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What to do when a project stalls

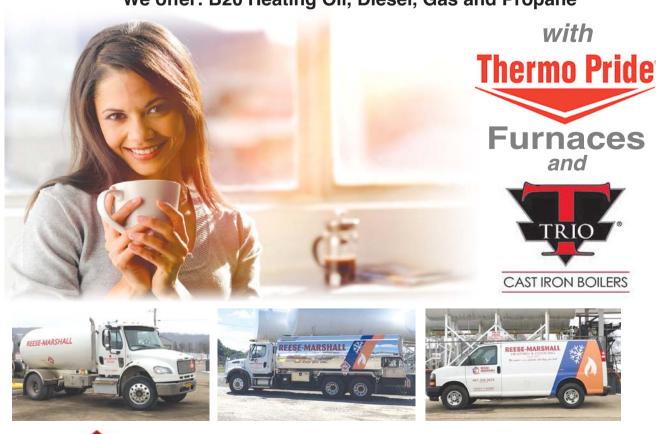
Upon embarking on a home improvement project, homeowners who have never before lived through such undertakings are often told to expect their projects to take more time than initial estimates suggested. Unforeseen complications can compromise project timelines, and some homeowners may find their projects stuck in neutral.

Stalled projects can make life at home difficult, and homeowners may feel helpless with regard to getting a project back on course. But there are ways for homeowners to get stalled projects back on course.

- Start off on solid financial footing. It's important that homeowners who want to upgrade their homes enter the home improvement process with a realistic grasp of their finances. Many home improvement projects stall when homeowners run out of money. Homeowners can avoid such unfortunate situations by only beginning a project they know they can afford. Whether funding a project with a loan or savings or a combination of both, homeowners should make an honest assessment of what they can afford to commit to a given project. If the amount of money available does not add up to the estimated cost of the project, delay the project now or you might be facing a stalled project down the road.
- Honestly assess whether or not you can finish the job. Do-it-yourselfers may have the abilities to complete a project, but they should not let their pride get in the way of their ultimate goal, which is the completion of the project. In addition to money, time or lack thereof, is often the culprit behind stalled projects. Homeowners with full-time jobs, families or both may not be able to find the time to complete a job in a timely fashion. If the project has been stuck in neutral and no sudden windfall of free time is on the horizon, start contacting contractors to finish the job for you.

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• Ask for help. There's no shame in asking for help to complete a project. Some homeowners may underestimate the scope of a project until it's too late. Asking family, friends or neighbors for help might be the only way to get a stalled project back on track. Certain home improvement projects may not require advanced skills, and even friends or family with little or no home improvement experience can pitch in to complete such projects. When more advanced projects stall, homeowners may want to hire contractors to complete the work. If budgets have not left



much room for hiring a contractor, homeowners can perform some of the labor on their own.

• Be mindful of permits. Some home improvement projects require permits, and these permits often have expiration dates. Homeowners must keep permits in mind when projects start to stall, recognizing that they may need to reapply for permits if projects go unfinished for especially long periods of

Stalled home improvement projects can be a nightmare. But homeowners can address such delays in various ways to get projects back on track. FH178262



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How To Make Your Dishwasher Work Better

The dishwasher is an unsung hero of many a kitchen. When a dishwasher is working properly, it can make fast clean-up of scores of dishes, silverware and glasses.

As handy as dishwashers can be, sometimes they seem to lose their cleaning power. While inadequate cleaning may indicate the time has come to replace the dishwasher, many times all the appliance needs is a little maintenance and TLC.

Begin by investigating the interior of the dishwasher. Check for any visible food particles or debris, cleaning out any food traps at the bottom of the dishwasher. The mat-like item at the bottom is called the coarse filter and is meant to catch big particles that could prevent your tub from draining. Don't forget to clean the rubber seals around the perimeter of the dishwasher where the door meets up with the tub of the dishwasher, as this is a prime location for debris to gather.

Running an empty dishwasher with a clarifying rinse can help wash away any residue and improve performance. Plus, this maintenance task can remove odors and refresh the dishwasher. Put two cups of white vinegar in the bottom of the dishwasher so that it will distribute through the appliance during the cleaning cycles. White vinegar will naturally break down old dishwasher soap and scale buildup inside of the unit. Consider a short rinse afterward with some baking soda to remove odors and scour the interior of the appliance as well. Baking soda and vinegar are popular cleaning substances and are safe to use around food items.

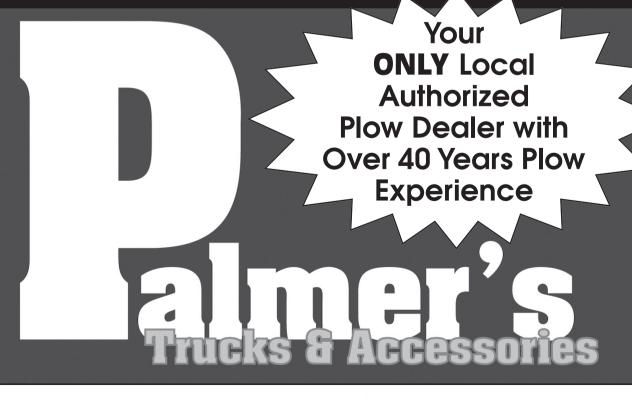
For more intense cleaning, create a bath of vinegar and water in your sink basin. Remove parts from the dishwasher, such as shelving and the utensil holder, so that they can soak in the solution.

Some dishwashers have removable spinning cleaning arms. Take these off, if possible, and let them soak to dislodge any residue that has clogged the water jets. Use a pipe cleaner or another flexible device to carefully remove











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any debris from the water holes. You may be amazed at what has built up in these small holes.

You also may need to inspect the drain line, which is often made of plastic and connected to the trap under the kitchen sink. On occasion, this tube can get blocked and prevent the dishwasher from draining effectively. In addition to these cleaning techniques, using a rinse agent may help the dishwasher work better. According to Jet Dry, the maker of a popular rinse agent, rinse agents help your dishwasher rinse away residue that causes spots and film on dishes and glasses. They are designed to lower the surface tension of the water, causing it to sheet off the dishes during the final rinse. This prevents the formation of droplets of water that can remain on the surface of the dishes and form spots and film.

Maintaining a dishwasher with regular cleaning can help it perform better during each and every load. EL156198

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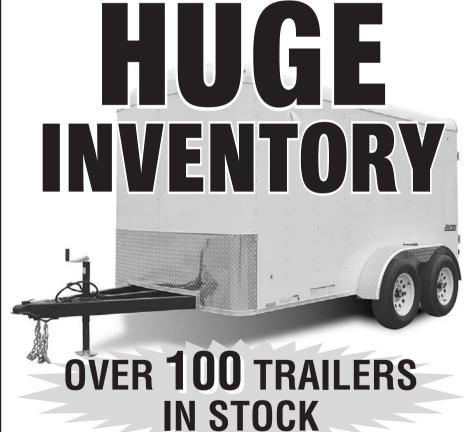
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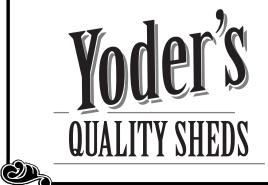
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Design ideas to give your home a farmhouse feel

Farmhouse style homes are having a moment. A 2020 survey from Homes.com asked more than 5,000 adults across the United States about their favorite house style from a list that included bohemian craftsman, mid-century modern ranch, French chateau, and Tudor, among others. Modern farmhouse was the runaway winner, as participants in 42 of the 50 states indicated this simple, cozy style was their favorite.

Home renovation projects can help homeowners put their own unique stamp on their homes, and such projects can be both aesthetic and functional in nature. The following are some farmhouse design elements homeowners can consider as they look to transform their home interiors with this popular style in mind.

- Exposed beams: Exposed beams instantly evoke images of a farmhouse. The home improvement experts at BobVila.com note that this rustic renovation project can utilize real wood or faux beams that look like the real thing. Decorative beams that have nothing to do with a home's structural integrity can be installed by skilled do-it-yourselfers. However, even faux beams are heavy, and BobVila.com recommends homeowners have an engineer assess their existing structure prior to installation.
- Distressed wood finishes: Distressing is designed to make something look less than perfect. Distressed wood finishes can be found throughout many farmhouse style homes. Furniture and picture frames can provide the distressed look farmhouse fans are looking for. This is a relatively inexpensive project that many homeowners can tackle on their own after watching some online tutorials that recommend the right tools and techniques to get the job done right.
- Kitchen sink: Many components combine to create a truly classic

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farmhouse kitchen. But perhaps no component is more essential than the classic farmhouse sink. The renovation experts at HGTV note that a classic farmhouse sink features a deep, wide basin. Farmhouse sinks are large enough to handle all the dishes that come after a big family meal. Old-fashioned porcelain sinks are worth consideration by homeowners who want their kitchen sinks to evoke a traditional farmhouse feel.

• Countertops: HGTV recommends butcher block countertops for homeowners who favor European farmhouse style. Homeowners overhauling their kitchens to create a farmhouse feel should consider installing a large island with a walnut butcher block countertop for an authentic farmhouse feel.

Farmhouse style homes are wildly popular. Some simple renovations can help homeowners with a fondness for farmhouse style bring this classic look into their homes. FH218159





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Questions to ask before embracing DIY

Home improvement projects are as popular as ever. In its 2017 True Cost Survey, the home improvement site HomeAdvisor found that, between February 2016 and February 2017, homeowners spent an average of just over \$5,000 on home projects. That marked a nearly \$1,900 increase from the year prior, indicating that homeowners are increasingly opening their wallets to transform their homes.

In addition to spending money to improve their homes, many homeowners are spending their time on projects as well. While DIY projects can provide a sense of fulfillment and personal attachment to one's home, prospective doit-yourselfers should ask themselves some questions before picking up their hammers and getting to work.

Do I have any physical limitations?

No matter how much home improvement television shows may simplify projects, prospective DIYers should know that such undertakings are typically very difficult and oftentimes physically demanding. Homeowners with existing health conditions or other physical limitations may not be capable of performing certain tasks or may need to take frequent breaks, which can delay projects.

Do I have the time?

Many home improvement projects require a significant amount of time to complete. Homeowners whose time is already stretched thin with commitments to work and/or family may not be able to complete projects within a reasonable amount of time. That's fine if working on a part of the home that won't affect daily life, but can prove stressful or problematic if the project is in a room, such as a kitchen or bathroom, that residents of the home use each day. Novice DIYers should be especially honest with themselves

about the time they have available to work on the project, as such homeowners are bound to experience a few timeconsuming missteps along the way.

Can I afford it?

While DIY might seem more affordable than hiring a contractor, that's not necessarily true. Novice DIYers may need to buy or rent tools, costs that can add up. Contractors already have the tools necessary to begin and complete projects, so the cost savings of DIY might not be as significant as homeowners think. Before going the DIY route, homeowners should solicit

estimates from contractors, comparing the estimates to how much a project will cost if homeowners do it themselves.

Can I go it alone?

Many home improvement projects require more than one set of hands, and it's risky and even foolish for first-time DIYers to assume they can begin a project and see it through to completion entirely on their own. Homeowners whose spouses, partners, friends, or relatives are willing to chip in may think that's enough. However, the DIY skills of those who volunteer may be a mystery until the project begins. Novice DIYers should enlist the help of a friend or family member with home improvement experience. If no such person is available, it may be wise to hire a contractor instead. Home improvement projects may seem simple on television. But prospective do-it-yourselfers must make honest assessments of their skills, time and budgets before taking on a DIY project. FH188178







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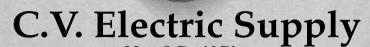
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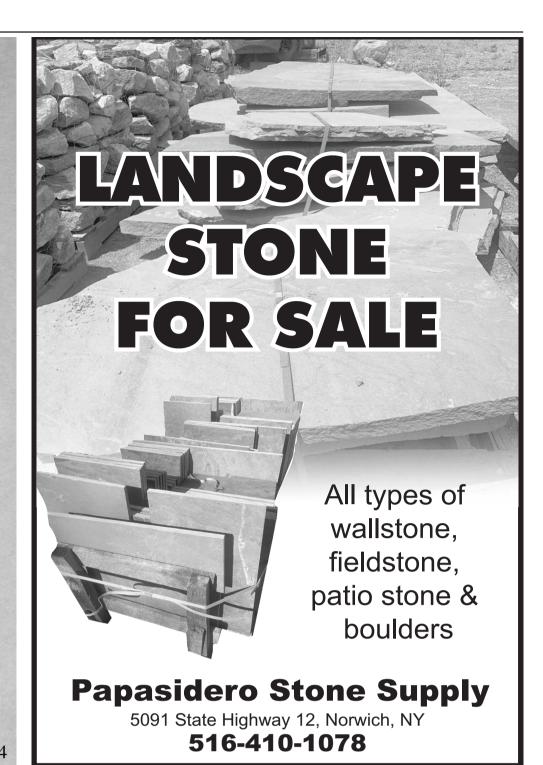
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