

Lamorinda OUR HOMES

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The Home Designer: Wrap It Up

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Hire a Pro

But don't shy away from doing some home repairs yourself

By Chris Lavin



Mark Shaw works on a sticking interior door at his home in Orinda.

Photos Chris Lavin

Now that winter weather has struck, homeowners are looking around their houses for those repairs that just didn't get done over the summer, but need attention.

"Hire a pro," says Mark Shaw, who calls himself a realtor and a violinist in the same breath, "but there are some things you can handle yourself."

Shaw says that if a homeowner has done nothing to their home for 10 years, and made no repairs, then it's likely the owner is looking at \$5,000 in repairs – and that's the low end.

Shaw gives free home maintenance seminars at the Lafayette Library twice a year, one focusing on the exterior, the other on the inside. His most recent crowd was there for advice mainly for particular problems: A persistent shower leak that hasn't been fixed by three consecutive repairmen ("water damage is the worst, you can't let that go"), furnace problems ("make sure you're not heating your attic"), and a handful of widows who were looking for guidance now that their husbands aren't around to oversee repairs.

"It's interesting," Shaw said, "that when you've lived in a house for a long time, and especially if you live alone, things start to need attention, and you might think everything looks just fine. But it doesn't to someone coming in for the first time. I see it all the time."
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Two perpendicular layers of stone wool insulation batts were easy to install in this Moraga home.

Photo Andy Scheck