

MIKE'S Tool Box

Volume 3, Issue 12

Mike Forner's Home Services:

My mission is to treat your home with the same passion and attention to detail that I use on my own home.



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Causes For Drywall Cracks

The causes for drywall cracks will vary considerably depending on the circumstances. The age of a home, materials used and quality of workmanship are all factors.

Cracks In New Homes

New homes will get cracks during the first year or two after constructions. One reason for this is the natural drying process of all of the lumber and building materials used causes shrinkage leaving tiny gaps which allows for settling due to the weight of the home pushing downward in may cases. When the structure settles unevenly, it will create stress points in the drywall.

The drywall will crack at these stress points. Hairline cracks are nothing to be concerned about. Cracks that cause the drywall to separate may mean a more serious issue.

Poor Workmanship

Drywall is installed in flat sheets that are typically from eight to sixteen feet long. Between the sheets there are joints. Tape and drywall compound are used to finish the joints.

Joints should not be placed at the sides of doors or other stress points. Tape and mud by themselves are not strong enough to keep a joint from cracking. A heavy door that is slammed can crack drywall if there is a joint in the wrong spot.

Plaster Walls

Many older homes have plaster walls instead of drywall. Plaster can be more brittle than drywall making it prone to cracking.

Plaster will sometimes develop a multitude of spider cracks. The same stress point issues that apply to drywall also apply to plaster. Cracks in plaster walls can be fixed the same way that you do on drywall but with different materials.

*DANIELLE AND I WISH YOU AND YOUR FAMILY A RELAXING AND JOYOUS HOLIDAY SEASON AS WELL AS A PROSPEROUS AND SATISFYING 2014.
STAY TUNED IN FEBRUARY FOR THE NEW AND IMPROVED TOOL BOX!*

~ MIKE ~



Upcoming Events In December That Might Interest You...



* The Winter Solstice on Saturday, December 21st, 2013.



* Christmas on Wednesday, December 25th, 2013.



* Tran-Siberian Orchestra Schedule for December 2013:

When: Sunday, December 15th

Where: Van Andel Arena, Grand Rapids MI

What Time: 3:00pm & 7:30pm

When: Sunday, December 27th

Where: The Palace Of Auburn Hills, Detroit MI

What Time: 3:00pm & 8:00pm



* Holiday Nights in Greenfield Village on December 6-8, 13-15, 19-23, & 26-28. Step into a Christmas card from the past complete with candlelit paths, live entertainment, Santa and live reindeer, holiday shops, a fireworks display & more.



How to Determine if the Cracks in Walls Are Serious

There's no exact method for determining how serious a wall crack is without hiring an expert to examine the wall, but you might be able to analyze the crack and surrounding area to determine whether it's likely a surface blemish or a larger problem. Houses usually settle during the first few months and even years after construction, so minor wall cracks are likely. However, gaping cracks, separation and horizontal crack lines might be signs that the issues are more severe.

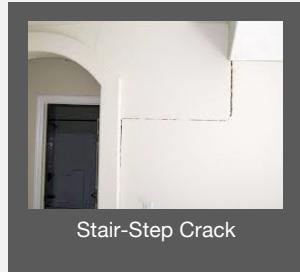
Horizontal Cracks



Horizontal Cracks

To determine how serious a wall crack might be, it's best to examine the shape of the crack and the direction it runs on the wall. If the crack is vertical and starts near the apex where the wall and ceiling meet, it might be a sign that it was created when the foundation settled after construction. Vertical cracks run the same direction as drywall, generally making them less serious. If the crack is horizontal or runs at a jagged 45-degree angle, it might mean there's a more serious problem such as severe foundation shifting or water damage. Surface-blemish cracks can often be repaired with drywall putty, sanding tools and a fresh coat of paint. More severe cracks usually require professional help to determine the exact cause and might include some reconstruction to prevent further damage.

Stair-Step Cracks



Stair-Step Crack

A stair-step crack looks like a flight of stairs and runs in both vertical and horizontal directions across the wall. The continuous pattern usually follows the grout or cement lines between cinder blocks. Stair-step cracks in cinder block foundation walls — usually found in unfinished basements — are a result of soil settling beneath the center of the wall. The only sure way to tell if the issue is serious is to hire an engineer to perform an onsite inspection with possible follow-up.

Doors and Windows

Another way to test the seriousness of a wall crack is to open and close internal doors to bedrooms and bathrooms and evaluate whether the doors stick. If so, ensure the sticking isn't a result of paint, faulty hardware or cracked wood. If you determine there's nothing obstructing the swinging motion of the door, it might be a sign of a moderate to severe structural change, often resulting in wall cracks. Sticky doors could indicate that a shifting house has twisted the frame. If you notice a visible gap at the top of a sticky door where it meets the door frame and you see light shining through, that might also signal a serious settlement problem, often resulting in jagged, horizontal cracks on nearby walls.

Visible Nails



"Nail Pop"

Study the wall area surrounding the crack and look for nail heads or screw heads that might be visible on the surface of the wall. The nail or screw might not have damaged the drywall, but it has likely pulled away from the wooden stud beneath. This phenomenon is often known as "nail pops" or "nail popping" and might be a sign of structural problems. Nail pops are frequently associated with more serious wall cracks and often signal significant drywall shear movement. Another cause is drywall that was installed initially with excessive moisture content.



For The Man Who Hated Christmas

By Nancy W. Gavin

It's just a small, white envelope stuck among the branches of our Christmas tree. No name, no identification, no inscription. It has peeked through the branches of our tree for the past ten years.

It all began because my husband Mike hated Christmas. Oh, not the true meaning of Christmas, but the commercial aspects of it – overspending and the frantic running around at the last minute to get a tie for Uncle Harry and the dusting powder for Grandma – the gifts given in desperation because you couldn't think of anything else.

Knowing he felt this way, I decided one year to bypass the usual shirts, sweaters, ties and so forth. I reached for something special just for Mike. The inspiration came in an unusual way.

Our son Kevin, who was 12 that year, was on the wrestling team at the school he attended. Shortly before Christmas, there was a non-league match against a team sponsored by an inner-city church. These youngsters, dressed in sneakers so ragged that shoestrings seemed to be the only thing holding them together, presented a sharp contrast to our boys in their spiffy blue and gold uniforms and sparkling new wrestling shoes.

As the match began, I was alarmed to see that the other team was wrestling without headgear, a kind of light helmet designed to protect a wrestler's ears. It was a luxury the ragtag team obviously could not afford.

Well, we ended up walloping them. We took every weight class. Mike, seated beside me, shook his head sadly, "I wish just one of them could have won," he said. "They have a lot of potential, but losing like this could take the heart right out of them." Mike loved kids – all kids. He so enjoyed coaching little league football, baseball and lacrosse. That's when the idea for his present came.

That afternoon, I went to a local sporting goods store and bought an assortment of wrestling headgear and shoes, and sent them anonymously to the inner-city church. On Christmas Eve, I placed a small, white envelope on the tree, the note inside telling Mike what I had done, and that this was his gift from me.

Mike's smile was the brightest thing about Christmas that year. And that same bright smile lit up succeeding years. For each Christmas, I followed the tradition – one year sending a group of mentally handicapped youngsters to a hockey game, another year a check to a pair of elderly brothers whose home had burned to the ground the week before Christmas, and on and on.

The white envelope became the highlight of our Christmas. It was always the last thing opened on Christmas morning, and our children – ignoring their new toys – would stand with wide-eyed anticipation as their dad lifted the envelope from the tree to reveal its contents. As the children grew, the toys gave way to more practical presents, but the small, white envelope never lost its allure.

The story doesn't end there. You see, we lost Mike last year due to dreaded cancer. When Christmas rolled around, I was still so wrapped in grief that I barely got the tree up. But Christmas Eve found me placing an envelope on the tree. And the next morning, I found it was magically joined by three more. Unbeknownst to the others, each of our three children had for the first time placed a white envelope on the tree for their dad. The tradition has grown and someday will expand even further with our grandchildren standing to take down that special envelope.

Mike's spirit, like the Christmas spirit will always be with us.



Christmas Eggnog Pie Recipe

Ingredients:

- 2 cups eggnog
- 1 cup milk
- 1 package (4.6 ounces) cook-and-serve vanilla pudding mix
- 1 tablespoon **rum or 1/2 teaspoon rum extract**
- 1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 pastry shell (9 inches), baked
- Whipped topping and additional ground nutmeg, optional

Directions:

1. In a large saucepan, cook the eggnog, milk and pudding mix over medium heat until thickened and bubbly.
2. Remove from the heat and cool slightly. Stir in rum and nutmeg.
3. Pour pudding mixture into crust. Chill until set.
4. Garnish with whipped topping and sprinkle with nutmeg if desired.

Yield: 8 servings.

How To Win Friends & Influence People

By Dale Carnegie

Chapter 9: Making People Glad to Do What You Want.

Always make the other person happy about doing the thing you suggest.

Don't give the other person any time to feel unhappy about a refusal...change the other persons thoughts.

The effective leader should keep the following guidelines in mind when it is necessary to change attitudes or behavior:

1. Be sincere. Do not promise anything that you cannot deliver. Forget about the benefits to yourself and concentrate on the benefits to the other person
2. Know exactly what it is you want the other person to do.
3. Be emphatic. Ask yourself what it is the other person really wants.
4. Consider the benefits the other person will receive from doing what you suggest.
5. Match those benefits to the other person's wants.
6. When you make your request, put it in a form that will convey to the other person the idea that they personally will benefit.

Principle 9: Make the other person happy abut doing the thing you suggest.

Uplifting Quote of The Month

"Christmas is not a time nor a season, but a state of mind. To cherish peace and goodwill, to be plenteous in mercy, is to have the real spirit of Christmas."

~ Calvin Coolidge



Wise Home Owner Tip:

6 Tips To Avoid Injury While Shoveling Snow

1. Warm up. Before digging in, jog in place or run up stairs and stretch to get your muscles warmed up.
2. Use an ergonomic shovel. Ergonomically correct shovels are typically much lighter than normal shovels and have a contoured handle that's designed to reduce or eliminate bending and decrease lifting. Remember, each shovelful of snow can weigh some 20 pounds. Use WD-40 on your shovel to prevent sticking snow.
3. Use the proper shoveling technique. Push the snow instead of lifting it, and be sure not to overload the shovel. If you have to lift, bend your knees and lift with your legs (**not your back!**), and avoid twisting or throwing snow over your shoulder.
4. Take breaks. Every 15 minutes or so, stand up straight, walk around, and drink water to avoid dehydration and overheating.
5. Listen to your body. Pay attention to your body's signals, such as pains, shortness of breath, or chest discomfort.
6. Don't shovel: Some people simply should ditch shoveling duties. Wainwright recommends that men and women over the age of 45, especially those who are not physically active or have a history of a heart condition, let someone else do the shoveling.

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Did You Know...

That you can use WD-40 to waterproof your winter boots and shoes? It'll act as a barrier so water can't penetrate the material. Also, use WD-40 to remove salt stains from boots and shoes during the winter months. Just spray WD-40 onto the stains and wipe with a clean rag.

Joke Of The Month

