

Introduction

In this 'How To' you'll learn the easy way to carry out a DIY project: think ahead, do your homework and work with care.

With the help of this website and a little thought, there are few DIY projects you can't carry out successfully.

1. Decide the objectives

If you are planning to redecorate your living room you may have many objectives.

You may decide to remove the centre ceiling pendant light and install wall lights. You may look at the dribbles around the radiator valves and rust spots on the radiator, and think that new radiators would be in order. The new hi-fi system and video that need more sockets than you've got - how about some extra sockets? What about the floor? The hardwood laminate flooring you saw recently was very nice, and affordable.

Think about all of these things before you start work. It's no use redecorating the room and then deciding to do the extra bits and pieces. Save time and money by thinking ahead.

Here's an example of a typical work plan. The example covers decorating a room, but the same principles apply to any project (figs. 1, 2).

2. Check design, materials and cost

Take time to look at the materials you want to use. If possible, get prices and samples of paper, paint, fabrics, work tops, flooring, etc. Try them together for a few days and make sure you're happy with the result. Pin fabric samples at windows and paint tester squares on the wall. Check the colours in daylight and artificial light. You'll be surprised how much they differ.

Check that the materials are suitable for your purpose. Will the wallpaper or flooring stand up to moisture in your kitchen or bathroom? Will fabric or embossed wall coverings invite your cat to sharpen its claws? Are the wall tiles suitable for use in your kitchen? They may look terrific, but be a nightmare to clean.

Once again, use your common sense and think ahead.

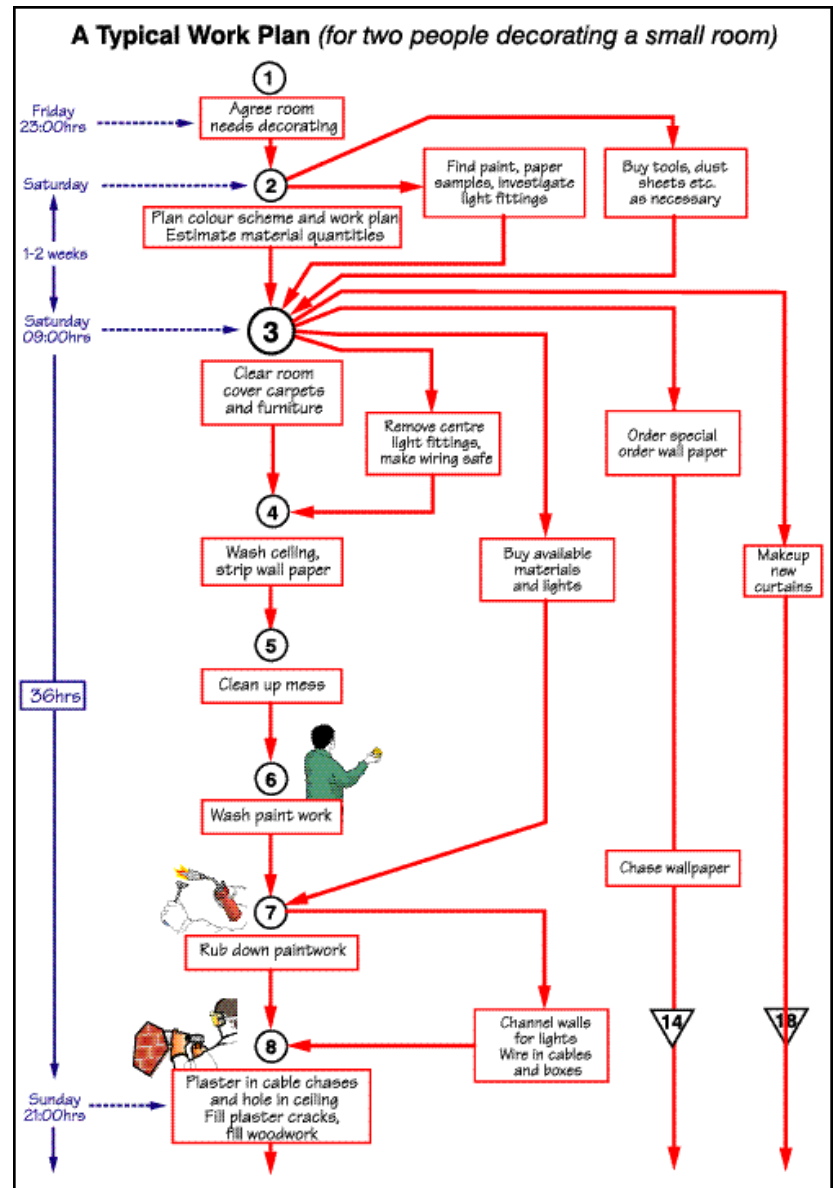


fig. 1

HOW TO: Plan a DIY project

Check design, materials and cost (cont.)

Read all the manufacturer's instructions and recommendations. Look for other sources of good ideas too. This website tells you what materials are available and how to use them and offers lots of inspiring ideas and practical tips in the Projects and Ideas section. You can go to Homebase stores to look at materials, and find more good ideas.

Many factors are involved in a DIY project. To design the project successfully, you need to understand the relationship between all these factors. The following examples demonstrate the factors and how they interact (figs. 3, 4, 5).

3. Get your tools and equipment together

Every 'How To' gives a list of the tools and equipment you'll need to do the job. Decide which tools you need and buy the best you can afford. Good quality tools will do a better job than cheap ones. If you look after them, they'll last a lifetime.

Some jobs need special tools or equipment, such as flooring staplers, decorators' trestles and scaffolding. These and many other items are available from hire shops. Check on cost and availability. You may have to book some items in advance, especially for weekend use.

When you hire equipment, make sure that the hire company demonstrates how to use the equipment correctly. They should also advise you on safety procedures and ancillary equipment such as goggles or face masks.

4. Acquire the necessary skills

Use the How To's on this website. They take you through every step of a DIY job, explaining all the techniques you'll need to use. You can also pick up additional printed 'How to' leaflets in Homebase stores.

You can learn a lot from DIY books and magazines and CD roms and television programmes. Some education authorities also run day and evening classes for DIY enthusiasts.

Don't forget relatives and friends. Cultivate those who do a good DIY job and pick their brains. Some may even be prepared to demonstrate their skills, or lend you tools.

When you're ready to try out a new skill, start small. Decorate a small bedroom before tackling the living room.

Only tackle electrical or heating projects if you're one hundred percent confident of your abilities. If in doubt, pay for a qualified tradesman who is registered with a professional trade organisation.

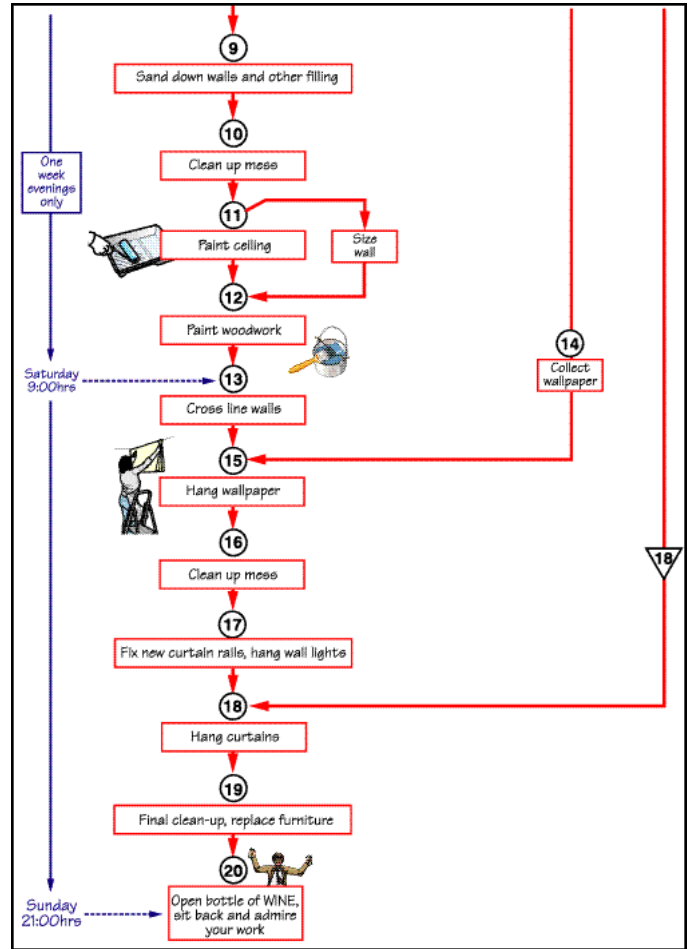


fig. 2

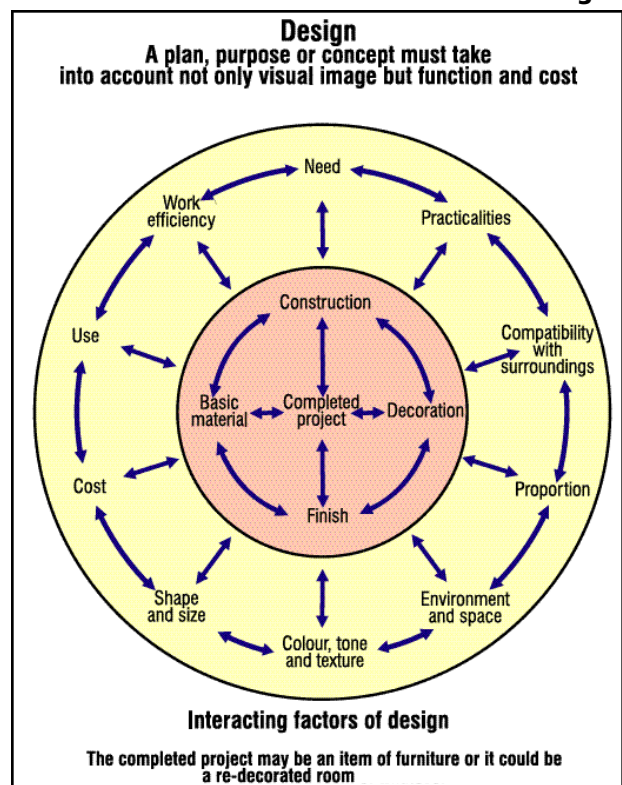


fig. 3

Allow enough time

5. Allow enough time

If you need to order materials, ensure that the delivery date is to your satisfaction. Add extra days to allow for delays.

As a general rule, always allow more time than you think you need to complete a project.

6. Write a work plan

Before starting a DIY job, decide your objectives. Write down everything that you think you need to do. Put all the tasks in order, against a rough time scale.

Follow your plan and you'll enjoy the work and the rewards from doing a good job. **HB**

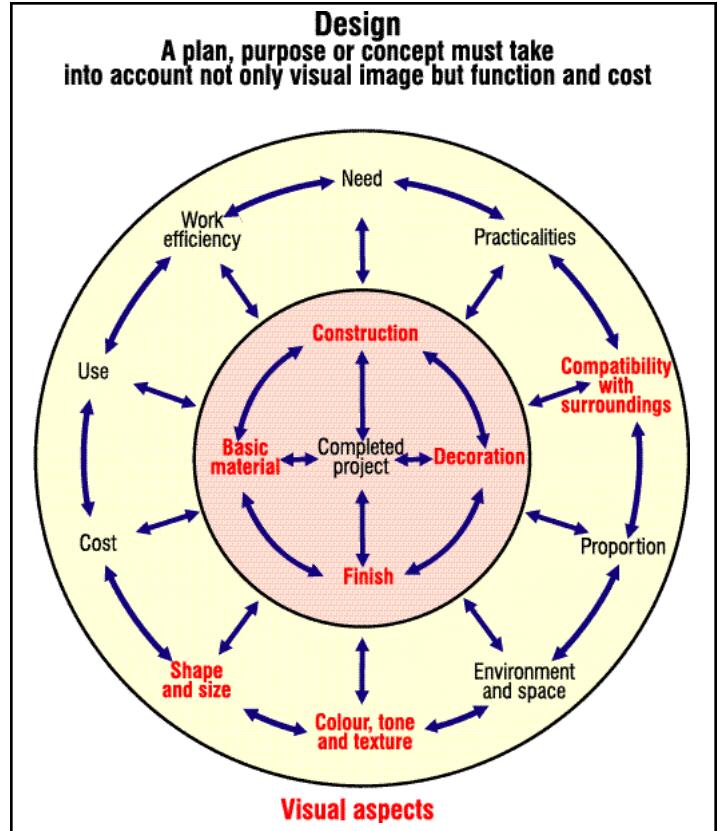


fig. 4

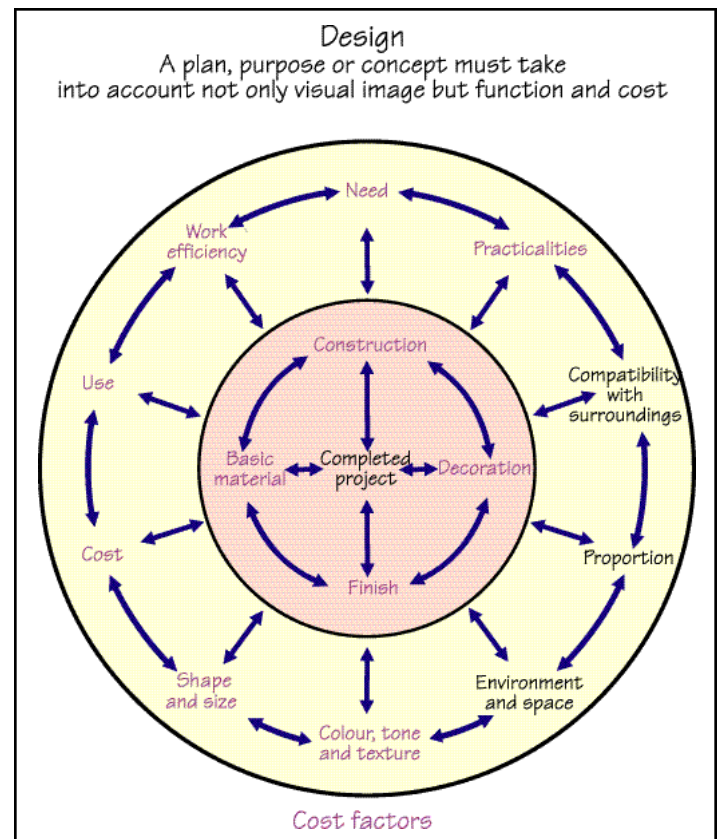


fig. 5