

# MIKE'S Tool Box

## 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.



### Tips To Get Your Home Ready For Spring

Springtime is coming and that means we will be spending more time outside. Start taking care of your home early to ensure you are able to have plenty of time for outdoor fun. To assist you in having a worry free spring and summer, here are some easy steps you can take to prepare your home. Maintaining your home this spring will ensure your home is in good shape throughout the summer.

**I DON'T DO WINDOWS:** Get a clear view of what's outside. Have your windows cleaned inside and out and checked for any cracked or damaged window glazing and panes. Also, see how well your weather stripping held up over the winter. Have worn weather stripping replaced and you'll keep the cool air in and the warm air out this summer.

**KEEP THE BUGS OUT:** To ensure you are not spending your time inside swatting flies, be sure to have window and door screens installed. This is a good time to have all of you screens checked for damage and repair them as needed. Also, while you have your screens out is a good time to have them washed with a little soap and water.

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**CHECK YOUR SIDING:** The winter weather (well maybe not this most recent one) is rough on the exterior siding and roof of your home. Spring is a good time to have the wood components especially the siding checked for wood rot and damage. Areas where paint is missing or chipping away and where caulking is missing or damaged are especially susceptible to rot. Generally it is better to catch rot and have it repaired when the damage is small, since it will only get worse each time it rains.

**CIRCULATE THE AIR:** Switch over your humidifier & bypass to summer from winter. If your home has an attic fan, turn it on to be sure it is working before the 90-degree weather hits! Homes with crawlspaces should have the vents open and free of debris to help airflow and reduce moisture. Inside your home, have the HVAC vents cleaned and the filter changed. Also, now is also a good time to have the AC inspected to be sure it works properly before the heat and humidity arrive.

**CHECK YOUR OUTSIDE UTILITIES:** Have your hoses reconnected and checked for leaks to ensure you have the water to fill that kiddie pool, water your flower beds, and wash your car. Also, before your first backyard BBQ or party, have your outside electrical outlets checked to ensure the radio will play and that bug zapper keeps the mosquitoes off your kids & guests!

More on preparing for spring and summer next month!



## Upcoming March Events That Might Interest You...



\* St. Patrick's Day on Saturday  
March 17, 2012.

\*Lansing Home and Garden Show  
located in East Lansing on the  
campus of Michigan State  
University. From 3/15/2012 –  
3/18/2012. The strongest Home  
and Garden show in Mid-Michigan  
fills the MSU Pavilion. Stunning  
gardens, extensive landscaping  
projects and a Standard Flower  
Show surround exhibits featuring  
new construction, remodeling,  
kitchens and baths, retail garden  
centers, pools and spas and home  
services. Free seminars daily.  
Phone for details at (517) 432-5566.



\*Daylight Savings Time at 2:00am  
on Sunday March 11, 2012.



\* The first day of spring is Tuesday  
March 20, 2012.



## SIGNS OF FOUNDATION PROBLEMS

Foundation problems typically have very recognizable signs. These signs can range from typical cracks you see in walls, to windows & doors that don't open or close properly, to more obvious signs such as cracks in exterior walls and uneven floors. We have outlined the most common signs in this article. Use the checklist below to help you determine if your home or business may need foundation repair

**1. CRACKS IN BRICK** – Stair-step cracks in brick mortar are a common sign in of a foundation problem in a houses. The mortar is the weakest link in the chain and usually will break before brick, however, brick can also break due to the stress.



**2. STICKING DOORS** – Both interior and exterior doors can stick if the foundation or framing has settled. Since settlement causes the frames of doors to be out of square, the door itself will stick in the frame or swing open by itself.

**3. SHEETROCK CRACKS** – Again, sheetrock is soft and will crack sooner than most other parts of your house. Diagonal cracks above doors, window frames, & other openings are one of the most common signs of settling.

**4. STICKING WINDOWS** – Windows will often be hard to open and close due to distortion of the frame, again, caused by settlement.

**5. SLOPING OR UNEVEN FLOORS** – If a piece of furniture appears to be leaning, it is probably settlement of the foundation.

**6. WRINKLES OR TEARS IN WALLS** – Wrinkled wallpaper or tears on wall texture and ceilings are also signs of foundation settlement.

**7. CRACKS IN FLOOR TILE** – Ceramic floor tile, being a rigid material, will often crack if the foundation moves.

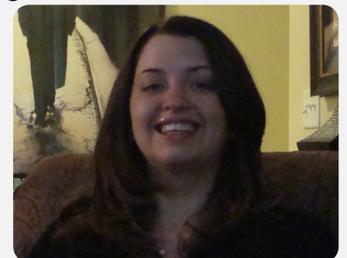
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## What We've Been Up To Over The Winter:



- Updated a home computer network router system.
- Troubleshooting/diagnosing & repairing a condensation/mildew issue in a bonus room above a garage
- General building maintenance for a local dental practice.
- Kitchen built-in appliance replacement/upgrade.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> flood studio innovative storage implementation.

- Prepping space for a recent retirees home office.
- Upgrading my Fender Stratocaster with Seymour Duncan pick-ups, new tone controls, new pick guard & learning a few new songs.
- Training for my 3<sup>rd</sup> degree black belt in Tae Kwon Do.
- Celebrating Danielle's (my daughter/office administrator's) weight gain (pregnancy) & engagement





## Spring Cleaning Basics

### Clean Windows

Dirty panes are no problem when you use rubber-edged squeegees, which are quicker and more effective than cloth or newspaper. They come in a variety of sizes -- and a screw-on extension will let you reach high spots.

To start, dip a sponge into a bucket of warm water and a few drops of mild dish soap. Wet window; rub dirt away. Dampen squeegee; starting at an upper corner, draw it down pane from top to bottom. Repeat, overlapping strokes and wiping rubber edge with sponge after each stroke. (For large windows, "snake" squeegee back and forth; then touch up edges.) Dry windowsills with a cloth.

### Wash Your Blinds

Once or twice a year, wipe wooden blinds with a few drops of gentle wood cleaner on a nearly dry sponge. Aluminum blinds can be washed outdoors: Place them on an old sheet on a slanted surface, and scrub with water and a noncorrosive cleaner. Use a hose to rinse well, and then dry the blinds thoroughly with a towel to prevent rust.

### Update Bed Linens

Replace your bedding for a quick makeover. For an easy custom duvet cover, use two flat sheets. Place sheets back to back, and sew around the perimeter, allowing for a 1/2-inch seam; leave an opening at the bottom. To close, sew twill-tape ties or velcro tape to the inside edges.

### Deep-Clean Carpets and Rugs

For synthetic carpeting, rent or buy a shampooer/extractor -- a machine that cleans the fibers and removes traces of soap using hot water. Open windows and let air flow to help carpets dry. If you have wool carpets or rugs, or any that are valuable or delicate, contact a professional for cleaning.



### Clean Your Curtains

Vacuum and steam-clean curtains or have them dry-cleaned. If you'll be replacing heavy curtains with lighter ones, as the weather gets warmer, it is especially important to remove dust and dirt before putting the curtains away for storage.

### Protect Wooden Floors

Guard against scratches on wooden floors. Make sure there are surface protectors on the undersides of furniture legs, and replace any that are dirty or worn. (A buildup of grit can mar the floor.) Use thick, padded self-adhesive discs; they come in different diameters and can be found at home stores.

### Clean Out the Refrigerator

This task is a daunting undertaking; make it more manageable by breaking it down.

- Make it a habit to throw out old, spoiled food.
- Every few months, wash the interior with a solution of two tablespoons of baking soda for every quart of warm water. Wash removable shelves and drawers in the solution (let glass shelves come to room temperature first so warm water won't crack them).
- Loosen hardened spills on fixed parts by wetting the area with the solution, allowing the residue to soften.
- Use a toothbrush to scrub crannies.
- Twice a year, vacuum or brush dust from the condenser coils to keep the system from overheating.



## Guinness Bread Recipe

### Ingredients

- 1 cup regular rolled oats, plus additional
- 2 cups whole wheat flour
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 cup melted butter
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract

### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees F (220 degrees C). Grease an 8x8 inch-baking pan.
2. Mix together the oats, flour, sugar, baking soda, baking powder, and salt in a bowl. In a separate large bowl, stir together the butter, vanilla, buttermilk, and Guinness® beer. Pour the flour mixture into the beer mixture, and gently stir until well blended. Pour batter into the prepared baking pan, and sprinkle with additional oats if desired.
3. Bake in preheated oven for 30 minutes, and then turn the temperature down to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C), and bake for an additional 30 minutes. Turn the oven off, open the door, and allow to cool for 30 minutes in the oven before turning out onto a wire rack.

## How To Win Friends & Influence People By Dale Carnegie

How to win people to your way of thinking:

If you tell someone they are wrong, you have struck a direct blow at their intelligence, judgment, pride and self-respect. That will never make them want to change their minds.

When we are wrong, we may admit it to ourselves. If we are handled gently & tactfully we may admit it to others, but not if someone else is trying to ram the unpalatable fact down our esophagus.

In other words, don't argue with your customer, spouse, or adversary. Don't tell them they are wrong, don't get them stirred up. Use a little diplomacy.

Principle 2: Show respect for the other person's opinions. Never say, "Your wrong."

Stay Tuned...

*"Men must be taught as if you taught them not, and things unknown proposed as things forgot."*

*~ Alexander Pope*

## Uplifting Quote of The Month

*"If you are going to be thinking, you may as well think big."*

*~Donald Trump*

*"Dream big, focus small."*

*~Mike Forner*



## Wise Home Owner Tip:

### Time Changes Mean Battery Changes

Get into the habit of changing the batteries in your smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors every fall or spring when changing the clocks for Daylight Savings Time. Verify that these safety systems work properly. By the way, are your smoke/fire detectors interlocked? If they aren't they should be for your and your family's safety.

### Energy Saving Tips

Use ENERGY STAR labeled products. A new refrigerator with an ENERGY STAR label will save you between \$35 & \$70 a year compared to the models designed 15 years ago.

Install 14-watt compact fluorescent light bulbs in place of 60-watt incandescent bulbs. CFLs use at least 2/3 less energy than standard incandescent bulbs to provide the same amount of light, and last up to 10 times longer. You can save \$30 or more in energy costs over each bulb's lifetime.

The most important maintenance task that will ensure the efficiency of your air conditioner is to replace the filters monthly. Clogged, dirty filters block normal airflow and reduce a system's efficiency significantly.

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### Did You Know...

That you can spray WD-40 around the bottom of your garbage can to prevent animals from getting into it?



### Joke of The Month

Mitch is working at the site, pushing a plank through the buzz saw, when he accidentally shears off all ten of his fingers. He manages to drive himself to the nearest hospital's emergency room.

The doctor takes one look at Mitch's bloody stumps and says, "Oh my gosh, reattachment surgery on so many lost digits has never been attempted before! But don't worry, I'm the best surgeon in the hospital, give me the fingers, and we'll get to work."

Mitch says, "I haven't got the fingers."

The doctor looks flabbergasted. "What do you mean, you haven't got the fingers? It's the 21st century! We've got microsurgery and all kinds of incredible techniques. I could have put them back on and made you like new. Why didn't you bring in the fingers??"

Mitch says, "Well, Doc, I couldn't exactly pick them up!"