchet. No more two parts to loose one. You release the ratchet, pull out the strap you need and tighten up the ratchet. When done, the strap rolls itself up on the spool! Incredible.

I have driven around town with the extra strap off my old tie downs shut in my truck doors. Or slammed under the lids of the toolboxes. Or the best one, dragging on the road behind me. I have purposefully avoided my ratchet tie downs for short strap jobs. Too much effort for a few 2x6's on my ladder rack. I have used bungee cords. Probably not the safest thing to do. Now I can use these Smart Straps tie downs faster and much more secure to the benefit of my fellow motorists and me.

Home run on this one folks, this is a really good evolution. And now that you know about them, your old straps are going to drive you crazy. Mine will be in the next yard sale I have.

For more information about this product, visit www.smartstraps.com



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Don't Miss the Show!**

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www.joeprin.com
and click on the Listen Live link.
Saturdays 8-10 AM

A Well-Planned Retirement

From Club Member John

Outside England 's Bristol Zoo there is a parking lot for 150 cars and 8 buses. For 25 years, its parking fees were managed by a very pleasant attendant. The fees were £1 for cars (\$1.40), £5 for busses (about \$7).

Then, one day, after 25 solid years of never missing a day of work, he just didn't show up; so the Zoo Management called the City Council and asked it to send them another parking agent.

The Council did some research and replied that the parking lot was the Zoo's own responsibility. The Zoo advised the Council that the attendant was a City employee. The City Council responded that the lot attendant had never been on the City payroll.

Meanwhile, sitting in his villa somewhere on the coast of Spain (or some such scenario), is a man who'd apparently had a ticket machine installed completely on his own; and then had simply begun to show up every day, commencing to collect and keep the parking fees, estimated at about \$560 per day -- for 25 years Assuming 7 days a week, this amounts to just over \$7 million dollars!

.....

And no one even knows his name.

How to prepare for the "Big Chill"

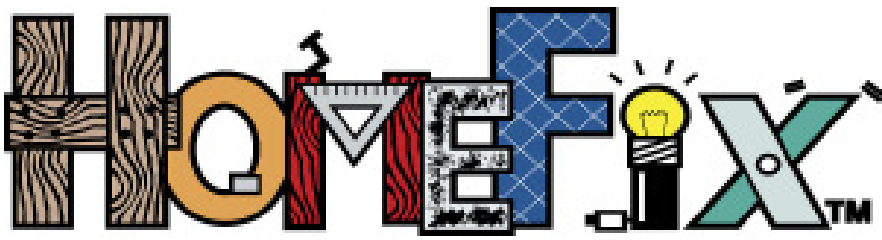
Tips on how to prepare for cold temperatures. (Maintain now or Pay later)



- Make sure that you detach your outside hosing to ensure that water in the hoses does not freeze and expand causing your outside faucets and inside pipes to break. Ensure that the outside faucet is not leaking or dripping. If they are; it is highly likely that the pipes will freeze. (Call Master Rooter Plumbing if you need help, with faucet repair) Cover the faucet using an insulation kit that you can buy at any Home Improvement store.
- Check and see if your home has a interior shut off valve to the outside lines. Close them and drain the water lines. If you do have a shut off to those lines and they are shut off, leave the outside faucets in the open position to let drain. (Call Master Rooter Plumbing if you need help locating or draining lines)
- Insulate pipes in all of the unheated areas or where the pipes have had a history of freezing. The following can be used to help reduce the chances of freezing: Heat tape, Thermostat-controlled heat cables.
- If you have indoor faucets that sometimes freeze in very cold weather: Try leaving your cabinet open where the piping is located so that they are exposed to more heat. In extreme cases let the water trickle very slowly into the sink to relieve pressure.
- If your pipes do freeze: Turn off water at the main shut-off valve so you don't have problems as ice melts. Leave the faucets on to relieve pressure as the ice melts. You can try using a blow dryer, or heat gun to help thaw frozen pipes. Call Master Rooter Plumbing for assistance.
- Seal the leaks around windows, vents, and doors to reduce heat from escaping house.
- Flush weather heater to remove sediment buildup- This sediment will cause corrosion, and drastically reduces the life of your water heater. Hard water is especially a issue in our area which is the primary cause of this sediment. To do this attach a water hose to the bottom faucet of your water tank and take the other out to an area where you can drain off. Ensure to drain several gallons from the tank or until you have removed as much sediment as possible. This next step is dangerous if not done carefully the water is hot! Test water heater's pressure relief valve Lift up lever and let it snap back. Keeping all body parts clear of small burst of water. If you do not get the small burst of water or does not snap back automatically call Master Rooter Plumbing Ensure the water heater thermostat is set at 120 degrees for optimal performance.
- Check all downspouts for gutter system is clear of debris to ensure that water can freeze and melt throughout cold season.
- If your home has a sump pump and pit, inspect and clean. Ensure that Pumps are not exposed to the cold or they run the chance of freezing.
- If you plan on leaving the home for an extended amount of time. Shut off the main water valve and drain the system. You can drain by opening the faucets at the highest and lowest point of the house. You should leave the heat on and set no lower than 55 degrees to help avoiding any potential pipe freezing.

Warning! These are simply tips to help prevent any costly damages that might occur from freezing. These tips are geared more toward protecting the home that will be inhabited throughout the cold months. Additional steps need to be taken if home will not be inhabited. Call Master Rooter Plumbing if you need more assistance. Master Rooter Plumbing also provides a home preparation package to help you prepare for the cold winter months call 888-9191 for more information. **2**

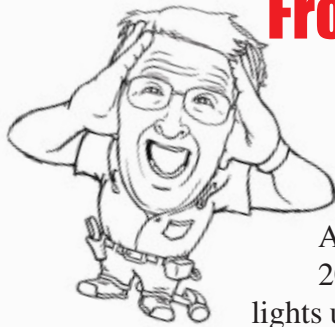
The



Issue #5
November 2009

Club!

An Elite Club Open To Anyone Interested In Making Their Homes Better And Having More Fun Doing It



From Joe...

Can you believe Thanksgiving and Christmas are almost here? I like the food that comes with these Holidays. Here are some tips from Idaho Power:

Cooking Up Savings in the Kitchen---

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, kitchen appliances account for more than 20% of the total electric bill in the average home. When you add to this the hot water and lights used, it becomes obvious that the kitchen represents a substantial area for energy savings.

Every Day Choices- Clean does matter

- Blackened burner pans absorb a lot of heat. Keep them shiny and bright so that they reflect the heat up to the cookware.
- Spills and splatters in a microwave absorb the energy as readily as cooking food. Clean microwaves operate more efficiently.
- Reduce your cooking time before you start by defrosting frozen foods in the refrigerator before cooking. With conventional ovens, keep preheat time to a minimum.
- Stagger multiple pans and don't lay foil on oven racks. Avoid peeking as you cook. And turn off the oven or stove just before the cooking is finished to prevent overcooking.
- Reheating prepared food uses less energy than cooking from scratch. Also, make sure you use the self-cleaning option in your oven infrequently and only after you've cooked a meal so it can use the residual heat.

Use the right cooking method for the meal

- Minimize the area that must be heated by using the smallest appliance capable of doing the job.
- Use right-sized pots and always cook with the lid on.
- Learn the secrets that make efficient cooking methods (like the microwave and pressure cooker) work for preparing high quality meals for your family.

Simple Kitchen Upgrades

If your kitchen is the social center of your home and in-use well after dark, replacing incandescent light bulbs with energy-saving compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs) will save you up to 75% on the cost of lighting this "hub." CFLs are currently available at reduced prices at participating stores. See Idaho power dot com slash energy efficiency for details.

Wise Investments for the Kitchen

- If you're still relying on a pre-1993 refrigerator or freezer, consider replacing it with an ENERGY STAR model as soon as you are able and receive \$30 back from Idaho Power.

For more energy saving ideas, visit the Idahopower.com/energyefficiency