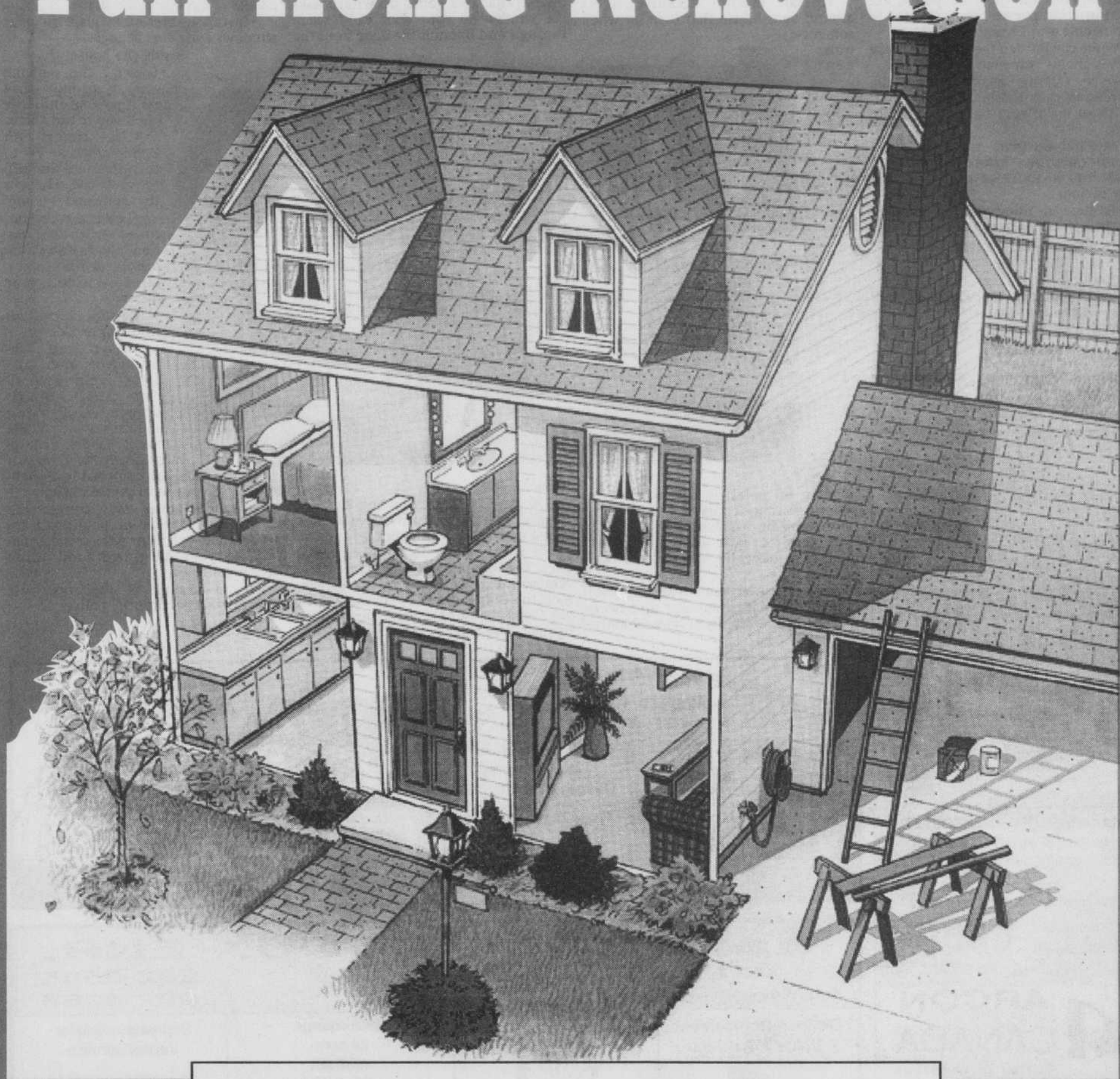
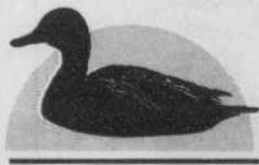


# Fall Home Renovation



*Brome County*  
**NEWS**



**Advertorial  
Supplement  
October 1998**



# Tips to make burglars pass by your home

(SOP) With nearly one-third of Canadians feeling they are likely to fall victim to a residential break-in and break-in rates on the rise, police are pushing crime-prevention programs to help people avoid being burgled.

People can harden the target or make thieves choose someone else's house.

We're talking about giving the impression that the house looks lived in. It's to make your home tougher to enter.

Potential burglars ask themselves several questions before deciding to break into a house or an apartment. They include:

- Is there anything worth stealing?
- Does the place look occupied?
- Can I get in easily?
- Am I likely to be seen or heard by neighbours?
- What tools or devices around the house will help me get in?
- When is the home most vulnerable?

## TIPS TO MAKE BURGLARS PASS BY YOUR HOME:

• Put away ladders, shovels and other tools that could be used to break into your house;

• Install motion sensitive lights around your house that turn on when someone walks near

• Change your lock to a key-in-key-out system, where you need to use a key to lock or unlock it both outside and inside. That's so someone who breaks the window in your door can't reach through and unlatch the door from the

cases of people using scanning devices to copy the radio waves of the door openers and then getting into the garage and robbing the house;

• Install unbreakable glass in your windows with bars or locks.

### Inside the house:

• Lower the phone ringer so people can't hear it ringing endlessly when you're not there;

• Use timers on lights, radios or TVs to turn them on and off, to give the illusion that someone is home;

• Leave a radio on, tuned to an AM station, loud enough for people to hear mumbling inside your house;

• Install locks on windows and doors;

• Don't leave cash, jewelry or other valuables lying around. Etch your driver's license number on televisions, VCRs, stereos, video equipment, even the covers of

CDs. You can borrow an etching pen at your local police station;

• If you're going away, contact the local police station or public-security department, who can pay special attention to your neighbourhood while they're patrolling;

• If you see someone suspicious, trust your instincts and notify police.



them;

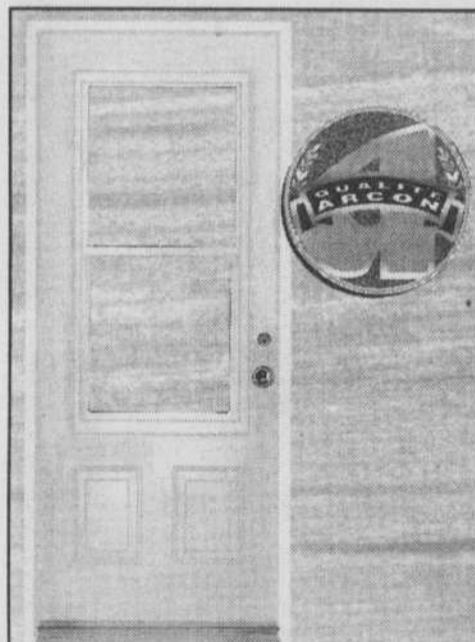
• Put a piece of metal on the door frame where your lock closes to make the lock stronger. Normally, the deadbolt lock goes into pine wood and so anybody can basically sneeze their way through it;

• Put alarm-system stickers on your windows or doors, and put up Beware of Dog signs, even if you have no alarm system or dog;

inside;

• Be careful about showing signs of wealth. Keep the curtains drawn so your brand new TV isn't in plain sight;

• If you're going to be away, make sure the grass gets cut and snow removed. Park your car in the garage, lock the doors and take the keys with you. And disconnect your garage-door opener. There have been a couple of



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# Hints on finding good contractors

**Q:** We were thinking of having the basement finished and some balconies replaced but we have never hired a contractor before. How do we go about it and what pitfalls should we be leery of?

**A:** Unfortunately when the construction and renovation markets get tight, unsavoury elements have a tendency to creep in.

This means that you have to be more careful than usual in choosing a contractor. Roofers, for example, are very busy in summer and you might want to put off any roofing work until the fall, if you can, when the demand for roofers returns to normal and some form of price stability returns to the market.

You should choose a contractor in much the same way as you would make any other major consumer purchase. Start by doing some basic research. Read some renovation books from the local library to find out how things should be done. Then ask your friends, relatives and neighbours, if they can recommend someone who did a good job for them.

Insurance and real estate agents along with the loan officer at your local bank might also prove helpful in this search.

If this fails to turn up any likely candidates there are always the Yellow Pages or your local community newspaper. If you are engaging an architect, the architect should be able to recommend a contractor.

To get the best work done for the best price, you should be looking for three different contractors so you can compare prices. When you have found three likely candidates, ask them to submit written bids for the work, and ask each one for three references.

The references should be for work that is similar in nature to what you want done and the work should have been done relatively recently.

Telephone the references and ask whether or not the client was satisfied with the work and if the work was done on time and budget. Ask if the contractor kept the work site clean and whether or not, all things considered, the experience was an enjoyable one.

Make sure to ask how changes to the project in mid-stream were dealt with.

During the first go-round ask the contractors what kind of work site insurance they carry and ask to see their licenses. Provide them with a detailed list of what you want done and ask them to bid on the project.

Make sure you give each contractor the same information and ask them to do the same work so that you can properly compare their bids and make sure they submit written bids which contain the cost of both materials and labour.

Make up your mind on whom to hire after evaluating a number of factors. You might decide to go with the contractor whom you feel the most comfortable with or the one with the best price or the best references.

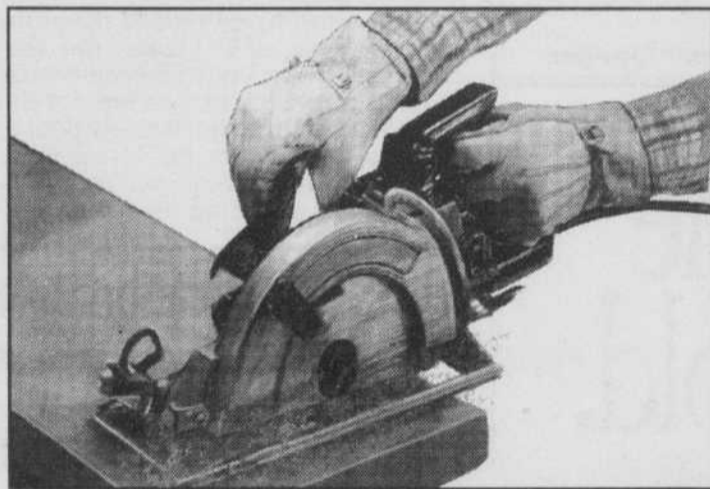
Examine the written bids carefully. The cost of materials, for instance, shouldn't vary significantly from one bid to the next. If there is a

large difference in the cost of materials from one bid to the next ask why that has happened. Labour costs, on the other hand, can vary greatly depending on how much employees like labourers, painters, plumbers and carpenters are being paid.

When you have narrowed down your choice, telephone the Better Business Bureau and find out whether any complaints have been lodged against the contractor you want to hire.

You should also check your own insurance to see whether you are protected against injury or theft of materials that are left on site. Find out whether or not it would be prudent to have a rider added to your insurance for the duration of the renovation.

Finally, a word about the fee schedule. Renovation projects are usually paid for in installments, with the last 10 percent being held back until all the work is finished according to the contract.



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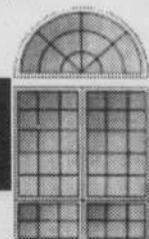
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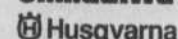
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# A ceiling fan is very practical

(SOP) In summer, the fan creates a cooling indoor breeze that can eliminate or reduce the need for air-conditioning. In winter, reversing the rotation of the blades can reclaim heat by causing rising warm air to circulate throughout the room.

A ceiling fan of good quality is durable and rarely needs attention beyond periodic cleaning. This is important because accumulated dirt can throw the fan off balance. Use a soft brush or lint-free cloth. Don't use water.

Here are some other trouble-shooting tips:

• If the fan doesn't move, be sure there's power at the outlet. Then check

the reversing switch. Push the switch firmly to one side or the other, it should not be in the middle of its throw.

• The wiring might be loose. Cut the power to the fan by flipping off the circuit-breaker or removing the fuse that controls the power going to it at your home's main service panel. (It's not safe to just turn off the switch.) Then check the wiring connections inside the switch housing. Tighten any that are loose.

• If the fan is noisy, check the motor-housing, switch housing, blades and blade irons for loose screws. If there is a light fixture, tighten the thumbscrews holding the bulb in place; they can

work loose from the fan's vibration.

• Is the fan level? Place a small level atop the motor housing. Make sure the canopy and mounting bracket are tight.

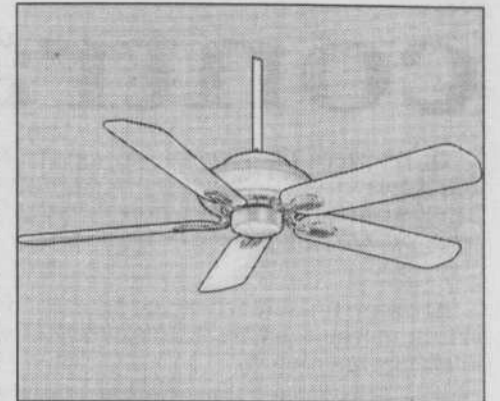
• Make sure that the fan is properly mounted. Consult the owner's manual. The fan's electrical box should be secured directly to a joist, a wood cross brace, or an approved metal bracket mounted between joists.

• One or more of the blades might be cracked or warped. To check for warped blades, remove the blades and lay them on a flat surface. They should lie flat. If a blade is cracked or warped, repair is probably impossible and might compromise safety. Replace the entire set because blades are matched as a set by the manufacturer.

• Examine the blade irons for defects. The irons are set at a factory at a 12-degree angle. The tip of each blade should be equidistant from the ceiling. If they are not, remove the irons and detach the blades. Stack the irons on top of one another. If you find one that doesn't match the others, replace the defective one.

• If you still haven't found the problem, balance the blades on the reassembled fan. Some fans come with a balancing kit that includes self-adhering weight strips. Even without a kit, you can balance the blades by a simple trial-and-error procedure.

• First try switching the position of



adjacent fan blades to see if that diminishes or eliminates the wobble. Check the fan at several speeds. If that doesn't work, use tape to temporarily attach small washers to the blades. Run the fan at several speeds. Repeat the test until you find the blades which, when weighted, produce the least wobble. Once the blades are balanced, glue the weights in place. For a four-bladed fan, balance two opposite blades at a time.

• You might have a defective motor, but investigate all other possible causes first. To check the motor, remove the blades and irons. Then turn the fan on to its highest setting. It shouldn't wobble. If it does, return it to the manufacturer for repair; most ceiling fan motors are covered by lengthy warranties. Look in your owner's manual for the closest authorized service centre.



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# How to keep the cold out

**Q.** The duplex we moved into over the summer has become increasingly drafty. There is a persistent draft at knee level and the windows, relatively new sliders, seem leaky. What can we do to cut down the cold and end the draft?

**A.** It's a little late in the year to do anything on the outside of the house. However, there are a number of things you can do on the inside that should improve the situation.

Start by taking a stick of incense and wandering through your house to identify where the cold air is coming from. Be careful not to set curtains or drapes on fire. Check high and low, around exterior doors, windows, electrical outlets and switches, and baseboards on exterior doors. When you hit a draft, the smoke from the incense will blow away, instead of rising in a straight line. It would be good to conduct this exercise when there's a mild breeze outside.

Examine your exterior doors for weatherstripping. If weatherstripping is already installed, it may need adjusting. If no weatherstripping has been installed, this should be done immediately.

In buildings that have never

been insulated, cold air comes in from unexpected sources. To a certain degree, the exterior walls are hollow and this allows cold air to penetrate into the living quarters. The joists that hold up the floors, for example, are embedded in the masonry walls. Joists shrink with age and cold air migrates through the masonry and flows into the building through these gaps.

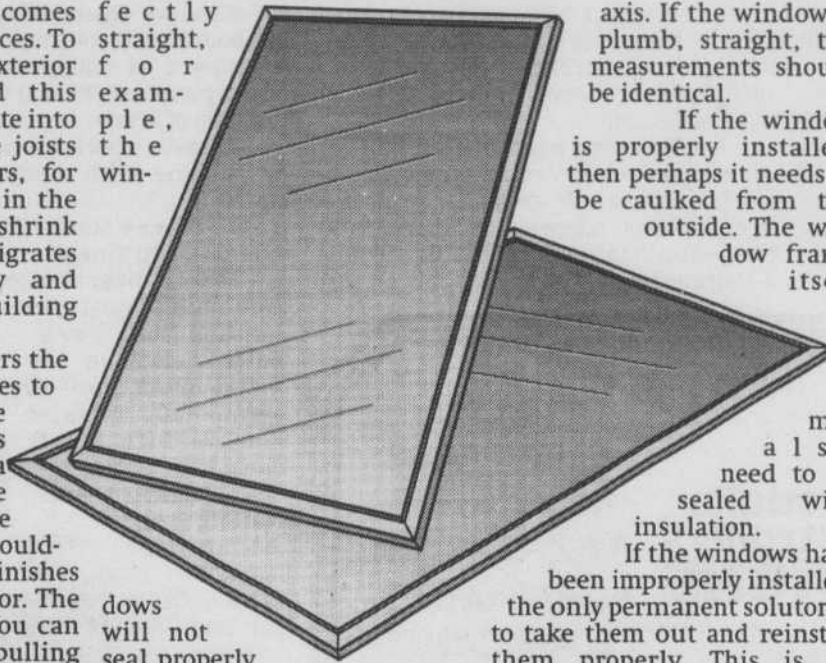
Once the cold air enters the exterior wall it penetrates to the inside through the baseboards. Baseboards are usually positioned a quarter-inch above the flooring to make sure they sit square. Shoe moulding or quarter-round finishes the baseboard to the floor. The gap allows cold air in. You can seal this gap by gently pulling up the shoe moulding or quarter-round and caulking the gap between the baseboard and the flooring. Once this is done, the moulding is replaced.

Electrical switches and outlets can be sealed by installing foam gaskets behind the switch and outlet plates.

Now, the windows. Even low-quality windows should provide a better weather seal than your discomfort suggests. If the windows were not installed properly, if they are not per-

fectly straight, for example, the windows

will not seal properly and this might be your problem. You can verify this by using a level on the vertical or horizontal sides of the window. Another way of doing it is to measure the windows from corner to corner on the diagonal



axis. If the window is plumb, straight, the measurements should be identical.

If the window is properly installed, then perhaps it needs to be caulked from the outside. The window frame itself

may also need to be sealed with insulation.

If the windows have been improperly installed, the only permanent solution is to take them out and reinstall them properly. This is, of course, a task better suited to warmer weather. Take advan-

tage of the situation to insulate properly between the window frame and the wall.

In the meantime, you can improve the situation by installing plastic storm windows on the inside of the windows. Kits for this are available in hardware and building-supply stores. First a double-sided tape is applied around the window. Starting at the top, you attach a plastic film to the tape, then apply it to the sides and finally the bottom.

This is a two-person operation because you should take pains to keep the plastic as straight and wrinkle-free as possible. One person should hold the plastic away from the two-sided tape while the other attaches it to the tape. When the plastic is fully applied, a heat gun or hair dryer can be used to shrink the plastic to eliminate any wrinkles.

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# To clean almost anything in your house

(SOP) Harsh cleaners can be hazardous to the environment. But you don't have to look farther than your kitchen cupboards to find some gentle substitutes.

Yet, cleaning the entire household with edible alternatives could be pricey. But pantry supplies such as vinegar, salt and soda can be counted on to clean almost everything in sight — for pennies.

## WHITE VINEGAR

—To remove a wax buildup on furniture or floors, mix equal parts vinegar and warm water. Rub into wood with a soft cloth. Dry wood immediately with a dry soft cloth.

—For a rinsing agent, add a half-cup of vinegar to the rinse water in the clothes washer. It removes soap film from clothes. Likewise, a vinegar solution — half vinegar, half water — brings a sparkle to glassware. Try this on dull

antique pressed-glass goblets and decanters.

—Remove greasy film from kitchen cupboards and counters by wiping with a solution of vinegar and water. Add one tablespoon (15 mL) vinegar to a gallon (5 L) of water.

—Remove spots from stainless steel by rubbing with a vinegar-dampened cloth.

—To remove static cling from shower curtains, add vinegar to the rinse water.

—Make a brass and copper cleaner by combining equal parts of vinegar, salt and flour into a paste. Leave on the metal object until dry, about 20 minutes. Remove with a soft cloth.

For quick results, combine equal amounts of hot vinegar and salt and rub on tarnished metal. Use

with salt and wipe with a paper towel. To keep it from rusting, wipe with a tablespoon or so of salad oil.

—Keep sink drains open and smelling fresh with regular treatments of a strong brine solution (one part salt to two parts hot water.) This will help to prevent grease buildup.

## SODA

—To put a shine on chrome, wipe it with a slightly damp cloth that has been sprinkled with soda.

Use it to shine up household chrome such as bathroom taps, burner rings and coffee percolators, as well as automobile chrome (not chrome-colored plastic.)

—Stubborn stains can be removed from stainless steel with soda. Sprinkle on a damp cloth and rub.

—Soda is a mild abrasive and can be used to clean tubs, sinks and the grout

between ceramic tiles. Apply with an old toothbrush.

—Ammonia water or powdered ammonia boosts the cleaning power of soda and vinegar. (When concentrated, ammonia is very irritating to the respiratory system; use only in a well-ventilated room. According to Pollution Probe, ammonia is not hazardous to the environment.)

Try this all-purpose cleaner: To one gallon (5 L) of water, add half-cup (125 mL) vinegar, quarter-cup (50 mL) powdered ammonia and quarter-cup (50 mL) baking soda. Wipe with sponge or soft cloth.

Used full strength, this cleaner is great for cleaning ceramic tiles, painted (oil-based) walls and wooden floors. Diluted with five parts water, it makes a good window cleaner. Add a few drops of dishwasher rinsing agent for streak-free windows.



these mixtures to clean solid brass or copper only, and not on metals treated to look like brass or copper.

## SALT

—To clean wicker furniture, dissolve one-half cup (125 mL) salt in one quart (1 L) warm water. Dampen a brush with the mixture, then sprinkle some dry salt on the furniture to be cleaned. Brush vigorously. Rinse with clear water and wipe dry.

Use this solution on unpainted wicker furniture only.

—To clean chopping blocks and cutting boards, sprinkle with salt and wipe with a damp cloth or brush. This method is especially useful for removing fish colors.

—To clean a greasy skillet, sprinkle



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## What is an oriental rug?

(SOP) When a buyer sees a rug advertised as a genuine oriental rug, beware. According to experts on oriental rugs, the term genuine is hardly applicable: There are no imitations. A rug is either an oriental or it's not.

The term oriental rug applies to any hand knotted rug from the Balkans, North Africa, Persia (Iran), southeastern Europe, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan (Soviet Union), India, China, Baluchistan (western Pakistan), Anatolia (Turkey), and the Caucasus.

There are machine-made orientals on the market, some of the finest being the Karastan rugs. But when faced with a price of \$3,500 for an average 9' x 12', why not spend the equivalent on something hand knotted? There is little price difference between the starting price of a hand knotted and a machine-made rug.

Oriental rugs can be separated into nine classifications by region: Persians, which are the largest group, can be identified by their all-over design. Most often these patterns tend to florals, but animal and human figures are common, often blended with a central medallion. Persian colours are usually pastels to muted red, browns and blues and the rugs are fringed at both ends.

Turkmen, Afghans and Baluchists are noted for their geometric designs of vivid reds, browns and greens. Like the Persians, these rugs are fringed at both ends, although webbed.

Caucasians are woven in Caucasia and Transcaucasia, and are known for their bold, sharply outlined geometric patterns. Colours are brilliant and contrasting, frequently including reds, yellows and blues.

For bold, floral or geometric designs look to Turkish rugs. They're less intricate than other orientals, but their precise, stylized patterns are enhanced by bright, sharp, contrasting colours.

Indian and Pakistani rugs, like the Chinese variety, are generally not as durable as other rugs, although there are many fine exceptions depending on the village of origin. Natural stylizations of botanical designs in brilliant colours typify these rugs.

Blue religious symbols with backgrounds of dulled yellows, browns and roses are the trademark of Chinese rugs. Green is not used as it's considered a sacred colour.

Originally, nomads used hairs woven from their camels, goats and sheep,

although today most rugs are made of wool blends, particularly wool imported from New Zealand. Cotton was historically cultivated in Persia and China, and China also was renowned for its silk which was often used in rugs. Although other materials were used, the nomadic carpet makers often used wool for the warp, weft, foundation and pile of their rugs. Wool remains the most important pile fibre today, and cotton the most common base and binder material.

### BUYING AN ORIENTAL RUG

Experts advise any buyer to look for three things when purchasing an oriental rug: quality of wool, quality of dyes, and density. For the first two, the buyer, unless well-read, will have to depend on the integrity of the seller. A good rug dealer will be able to tell you what kind of dye was used, its colourfastness and durability, and the type(s) and quality of wool. Density is something the buyer can judge with a simple inspection by counting the knots per square inch. (Good luck!)

When looking for a reputable gallery, take into account any references you may have had. The length of time a rug dealer has been in business can be a good indication of their expertise and dependability. Ask if you may take the rug home for a trial to determine colour and style compatibility. Any good dealer will be glad to let you do this.

Like many businesses, rug galleries are ephemeral. A wise caution is to avoid hotel-lobby sales and auctions, even if you're looking for something antique. Tell your dealer what you're looking for. Often they will have access to estate sales that will have quality, antique oriental rugs.

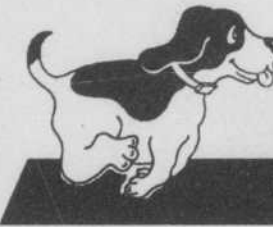
Experts also advise very infrequent cleaning and vacuuming of oriental rugs — every three to five years for cleaning, and once every three weeks for vacuuming. This will reduce the wear. They recommend that an air suction head rather than a beater bar be used on the rug, to prevent damaging the tufts. Always vacuum side to side rather than fringe to fringe, to protect the weft. With proper care rug will outlast you, your heirs and those after them.

Purchasing an oriental rug can only enhance your home. While fashion changes, oriental rugs are timeless.



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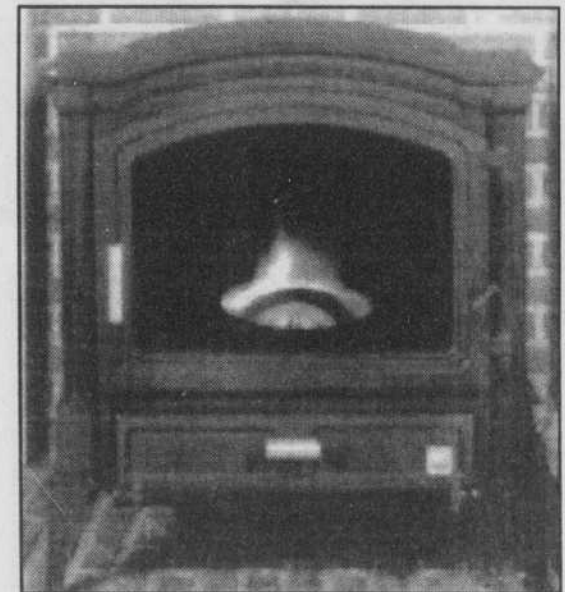
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