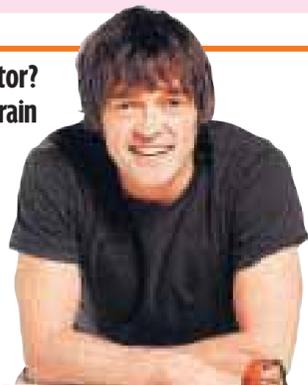


**Want the decks factor?
Let stain take the strain**

I PAINTED my decking last year and I have noticed the paint has started to flake. Would it help if I power-washed the decking, then used decking oil? - **Peter Mustard, by email**

DECKING is best left to weather naturally because paint tends to flake and stain where most of the foot traffic is, especially around a table and chairs. Then when you come to stain it again the following year it becomes patchy. I recommend power-washing the decking when you have a couple of warm, dry days available. Once it is completely dry, paint or stain it. Cuprinol do all the products you need. I would consider using a stain because it soaks into the wood while paint sits on the surface.



DIY Donny



Best buy
Paslode cordless nailer
Ideal for fixing fencing boards. Hire or buy one, it will make your life so much easier.

Wax sticks are up to scratch

WE have scratches on our beech-coloured furniture. It's chip-board with a solid wood coating. It has a wax-type finish. - **George Lewis, by email**

Top tip
If you have a stiff screw that is difficult to drive home, rub some candle wax on the tip. It works wonders.

YOU can buy coloured wax sticks to use individually or mixed together to match the colour of the wood. Melt the wax into the scratch using a lighter and scrape it level while the wax is still soft. When it has set buff with a dry cloth.

Can I fix bubble trouble?

MY wooden front door started to bubble through the varnish so I had it painted. Now it has started to bubble through the paint as well. What do you think the problem is? - **Moira Young, by email**

IF the bubble formed after the paint dried the blistering is due to old and new layers of paint losing their bond. You need to sand the door back and repaint it. If a bubble is forming while the paint is drying, the surface being painted is damp. Make sure it is bone dry before repainting.

Is it a rotten idea to have grass against my fencing?

I HAVE just built a fence in my back garden and would like to know whether it is okay to lay grass right up to the fencing boards, or would this lead to the boards rotting? - **Robert Boyle, by email**

IF the boards are touching soil this will shorten their life. Even

though boards are pressure treated, if they are submerged in soil they will rot quickly. The first sign of this is usually a white powdery deposit. Remember you won't be able to paint the bottom of the fence if it's in soil. A small band of gravel under the fence looks good and because gravel does not hold water you can have it right up to the boards and it can be moved away for painting.

I'd lav you to solve my damp toilet conundrum

CONDENSATION formed on my toilet cistern during the winter but the problem has now stopped. Will it return? - **Joyce Semple, by email**

THE condensation is caused by warm moist air hitting a cool surface, the cistern, which is cooled by very cold water from outside. It's a common problem and will return in cold weather, I'm afraid.

There's a flaw in my floor.. what can I do about it?

I'VE had my kitchen floor tiled so the surface is slightly higher than it used to be. Now I can't get my fridge back into the space between the floor and the worktop. I've set the fridge feet to minimum height but it won't budge. - **Liz Freeman, by email**

JUST remove the feet altogether, store them in a safe place and use thin card to level the front of the fridge. Alternatively you could remove the floor tiles under the worktop, which you wouldn't see anyway, or raise the worktop.

Email DIY.Donny@sundaymirror.co.uk or write to him at Homes and Holidays, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5AP



Ice cream shades are perfect with white units and pale wood in a shabby-chic kitchen.
WE USED: Cake tins, £12 for three, cake stand £12, tea and coffee canisters £6 each, striped mugs £2 each (www.sainsburys.co.uk, 0800 636262)



Don't be afraid to colour clash - orange and pink geometric prints look fresh and modern with pale green and yellow.
WE USED: Spectrum squares double bedset £22, green mix cushion £9.50, glass ball pendant light £49.50 (www.marksandspencer.com, 0845 302 1234)

**How to use..
SORBET
SHADES**

It's the hottest trend of the summer, candy ice cream shades. But they don't have to be sickly sweet... here's how to make them work for your home

By **FRANCESCA COOKNEY**

- 1. Look for...**
Cool blue, lemon, orange, mint green, lilac and pink.
- 2. Add...**
White painted wood is perfect for a country feel, or go for a more funky look with white gloss and coloured glass. Grey is a contemporary alternative that will make pastel colours pop. Avoid a washed-out look by combining pale tones with bold primary colours.
- 3. Accessorise with...**
Stripes and polka dots are a playful, slightly retro touch. Metallics add a bit of old-style glamour or go all out with florals for a pretty, feminine look. Kitchenware looks cute in sugared almond shades, while geometric prints are the most modern way to try out the pastel trend.



Peach tones work beautifully with mint green and a white plastic table for a cool, retro look.
WE USED: Matt emulsion in Baking Day and Aqua Source £16.98 for 2.5l (www.crownpaint.co.uk, 01254 704951). Cult Furniture have similar chairs (www.cultfurniture.co.uk, 020 8185 6960)



For an eclectic vintage look, mix muted lilac with teal and add white accents and floral accessories.
WE USED: Chalky flat matt paint in Vintage Blush and Boudoir £20.59 for 2.5l (www.wickes.co.uk, 0845 274 1000)



Pastel shades are crisp and contemporary against a grey background.
WE USED: Söderhamn light turquoise sofa £1,660 (www.ikea.co.uk, 0845 355 1141)

GET THE LOOK

Tu glass bottles £3 each (www.sainsburys.co.uk, 0800 636262)

Geometric cushion £25 (www.johnlewis.com, 0845 604 9049)

Ariel touch lamp £9.98 from B&Q (www.diy.com, 0845 609 6688)

Tu aqua towels from £1.25 (www.sainsburys.co.uk, 0800 636262)

Garden party cushion £16 (www.bhs.co.uk, 0845 196 0000)

Measuring spoons £5 (www.marksandspencer.com, 0845 302 1234)

Toronto chair £69 for two (www.marksandspencer.com, 0845 302 1234)

Glass vase £35 (www.next.co.uk, 0844 844 8000)

Candy stripe rug £99 (www.wovenground.com, 020 7731 1849)

Hug mug £1.49 each (www.dunelm-mill.com, 0845 165 6565)

LSA Polka wine glasses £28.99 for 4 (www.drinkstuff.com, 0870 428 0958)