



Website helps you tackle your home-improvement projects

Summer vacation season is in full swing. For many, this means a trip to the beach, mountains or some other destination.

Not everyone travels for vacation. Some people may choose to use the combination of time off and warm weather to tackle a big home improvement project. It's a great time to build that deck, patio or landscaping project you've dreamed of, or to finally tackle that painting, roofing, siding or other exterior maintenance issue you've avoided.

You could call contractors and give your vacation pay to them. Or you could do a little research and take on the project yourself. Replacing a roof may be

best left to the pros, but doing a less-daunting project yourself can be very satisfying.

Lots of tools online

It's a great time to be a weekend handyman. Thanks to sites such as **DoltYourself.com**, it's easy to find instructions, plans, videos and other useful information on any project you want to attempt.

The How-Tos section offers a comprehensive range of home repair and improvement topics, including:

- **decorating**
- **painting**
- **electrical**
- **appliances**
- **plumbing**
- **heating**
- **air conditioning**
- **cleaning**

Those are some of the topics specific to the house. There's also sections on:

- **gardening**
- **outdoor projects**
- **lifestyles**
- **crafts**
- **recreation**
- **"green" solutions**
- **cars**
- **trucks**
- **boats**

There even are articles on finances, legal matters and real estate.

Most of the instruction on the site assumes a basic level of knowledge of tool use and working techniques. Some projects have thorough descriptions and videos that explain all the ins and outs. Others have more general instructions and lack video, photos or drawings that would help clarify the text.

For an experienced do-it-yourselfer, the less-descriptive tutorials are useful as a broad outline for tools, materials and the steps necessary for a project. These tutorials don't give enough instruction for a novice to confidently attempt a project. Even the experienced viewer would appreciate more visuals accompanying the text.

The site is nicely designed. It has good photography, organization and typography, and intuitive navigation. It's set up to scroll down through the content with the main features at the top and secondary stories visible as you go further down. Drop-down navigation at the top of the page and a complete index of sections at the bottom allow you to easily find topics you're looking for. A search feature allows you to find specific topics.

The site is a good resource, but it would be better with more thorough tutorials.

KEVIN O'NEILL is a staff artist for The Times-Tribune. Share your favorite websites and apps with him at koneill@timeshamrock.com.



KEVIN O'NEILL
InSites