

# MAKE IT LAST!

Avoid repairs, frustrations & wasted cash!



by Mark Petersen

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Making your stuff last longer is a great way to get more bang for your buck, and there are dozens of ways to do that, many of which you probably already know: changing the oil in your car, putting on a fresh coat of paint, etc. But we've gathered some great tips that may be new to you, tips that will help you get the most out of your house, tools and even your clothes.

## COVER YOUR TOES

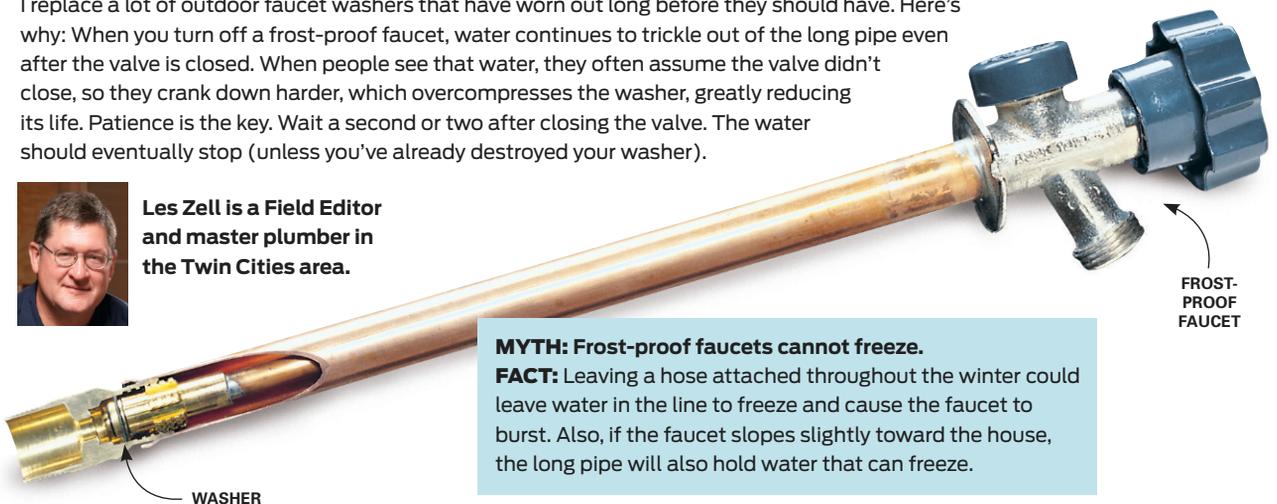
Extend the life of your work boots or shoes by coating the toes with a rubbery protective shell. The product shown here is called Tuff Toe and can be found at shoe stores or online for less than \$25. Boot Guard is another brand.

## DON'T WRECK AN OUTDOOR FAUCET

I replace a lot of outdoor faucet washers that have worn out long before they should have. Here's why: When you turn off a frost-proof faucet, water continues to trickle out of the long pipe even after the valve is closed. When people see that water, they often assume the valve didn't close, so they crank down harder, which overcompresses the washer, greatly reducing its life. Patience is the key. Wait a second or two after closing the valve. The water should eventually stop (unless you've already destroyed your washer).



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**MYTH:** Frost-proof faucets cannot freeze.  
**FACT:** Leaving a hose attached throughout the winter could leave water in the line to freeze and cause the faucet to burst. Also, if the faucet slopes slightly toward the house, the long pipe will also hold water that can freeze.



## LOOSEN BAND SAW BLADES

Band saw blades that are always under pressure can break prematurely from metal fatigue. Extend the life of your blades by releasing the blade tension whenever your saw will sit idle for three days or longer. Some saws have a quick-release mechanism, which makes this a cinch. Otherwise, rotate the tensioning knob two or three complete turns.



## KEEP THE ROOF CLEAN

Leaves and moss can trap water and cause your roof to deteriorate prematurely. You could blow the leaves off a low-pitched roof with a leaf blower. On steeper roofs, you could pull them off with a broom on an extension pole. And trim back all branches that are close to or touching the shingles.

Chemically treat mold, then sweep it off with a soft broom. A diluted bleach solution will kill mold but could also kill the plants on the ground below, so be careful to spray just enough to soak the mold itself. Specific roof cleaners containing fungicide are also available. Installing zinc strips at the peak of the roof can help keep mold at bay.



## PROTECT GARDEN HOSES FROM SUN DAMAGE

UV light from the sun slowly destroys plastics, so if you can't keep your garden hose out of the sun, wipe it down with some Armor All or similar protectant in the spring and again midsummer. I set the hose on plastic or cardboard, spray the whole thing down and then wipe it with a rag.

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## USE A GENTLER DRAIN CLEANER

Frequent use of some chemical drain cleaners can soften plastic drainpipes and corrode metal ones. Go easy on your pipes by using a drain cleaner made of natural enzymes that eat away at grease, oil and soap blockages. This type of drain cleaner isn't nearly as aggressive as traditional cleaners and is best used as a preventive. Use it when you first notice the slow draining. Home Solv is one brand and costs \$6 online.



**MYTH:** It's OK to pour grease down the drain while running hot water.

**FACT:** Sure, the hot water will keep the grease from hardening...until it cools off farther down your drain lines. That just makes the clog harder to clear. Never pour grease down your drain!



## RINSE YOUR SPREADER

Chemicals from fertilizers speed up corrosion of the metal parts of your spreader, so rinse it out every time you use it. After it dries, coat all the moving parts with a light lubricant spray like WD-40.



## STORE PAINT CANS UPSIDE DOWN

When a paint can is stored upside down, the paint creates an absolutely airtight seal, which will make the paint last longer. The obvious caveat to this tip is to make sure the lids are sealed tightly.



## LUBRICATE BITS AND BLADES

We use Boelube at Lockheed Martin to make our drill bits last longer. Whenever I drill multiple holes in metal, I stick the bit into the lube before starting each one. It also works on metal-cutting reciprocating and band saw blades. It reduces friction, which makes the cutting edge last longer. And yes, it was developed by our competitor, the Boeing Company. The product number is 70200-13, and you can find it at [mscdirect.com](http://mscdirect.com) and other online retailers for about \$5.



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## VACUUM YOUR CARPET OFTEN

On carpet, dirt acts like thousands of little blades. Walking across a dirty carpet grinds sharp dirt particles against the yarn, making tiny nicks in the fibers. That dulls the sheen, which is why high-traffic areas appear duller than the rest of the carpet. Over time, grinding dirt will actually wear away the fibers themselves.

Bottom line: The less dirt in your carpet, the longer it will last. A good rule of thumb is to vacuum your carpet once a week. High-traffic areas will require more frequent vacuuming.



**MYTH: Don't store batteries on a concrete surface.**

**FACT:** According to the folks at Interstate Battery, "Tremendous technological improvements have been made in the seals around the battery posts and vent systems, which have virtually eliminated electrolyte seepage and migration. So, it's OK to set or store your battery on concrete."

## KEEP BATTERIES CHARGED

Batteries can deteriorate and die if they go a long time without being charged. Charge the batteries for your boat, motorcycle or riding lawn mower at least once a month in the off-season. Another option is to hook them up to a battery maintainer. A battery maintainer won't damage your battery like a trickle charger would. A maintainer has smart monitoring circuitry that charges the battery only when it needs it. Remove the battery and store it indoors if you live in an area with severely cold winters.



## LONG-LASTING CLOTHES

I always wash my clothes inside out. The exterior of the fabric takes much less

abuse and everything looks newer longer.

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