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Turn household headaches into easy fixes

(StatePoint) As temperatures rise, it's time to enjoy the great outdoors. But you may find the colder months took a toll on your home, yard or gear. Are there some items that seem beyond repair?

Here are a few tips and tape repairs to get you through even the toughest tasks.

1. No More Slippery Steps. Falls are one of the leading causes of unintentional injuries, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and if you have an older ladder with poor traction, you could be asking for trouble. So, if your next project takes you to new heights, make sure to first apply tread tape to each ladder rung to provide extra grip and protection from slipping, helping to keep you from becoming a statistic.

2. Get a Grip on Garden Gear. Taking care of your lawn and garden is no easy task, and your garden tools may have the wear and tear to prove it. Whether you're dealing with broken handles, worn grips or torn fabrics, use a high-strength tape such as T-Rex Tape, which has the intense strength, durability and holding power to handle even the most extreme repairs with ease and have you back to work in no time.

3. Simple Tech Saves. Blame it on multitasking: you dropped your device in the middle of a DIY video and a cracked screen has left you (and your project) in despair. Can't break away to get to a repair shop? Apply clear repair tape over the shattered screen to get the surface functioning and you back to mastering your task.

4. Secure Furniture Moves. Whether you're moving the extra fridge into the garage to store frosty beverages or relocating patio set pieces from the shed, furniture moves can cause headaches. To make it easy, skip the bungee and opt for Brute Force tape to keep doors shut and secure heavy pieces to the dolly.

5. Fast Repair for Flimsy Flag Poles. If a broken flag pole is interfering with your patriotism or ability to support your favorite sports team, simply apply a strong, all-weather tape, such as T-Rex Tape for a fast and secure repair. The aggressive, double-thick adhesive sticks to rough, dirty surfaces and holds strong even through intense weather and temperatures.

6. Up Your Curb Appeal. If you're looking for an inexpensive (and easy to install) boost to curb appeal, consider adding or updating house numbers, door knockers or other decorative hardware. Forget drilling into metal, brick or siding; instead, consider a heavy-duty mounting tape for a simple -- and stylish -- solution.

7. Patches for Pools. Warm weather means your family will be ready for fun in the sun and a few laps in your backyard pool. On the flip side, finding a pool leak can send you spiraling down the money drain, while a hole in your child's favorite float might cause the next meltdown. For quick and easy repairs, grab T-Rex Waterproof Tape, which as the name implies, offers a waterproof seal, even for underwater repairs.

For additional repair tips, visit T-RexTape.com.

Repairs don't have to be as brutal as winter's worst storm. This year, make sure to stock your tool box with the strongest tapes around.

Shopping for a home this Spring: Map out your journey

(StatePoint) Spring is here, which means the weather is warming, there's more daylight, flowers are popping up… and so are "For Sale" signs in yards nationwide.

In fact, 40 percent of annual home sales happen between the start of spring and the start of summer, according to the National Association of Realtors, and more than 2 million people are expected to buy a home this spring.

The process of buying a home can be thought of in the same way as taking a spring break road trip. You have to map out your journey, create a playlist, and assemble your co-pilots. To make your journey less stressful and more successful, the experts at Freddie Mac are offering the following tips:

Mapping Out a Plan

Before hitting the road, get a lay of the land by understanding the current market. The median home price is $249,500, up 3.6 percent from last year. It is also useful to know that there is 3.5 months of housing inventory on the market, which means supply is low. What does all this mean for you? Competition is high, rates are historically low and generally the market is holding steady.

Make Your Playlist

Like having the perfect soundtrack for a road trip, buying a home requires building a "homebuying playlist" of sorts and the order of the playlist matters. Getting familiar with the essential homebuying concepts -- ahem playlist tracks -- such as down payments, credit scores, pre-approval letters and closing costs, can help you enjoy smoother sailing (and maybe even dancing). To learn more, visit freddiemac.com/blog.

Assemble Your Co-Pilots

A road trip is no fun with the wrong people. Be sure to pack your car with trusted professionals who'll help you avoid bumps in the road.

If this is your first time hitting the road, you may want the company of a housing counselor, whose services are often available at little or no cost and can help assess your financial situation and educate you on the process.

Other people to invite with you on your journey include your lender, responsible for helping you secure the best financing options for your situation, a home inspector who can spot problems with the property, a closing agent, who will oversee the closing or "settlement" of your loan and help you avoid closing day jitters, and last but not least, your real estate agent, who rides shotgun. Your realtor should be at your side helping you navigate and readily available to answer all your questions throughout the journey.

Get to know your team well and ask questions. It's their job to support you on this adventure. To learn more about other professionals who will be involved, visit myhome.freddiemac.com.

If all goes as planned, at the end of your road trip, you will be a homeowner. But remember, half the journey is getting there, so keep your eyes on the road and stay focused.

Tackle disorganized areas of your home

(StatePoint) While we all know that minimalism is "in" right now, thanks to Japanese cleaning guru Marie Kondo and her "Tidying Up" show on Netflix, decluttering your whole house can feel daunting.

Instead, start small with these tips for tackling the areas that tend to collect the most dirt and clutter.

1. Purge your refrigerator weekly. The day prior to garbage collection, clean out your fridge of all leftovers and expired foods, and wipe down the shelves to prevent stickiness and mold from leaking containers. Pro Tip: Line refrigerator trays and drawers with a protective, dishwasher safe layer, such as Clear Classic EasyLiner Brand Shelf Liner, to make it easy to wipe spills clean.

2. Add order to kitchen cupboards. When organizing cabinets, place everyday items such as cups and dishes in easily accessible cupboards, and store things that you use less frequently, like fine china, on the harder-to-reach shelves. When it comes to the pile of cookie sheets and cupcake pans shoved in that hard-to-reach cabinet, use a basic file organizer to create a neatly organized bakeware zone.

3. Categorize your pantry. Store your food by category, such as breakfast or baking, with the items that are most-used placed front and center. If you have kids, set up a snack zone, so they don't rifle through other shelves. Pro Tip: Ensure small items don't fall through the spaces in wire racks by laying down a base on the shelves, such as Solid Grip EasyLiner Brand Shelf Liner.

4. Organize the junk drawer. Eighty percent of Americans report that they have at least one junk drawer in their home, but the average household actually has three of these catch-all drawers, according to Duck brand research.

To wrangle this chaotic space, install bins or trays to keep similar contents together and make it easy to see what's actually in there. For larger pieces, shelf liners with a grip surface and grip bottom provide cushioning, hold items in place and protect the drawer bottom. Plus, they're removeable for easy cleaning.

5. Declutter your linen closet. To make the linen closet as functional as possible, utilize adjustable dividers to sort textiles and fold sheets into pillow cases to ensure bedding sets stay together. Additionally, ensure your linens are protected from potential damage by installing shelf liners. Melamine or veneer shelves can cause fabric to yellow, and textiles that are laid directly onto wire shelves inevitably form crease lines, but a layer of multi-purpose liner can preserve linens and even add a pop of color or style to your closet.

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