

Door repairs you can make

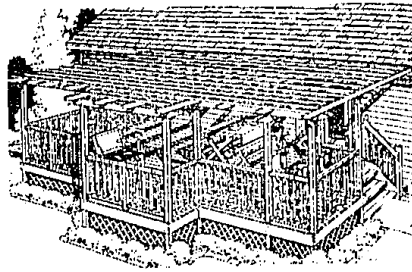
BY READER'S DIGEST BOOKS FOR AP SPECIAL FEATURES

If a door won't open and close properly, the source of the problem may be the door itself - the hinges, the latch or the frame.
 If a door is badly deformed, replace it. Minor warping can sometimes be corrected by adding another hinge.
 If the house's settling has pushed the door's frame - or jambs - out of square, the door can often be planed or trimmed to fit the new shape. You may need to call in a professional to repair - or replace - a metal floor with a warped frame.
 Hinge-related repairs are easier to make. Check them first. Look for hinge screws that have worked loose or that are turning in their holes without gripping. Plug an enlarged screw hole with a glue-coated wooden golf tee or dowel, or use matchsticks or toothpicks.

When the glue is dry, trim the plug flush. Then drill a pilot hole and insert the screw.
 For a hole that's only slightly enlarged, drill a pilot hole going through the jamb into the stud behind it. Insert a longer screw.
 Here are some other trouble-shooting tips:
 • If the door rubs at the top or bottom corner, check and tighten loose hinge screws. Or place a thin piece of wood or cardboard behind a hinge leaf on the jamb. Do it on the hinge that is closest to the rubbing area.
 • Humid weather can cause a door to stick because the wood under the paint swells. Wait until you've had a few days of dry weather. Then lightly sand the door edges and jamb. If necessary, sand down to the bare wood, then prime and repaint the edges. If the sticking is severe, you may have to plane the door edges.
 • Saw the bottom of the door to fit if it won't clear new flooring or carpeting. Score the cut line with a utility knife to keep the veneer from chipping.
 Sawing the bottom of a hollow-core door

may expose a cavity; fill it with the frame board in the cutoff portion of the door. Before rehanging it, seal the bottom of the door with a clear wood sealer.
Planing a door
 Always take down a door before planing it. Take out the pin from the bottom hinge first. When reinstalling it, seat the top pin first. Because it's easier to resist than to refit latches, always plane the door's hinge side rather than the lock side.
 To avoid dulling the plane blade, strip the paint or varnish from the door edge before planing. Check the door's fit often so you don't remove too much wood. After planing, deepen the hinge mortises on the planed edge as needed.
 Finish the planed edge with primer and paint or a clear wood sealer, such as polyurethane thinned with mineral spirits.

The Weekly Do-It-Yourselfer

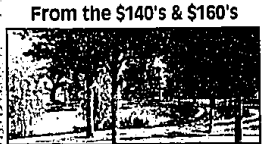


Parallel porch deck

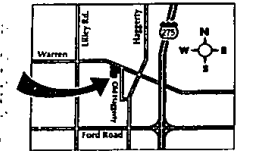
This week's project can be a popular addition to nearly any home. With the many options available, you can create a porch that is like no other. The first decision to make is what size. You can choose from eight sizes, ranging from as small as 8' x 12' to as large as 10' x 24'. Other options include a country porch swing and lattice work. Stair and railing plans are included, making it possible to make your project even more customized with all the choices available at your local lumber yard. Two complete sets of the plans

are included: one for you or your builder, and one for the building department. Plans include clearly labeled, detailed drawings along with full framing instructions. Illustrations are drawn three dimensionally with full elevations and cross sectional diagrams. Step-by-step comprehensive instructions are included to aid you in construction. A full materials list will make your trip to a local lumberyard for building materials another easy step toward the completion of your new project.

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Doors that don't close

If a door doesn't latch properly, the latch bolt may not be catching in the strike plate. Correct minor misalignment between the bolt and strike plate by enlarging the strike plate's opening with a file.
 To correct a larger mismatch, move the strike plate. Unscrew the plate and enlarge the mortise. Then plug the old holes and drill new ones. After mounting the plate, fill any exposed old mortise with wood putty.
 If a door springs open, it may be that a hinge has been mortised too deeply into the jamb.
 Remove the hinge leaf from the jamb. Cut a thin piece of cardboard or wood the same size as the leaf. Reinstall the leaf with the shim behind it, driving the screws tight.
 Test the door. If the mortise is still too deep, add another shim.

Fire safety in your home

(NAPS) - Fight fire in your home with these safety tips:
 1. Install properly placed smoke detectors, test monthly and change the batteries annually.
 2. Place a fire extinguisher close to the kitchen and recharge periodically.
 3. Place deep large ash trays around the house.
 4. Empty cigarette butts into a metal can. Don't put in anything that could catch fire.
 5. Don't leave any cooking unattended.
 6. Don't hang spice racks or pot holders over stoves.
 7. If a grease fire breaks out in a pan on the stove, put a lid on to cut off oxygen and turn off burner. Never carry the pan from the stove since it could fan the flame.
 8. In case of an oven-fan fire, close the oven or broiler door and turn off the oven.
 9. Follow heating unit instructions carefully and heed warning labels.
 10. Before you go to bed, check on and behind sofas and chairs for dropped cigarette or embers.
 11. Never smoke if you are overtired, taking strong medication, drinking alcohol or reclining on a bed or sofa.
 12. When selecting furniture, look for the gold UPAC hangtag. This tag tells you that the furniture is more resistant to smoldering cigarettes.

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Mortgage rate down this week

WASHINGTON (AP) - Interest rates on 30-year, fixed-rate mortgages averaged 7.81 percent this week, the lowest level in two months, the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corp. said Thursday.
 The decline to a nine-week low was the fourth in a row and brought the weekly average more than one-quarter percentage point below a seven-month high of 8.18 percent the week ended April 3. That was the week after the Federal Reserve tightened monetary policy for the first time in two years.
 Fifteen-year mortgages, a popular option for those refinancing mortgages, averaged 7.44 percent this week, also a nine-week low and down from 7.47 percent a week earlier.
 On one-year adjustable rate mortgages, lenders were asking an average initial rate of 5.78 percent this week, the lowest in seven weeks and down from 5.82 percent.
 The rates do not include add-on fees known as points.