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Small Fixes, Big Results

Four household repairs anyone can do
By Carolyn Forte

Stained grout. Because it's porous, tile sealant inevitably absorbs more grime than you can remove. So rather than go at it with a bleach-dipped toothbrush yet again, pick up Grout Ink from Stone Care International (\$8) — it's as easy to use as a Magic Marker. Clean the surface of any dirt first, and apply one coat in a shade that matches your grout (white, gray, or earth tone). Wait an hour; apply a second coat. In our tests, treated white grout looked almost new and results held up for weeks.

Wood-furniture dent. Your daughter tossed her cell phone on the coffee table and dinged the wood. Here's how to fix that dropped call: Simply dampen a large cotton dishtowel, fold it into quarters, and place it over the spot. Set your iron to high (without steam), and press the cloth a few seconds (making sure the iron doesn't touch the wood) until the water from the towel stops steaming. If the grain is still a little dented, repeat. Follow up with a coat of furniture polish on the entire tabletop.

Squeaky door. Creaky entryways and closets are great in scary movies, but not in real life. To exorcise the sound effects, first shut the door tight (so it won't fall) and pull out the center pin from one hinge. If the pin is in snugly, hold a screwdriver against the bottom and with a hammer, lightly tap upward until it comes loose. Clean the pin with an abrasive scrubbing pad, like 3M's Scotch-Brite Heavy Duty Scour Pad (\$2.29 for a three-pack), and coat with a little petroleum jelly. Dab some on its end so as you reinsert the pin, you also coat the inside of the hinge. (Insert pin from the top and tap it down, if you have to.) Open and close the door a few times to work the jelly in, adding more from the outside if necessary. Repeat with remaining hinges.

Peeling wallpaper. No need to call in professional help every time a corner of the dining room wallpaper curls up. Make it stay put, once and for all, with Red Devil's House and Home Restore Wallpaper Seam Repair (\$3 for a 5-ounce tube). This adhesive is easy to apply: Just spread a thin, even coat on the wall (or the back of the paper) and press into position. The tube has a crank, so you can roll as you go, keeping the product fresh. In tests, even high humidity couldn't peel our re-fastened



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wish you and your family a
wonderful holiday season!**