

*YOUR*  
**2014**



*HOME IMPROVEMENT*  
**CALENDAR**

## 2014 Home Improvement Calendar

UK Oak Doors

<http://www.ukoakdoors.co.uk/>

## Introduction

We all begin the year with the very best intentions; stop eating junk food, exercise more, sort the house out, clean for five minutes a day rather than rushing madly to cram everything in to a cupboard before your parents arrive. The list goes on.

However, as life begin to catch back up with us it becomes more and more difficult to keep on top of the promises you made to yourself. What you really need is someone to organise all of this for you and keep you on the straight and narrow.

If you've been meaning to sort your house out this year, whether it's just sprucing up the garden, finishing off that little bit of painting you've been meaning to do for months, or finally clearing out your clutter, this month-by-month DIY calendar will make sure you get all of your household maintenance done on time and right first time.

Each month, you'll find a list of tasks that need completing along with a list of tools that are required and simple step-by-step instructions. Before you know it, it'll be December and your house will look as good as new. With all of those niggling DIY project and tasks safely behind you, you can look forwards to a stress-free year.

So, what are you waiting for? Get started now!

Happy DIY-ing...

# January



*“Start the year by being a sponge. Look for ideas everywhere, but take the time to live with your home, room, furniture and work out what you really need. Then you can seek out the perfect additions gradually, building up your rooms so they work for you.”*

Torie Wilkinson at [Klaus and Heidi](#)

January is traditionally the time of year when people go on a house-cleaning spree, throwing away old and unwanted possessions, taking down decorations, and giving their homes a thorough cleaning. Sadly, for many people this enthusiasm for cleaning and decorating doesn't last long, and by February any New Year's resolutions are forgotten. This year, why not take your spring-clean to the next level and start the year the way you mean to go on by preparing yourself for a year of successful DIY.

## **January Is A Month Of Planning**

Resist the temptation to try to start tackling all of your indoor jobs in January. If you rush in to doing lots of jobs right away, there's a good chance you'll burn out and get sick of spending your weekends surrounded by screwdrivers and paintbrushes. Instead of rushing to get jobs done in January, let yourself relax after the festive season, and ease into the year's projects by spending your time off doing some research.

Make a list of all of the jobs that you want to get done this year (including tasks such as re-turfing the garden or fixing the roof, even though those jobs will have to wait until the warmer months). Try to find out which jobs you can tackle yourself, and which you will need to pay a professional to do for you.

Using this list, put together an annual budget for your DIY projects, and work out how much you'll need to set aside each month to afford all of the jobs you'll be doing throughout the year. If it helps you to divide your finances strictly, you may want to consider opening a second bank account or instant access savings account online so that your DIY funds aren't sitting there in your main bank account - easy to access for impulse spending!

If any of the jobs on your to-do list require planning permission, call your local authority and find out how long the application process takes. Make sure that you start the application process early to ensure that you have a nice time buffer to work with in case there are delays or problems with your paperwork.

## **Practical Shopping In The Sales**

The January sales can be a great time to pick up cheap tools and consumables. While everyone else is rushing to the clothes, gifts and electronics aisles, take this opportunity to head on over to the DIY section. You may find cheap gardening tools, paint brushes, rollers, trays, and other handy items.

That sort of shopping might not be as exciting as shopping for a new TV in the sales, but you could save a fortune. You can always pick up some shiny new electronics later in the year, when new models have been released and you've finished your renovation work.

## **Spring Cleaning**

Your DIY projects will go much more smoothly if you have time to work. It's a good idea to try to find some time for de-cluttering and spring-cleaning. If you have a lot of clutter to sort through, consider trying the Fly Lady approach - break down the cleaning into lots of small tasks, doing a few minutes each day rather than trying to clean an entire room in one go. Once you have tackled a room, make a point of trying to keep it uncluttered. It's easier to tidy up after yourself each evening than it is to clean up a week's worth of mess in one

# February



*“When you buy a new build you miss out on the chance to fully make a house a home. When you renovate a house from scratch it becomes a part of you, especially after all the building work, and you then get to research colours and fabrics and the overall interior design of a room which is mega fun!”*

Katie at [Sunflower Teeth](#)

By February, life is returning to normal for most people, and the enthusiasm felt for those New Year's resolutions set in January are starting to fade. However, if January went according to plan for you, then you should be in a good position to start tackling common DIY tasks.

February is a good time to start working on interior DIY jobs. Hopefully, your home should be fairly clutter free at the moment, so a good starting point is replacing your interior doors.

## **Choosing Doors That Suit Your Home**

Choosing the right design for your interior doors it can really make a big difference to how your home looks. You should try to pick a door colour or design that complements the rest of the room's decor, or contrasts with it in a striking manner.

For example a bright door that complements the other, perhaps softer, colours used in the rest of the room. Alternatively, a bold design would work well in a themed room.

In addition to thinking about colours and patterns, spare a thought for the material of the door too. If your room does not get a lot of natural light, you may want to use a glass paned door to make the room feel brighter and more open. However, if you will have a desk opposite the door, you'll probably want a solid door so that you don't have to worry about glare on your computer screen (or in your eyes) while you are working.

## **Fitting Doors - A Step By Step Guide**

Fitting doors can be more challenging than you might think, especially if you live in an older home. Doors come in a range of standardized sizes; if your interior doorways match the most common sizes you can just walk in to a shop, order a door, have it delivered, and hang it easily.

If your home was built before the current standard sizes became fashionable, then you may have difficulty sourcing the right size of door. To find out what size you need, you should measure the height, width, and depth of the door. Note the measurements in both inches and centimetres (to save you having to worry about unit conversion while you're in the store).

If you can't find doors that match your home's door frames brand new, you may want to try buying period doors from a place that specializes in reclaimed fixtures and fittings.

Once you've bought a door, you need to figure out where the hinges go, and where the latch will sit. This should be obvious on a solid door, but can be more difficult to figure out on a hollow core door. Most door manufacturers will print some markings on hollow core doors to help you locate important areas, for example:

- LB = Lock Block
- T = Top
- H = Hinge

The exact markings may differ for each manufacturer.

Before you try to hang the door properly, try putting it into the door frame as-is. This will highlight any problems with the fit. If the door is too tall or too wide, you can plane it down to fit. Work slowly and methodically - it's better to find you've removed too little and need to spend a bit more time planing than it is to chop too much off in your first attempt and end up with a door that's too short.

You should aim to have a 2mm gap between the door and the frame on the left and right hand sides, and a 6mm gap at the bottom of the door. The 2mm gap is important to give the door freedom to

rotate.

If you're replacing an old door, you probably already have a spot chiselled out for the hinges on the door frame. Carefully measure the position of the hinges, and mark out spots for them on the door. Drill a pilot hole and then secure one screw for the top hinge, and then one for the bottom, to ensure that the door still hangs correctly. Once those two screws are done and if you're happy with the fit you can repeat the process for the rest of the screws.

# March



*“I love swapping out décor items to transition through seasons. After a cold and dark winter I’m itching to introduce uplifting pops of color throughout our home. Energetic hues of fuchsia, citron and coral are some of my favorites. And statements do not need to be big and bold. Adding some colorful frames, vases, pillows or even fresh flowers can help to signify spring’s arrival.”*

Gabbi at [Retro Ranch Renovation](#)

By March, the weather should be improving, and you're probably wishing that you could spend some time outside. This month is a great time to start working on your garden, and you can show off your green fingers (and prepare for a chance to show off your cooking skills) by starting a small vegetable garden.

Even if you have limited space in your yard, there are a few things that you should be able to grow at home:

## **Vegetables For The Garden**

If you're lucky enough to have a decent-sized garden, then there are several vegetables that you can grow at home. This month is a good time to plant the following vegetables:

- Beetroot
- Leeks
- Lettuce
- Brussels sprouts
- Radish
- Parsnips
- Early Turnips

If you have a greenhouse then you can add tomatoes, peppers, and cucumbers to that list.

Take the time to put together a gardening calendar so that you know which plants will need looked after and when! If you plan your crops well you can have something growing almost year-round.

## **Window Box Vegetables**

If you have limited space, then you don't have to miss out on gardening. There are many vegetables that grow well in a window box. You will need to fill your window box with some good compost, some water-holding gel (to ensure that the plants don't dry out), some bubble wrap, and some gravel to use as drainage material.

Vegetables that do well in a window box include:

- Short-rooted carrots such as Kundulus and Parmex
- Runner beans (dwarf varieties)
- Spring onions
- Parsnips (if your window box is deeper than six inches)
- Loose-leaf lettuce

You should take your time when preparing the window box. Line the box with bubble wrap, and then add a layer of gravel. Mix some compost and water-holding gel together, and fill the window box until the compost is a couple of inches away from the lip of the box. Gently flatten the mix out with your fingers, and then top up the soil until the box is almost full. Water this soil well, and leave it to sit overnight so that the soil has a chance to settle. Once this is done you can plant your vegetables.

## **Get The Family Involved**

Gardening is something that the whole family can get involved with. Consider giving older children a small section of the garden that they can care for themselves. Younger children may not want the responsibility of having a full garden of their own, but they could still have a lot of fun with their own mini “window box”. Cress is incredibly easy to grow, and can usually be eaten around a week after it is planted. This gives children the chance to see the results of their work quite quickly, rather than having to wait a few months before they can take it out of the ground.

If your family does find that they enjoy gardening, then you can rotate different crops throughout the year, enjoying fresh, tasty home grown vegetables (and their associated cooking projects) as the year goes on.

April



*“With spring already in full swing and the warmer weather just around the corner, it’s time to start thinking about getting your garden into shape, too. As well as having a general tidy and clean, think about adding some splashes of colour to your outdoor space - even the smallest garden, yard or balcony can be brightened up with some fun accessories and colourful planting!*

*A simple hanging basket and some bright, colourful cushions can make a huge impact on the feel of your space. But don’t just stop there; think about adding some lighting, too. We love to have different sized lanterns dotted around. The warm glow of the candles instantly makes any space feel cosy, welcoming and ready to enjoy all summer long.”*

Christine and Jane from [Little House On the Corner](#)

April is a good time to make a start on outdoor DIY jobs. The weather can still be unpredictable, so it's not a good idea to start any big painting or construction tasks, but you should have enough nice weekends that you'll be able to get your home ready for the summer. The more you get done now, the more time you'll have to enjoy yourself during the (most likely brief) June heat wave.

## **Getting Your Hands Dirty**

This month is a good time to do some of the more heavy-duty tasks such as cleaning your patio, hosing down your summer furniture, weeding the garden, cleaning your gutters, and fixing your garden fence if it suffered any damage during the winter.

If you're working on gutters or tall fences, put safety first! Always wear the appropriate safety equipment for the tools you're handling, and don't over-reach or take chances when you're working at the top of a ladder.

## **Easy Summer Gardens**

If you want your garden to look great this summer, then you should start planting appropriate plants now. The best plants, for most gardens, are ones that are fairly low maintenance, and that bloom for a long time.

Good plants to invest in for your garden include:

- Hydrangea Macrophylla
- Hibiscus Syriacus
- Echinacea Purpurea
- Salvia X Sylvestris

Weed your garden carefully before you start planting, water the garden regularly, and take care to deadhead spent flowers on a regular basis, and you should have a garden that blooms nicely until late August.

## **Building a Summer Deck**

Building a decking area is a good way to transform your garden into a relaxing, enjoyable place to spend summer evenings.

The key to putting together a nice deck is to plan carefully. Measure your garden and sketch out a design before you start work. You may want to mark out the area that the deck will cover in your garden to make sure that you'll like it once it's in place. Make sure that your deck won't cover any manholes, air bricks, or any other important areas.

Once you're sure you have the perfect layout, it's time to prepare the ground. Firstly, measure out the perimeter of the deck and mark it with pegs and rope or clothesline. Clear all of the ground of vegetation, and pat the soil down so that it's flat and firm. Lay the deck fabric over the cleared ground to prevent weeds growing under the deck.

Next, put down concrete paving slabs. Use a spirit level to ensure that the deck slants appropriately. For every metre of deck, there should be a 10mm drop, and the deck should slant away from the house.

Once the concrete slabs are in place, put a layer of bitumen BPC membrane over those slabs. Now you're ready to start laying the timbers. The outer framework should rest on top of the concrete slabs,

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