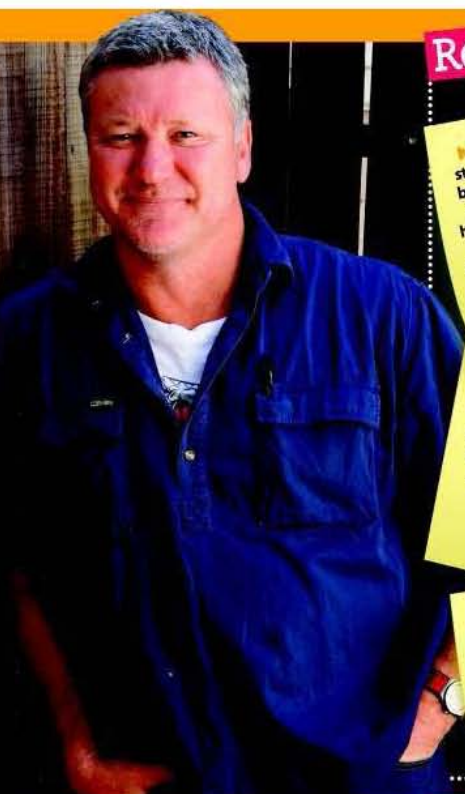


## Budget blitz

# YOUR DIY

WANT TO RENOVATE YOUR HOME WITHOUT BUSTING YOUR BANK BALANCE? DOMESTIC BLITZ STAR SCOTT CAM HAS A FEW CLEVER SUGGESTIONS



### Readers' DIY tips

▶▶ A neat, fast way to paint stair spindles or other hard-to-brush objects is to slip a plastic food storage bag over your hand and then an old white sock over the bag. Then dip your covered hand into the paint and apply it to the surface. You'll cover all the areas, including the nooks and crannies.  
Louisa Derby, NSW.

▶▶ When you buy wallpaper, ensure each roll is exactly the same as the rest, including the batch number and shade number. And buy one roll too many because you never know when you might make a mistake ...  
Madge Markson, Qld.

▶▶ If you're using sandpaper on a round surface, try covering the back of the sandpaper sheets with duct tape. This will help improve the flexibility of the sandpaper.  
Jo, NSW.

**W**hen it comes to renovating the house, keep costs down by following a few simple rules. Try these on for size:

**Tackle the trades yourself (well, only if you're confident)**

▶▶ OK, I don't recommend trying plumbing or electrics – you definitely need a licensed and experienced tradie for that type of work – but why not give painting a go? And stripping out kitchens or bathrooms is pretty easy if you hire a skip and wear a disposable suit.

The rule of thumb here is to weigh up the value of your own time against the experience of a professional, who may do the job more quickly and easily.

A few services can help you find experienced trades. Check out [www.servicecentral.com.au](http://www.servicecentral.com.au) (call 1800 737 842), [www.spinners.com.au](http://www.spinners.com.au) (call 13 77 46) or [www.1300alltrades.com.au](http://www.1300alltrades.com.au) (call 1300 255 872).

**Persuade your friends to form a working bee**

▶▶ Offer food and drink and call your strongest and most hardworking mates for a working bee.

If you rustle up three or four to dig out old concrete, sand back exterior timbers for painting or turf the front lawn, you can get a job done in a day instead of a week.

All it'll cost you is a bit of hospitality – and an obligation to return the favour.

**Use second-hand materials**

▶▶ It's environmentally friendly to reuse materials and you may save a bundle. Check out local demolition yards or call builders who do salvage and demolition.

Pavers and structural timbers are usually easy enough to source, and you may find a "you-beaut" feature like a claw-foot bathtub or leadlight windows.

**Keep your eyes on the auctions**

▶▶ Auction houses used to be a well-kept secret, but these days it's easy enough for any punter within reach of a major capital city to pick up building materials on the cheap.

Many of the goods available at auction are cancelled orders or surplus stock, but some manufacturers

are now regularly selling discounted kitchens and bathroom vanities through auction houses, which generally advertise in the Saturday newspapers.

You can even bid online at [www.graysonline.com.au](http://www.graysonline.com.au). To hunt down cheap building materials, try [www.xsstock.com.au](http://www.xsstock.com.au) or [www.constructionconnect.com.au](http://www.constructionconnect.com.au)

▶▶ Catch Scott and the rest of the team on *Domestic Blitz*, which screens Sundays at 6.30pm on the Nine Network.

**IT'S EASY TO PICK UP BUILDING MATERIALS ON THE CHEAP**

### TOOLTIME FOR HANDYGALS

▶▶ Grab some girl-sized equipment to make the job easier

▶▶ This 150mm spirit level has horizontal, vertical and 45-degree levels, magnetic base and a hanging hole for easy storage, \$4.99.

▶▶ This 6-in-1 screwdriver has a soft, ergonomically designed rubber handle and interchangeable screw heads, including standard heads, a Phillips head and nut drivers, \$13.99.

▶▶ This cool hobby staple gun is light duty, suiting 4-8mm staples, \$12.99.

▶▶ All tools are sold online at [www.diywoman.com.au](http://www.diywoman.com.au)

