

HOME WORK

Readers ask about washers and glue

APPLIANCE DOCTOR



JOE GAGNON

I got over 100 e-mails every week. Some of them are here with my answers to help you along the way.

Q: I have a 7-year-old Maytag washing machine, model No. LAT 8840 BAW. It works great. Sometimes after my wife washes a load of clothes and the washtub is dry at the end of the cycle when the clothes are removed. By the next morning, there is up to a gallon of water standing in the bottom. Is it a water pump seal?

A: The problem you are having is with the water valve on the back of the washing machine. It is leaking through after it is shut off. This is not a hard part for you to change, and it costs about \$30 for the part. Take a look at it where the two hoses

connect on the back of the unit. Two screws, a little hose comes off and remove the four wires. Do it yourself and save some money.

May I suggest something that will make your wife feel like a queen? Why don't you inform her that every other week you will do the wash? Your wife will appreciate it.

Another reader asks: "Now my wife and I are taking the plunge and buying a home in Canton. Can you please advise me on what brand and model of refrigerator, washer, dryer and stove we should buy? We are in our early 30s and late 20s with no children."

A: My dear friend, you are exactly the person I wish to help as much as possible. It's not that I don't want to help the older folks, but you will reap more benefits from reading these columns than anyone else because of your age bracket.

There is not one manufacturer who makes all products to my liking, so your question is a tricky one and the one most often asked. I usually respond

that I like Whirlpool refrigerators and stoves, and Maytag washers and dryers. That's the viewpoint of an old white-haired repairman.

Shirley wants to know if the new book has more information than the Appliance First Aid book I wrote. My new book, "The Words and Wisdom of the Appliance Doctor," is vastly different than the first. It is a compilation of columns from the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers with additional information. I've often heard people say they clip the information in my columns and place them in a binder. You won't have to do this anymore. For the columns are in the book. If you read the book, you can write a letter of appreciation to this newspaper for allowing me to do it.

Another reader named Flo thought the Appliance Doctor would know what glue to purchase for a repair to a paper napkin holder that is lucite and has a broken knob.

I don't know everything, but buy the best glue you can afford.

Q: I have a Whirlpool washing machine that is about eight years old. It's located in the basement, is fed by the basement water pipes and drains

directly into the laundry tub. The problem I'm having is a foul odor (like stagnant water?) is coming from the machine.

I have made sure that the machine is level, confirmed that the drain is properly functioning so that no water is forced back into the machine during spin cycles and placed a lint filter over the drain (and change it regularly). I also checked that water tubing-connections are secure, at the back of the machine.

The machine seems to be functioning normally other than the foul odor. The smell is most obvious when the machine is filling and a day or so after the last wash load. Any thoughts? (Jennifer Grodsky)

A: It sounds like the vent stack pipe on the roof is plugged. Joe Gagnon can be heard on *NewsTalk 760, WJR-AM, every Saturday and Sunday mornings. Do you have a question for the Appliance Doctor? Contact him care of Ken Abramczyk, At Home Editor, Observer Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150 or e-mail kabramczyk@homecomm.net. To send a fax, call (734) 591-7279.*

Address pesky floor squeaks by examining joists and nails

ASK DAD



HARRY JACHYM

Floor squeaks often are more noticeable at this time of year, and homeowners often wonder what causes them.

The heated air has a drying effect on wood, but the answer depends on what's causing the squeak and where it's located.

Floor squeaks are caused by two surfaces rubbing against each other, which is usually the subfloor rubbing against the joist (the horizontal floor framing members). Sometimes the squeak can be as simple as an improperly driven nail that grazes the side of joist, which moves when someone steps near it, also creating noise.

How to address it depends on whether a finished or unfinished ceiling in the basement exists below.

Unfinished business

If the squeak is above an unfinished ceiling, the job should be relatively simple. Have another person step on the floor while you stand downstairs or on that lower level, making it squeak until you can locate the source.

The squeak can often be quieted by forcing construction adhesive between the joist and the subfloor and driving 3 1/2-inch screws through both sides of the joist at about a 45° angle into the subfloor. (Be very careful not to go through the subfloor into the finished floor.)

You may find you need a little more force. After forcing construction adhesive into the gap, glue and screw a short piece of 2-by-4 into the joist and subfloor. Use 3 1/2-inch screws through the joist into the 2-by-4 and 2-inch screws (assuming 3/4-inch subfloor material) through the 2-by-4 into the subfloor.

In both the above cases, weight should be put on the floor above to push it against the joist before fastening. And again, be careful not to run the screws through the subfloor.

Many home repair books suggest hammering a shim in the gap between the subfloor and the joist where the noise is occurring. Sometimes this repair works, but quite often it tends to separate the subfloor and joist in

adjacent areas causing the squeak to spread further.

If a nail is causing the commotion, grab it with a pair of pliers and bend it out, away from the joist. If part of the nail is in the joist, a pry bar, cat's claw or screwdriver may be needed to free it.

When you have a finished ceiling below the floor squeak, it usually means working through the floor.

You'll first have to locate the joists and the direction they are going. Some electronic stud finders will read through carpet, but most won't.

Tap the floor with a hammer, listening for a dull thud sound, which should indicate the joist's location. To verify, drive a finish nail through the carpet and subfloor. If, after going about 3/4-inch to 1-inch deep there's no resistance to driving the nail, you've missed the joist. Pull the nail and try again, moving about 1/2-inch perpendicular to the joist run. Joists usually (but not always) run across the short dimension of the room.

Once found, drive two or more 16d (penny) finish nails through the carpet at opposing angles into the joist. Set the nails through the carpet and pad.

An alternative to this is to push the point of a 2-inch or 3 1/2-inch screw through the carpet and pad and with a power drill/driver, drive it into the joist until the head goes through the carpet backing. Using screws holds better than nails and tends to draw the subfloor tight against the joist. (This method only works when you can separate the carpet pile where the screw is being inserted so the backing is visible. Long or thick pile where you can't see the backing may catch the screw pulling the carpet fibers or wrenching the driver from your hand.)

Tile, hardwood options

Tile floors above a finished ceiling leave you two options: you can remove the tile, eliminate the squeak and replace the tile or you can cut out the ceiling, stop the squeak from below and repair the ceiling.

Hardwood floors leave you with the same two options, along with a third. It is possible to drill a small pilot hole through hardwood, drive and set finish nails through it into the joist, then putty over the nail hole.

Harry Jachym, a licensed builder, lives in Plymouth and teaches building trades to high school students in a school district in western Wayne County.

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