



LIFE AT HOME

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AROUND THE HOUSE

Who says it has to be 'Mr.' Fix-it?

WORKSHOP • Most women know how to change a light bulb or furnace filter. When it comes to slightly more complicated home maintenance tasks, however, we either ignore the leaky faucet or — if there's a man about the house — sweetly ask for his assistance with a sentence that begins, "Honey, can you fix the..."

It doesn't have to be this way. Jude Murphy, owner of Willow Moon Carpentry (builtbyagirl.com), is offering her popular Basic Home Maintenance for Women workshop on Oct. 4.

The all-day workshop first gives gals a home overview that covers building materials, house structure, electrical and plumbing. Women will then learn how to patch holes in drywall; replace light fixtures; install a new toilet, faucet or sink; and find a wall stud and install a wall anchor.

"Lots of the stuff we cover is so not scary, once you have the basic information," says Murphy, who has been building custom furniture for clients, and handling home renovations, for nearly 20 years.

Women who have signed up for Murphy's two previous workshops have run the gamut from newly divorced women to widows in their 70s to moms and their teenage daughters.

It's not all lecture, either: participants are broken into smaller groups and given a chance to get hands-on experience at various stations, from a plumbing area to a wiring wall.

They'll leave the course empowered to change the kitchen hardware and lighting, among other small jobs.

Basic Home Maintenance for Women runs Oct. 4 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Killarney Glegg community centre. It costs \$225 plus GST per person, including lunch, refreshments and a home maintenance reference booklet. To register, e-mail Jude at jude@builtbyagirl.com or call 403-809-7029.

See your design plans come alive — before you pay

WEBSITE • Wouldn't it be cool to see what that new sofa would look like in your living room before you purchase it?

It's now virtually possible to do just that, thanks to a free website called SceneCaster (scenecaster.com).

After joining, users can create spaces by typing in the room's dimensions or by building them from a template.

Then, they can add objects such as lamps, tables or pillows by clicking on them and dragging them into the scene from online catalogues or after searching for them on Google.

Users can even sample paint colours, flooring and decor details such as area rugs or curtains. If they find an online object they really like, it can be purchased through the site's "Shopping on SceneCaster" function, so long as it's through an e-commerce site partnered with SceneCaster. Completed virtual rooms can be shared with friends on Facebook, too.

—Compiled by Lisa Kadane, Calgary Herald



Grant Black, Calgary Herald



THE DREAM: Calgary Herald Archive
Spotless countertops, well organized cupboards and fresh flowers are telltale signs that kids don't live here.

THE REALITY: Julie Van Rosendaal and her son Willem, 3, prepare dinner together in their Ramsay home.

Someone's in the KITCHEN with mommy

Has your home style gone from 'chic' to 'shriek' since kids came on the scene? We feel your pain. Starting this week, we're launching a new series on having kids — and still having style.

baby steps to **style**
TODAY: THE KITCHEN

How little kids can help

UNDER TWO: Little ones don't have the dexterity or communication skills to really help, so make sure there are plenty of safe distractions that buy you time to cook. Dedicate a kitchen drawer to toys, or bring an ExerSaucer, Jolly Jumper or bouncy chair into the room.

"Mostly, they just want to be near you," says Super-time Survival author Lynn Roblin.

AGES TWO TO FIVE: Start them on the road to chef-dom by letting them stir; tear, rinse and spin lettuce; and rinse other veggies. Ages three and up can break eggs into a separate bowl (for shell control), arrange a cheese and cracker or veggie tray, put the fixings on their own pizza, or layer yogurt, fruit and granola into a parfait.

Closer to age six they can try grating cheese or learn to use a microwave to cook eggs or melt cheese over nachos, with supervision.

—Tips courtesy, Lynn Roblin



LISA KADANE

"Can I help with dinner, Mommy?" How I've grown to both love and loathe that question.

I love that, at age three, my daughter is eager to pour flour into a mixing bowl, beat an egg or stir the marinade.

I loathe the messes and chaos that inevitably ensue when she joins me for meal prep.

It used to be so simple.

Pre-kids, my husband and I would arrive home after work, scan the pantry for meal ideas, then set about creating dinner over a leisurely glass of wine. It didn't

matter if we ate at 8 p.m., or later. Every night was date night.

In those days our kitchen really was like a show home: the bare counters shone, the canisters were perfectly aligned, the dishes were hidden in orderly cabinets. We could dine by candlelight if the mood struck.

But along came baby girl. She sat in a bouncy chair by the table while I wolfed down leftovers before she started crying. Then she was in a high chair lobbing banana chunks onto the floor and laughing. Soon she was sitting on the counter poking holes in tomatoes while I chopped veggies. Just when she mastered spooning more couscous into her mouth than had hit the floor, I went and than her baby.

My once-gourmet kitchen is now permanently littered with bibs, craft projects and play kitchen props. Dishes are often stacked above the dishwasher, awaiting entry

should some real estate open up inside. A vase filled with fresh flowers is a rare sight (a sippy cup housing a dandelion doesn't count).

It's also somewhat amiss in the hygiene department: bread crumbs sprinkle the counters, rogue globs of Al-phagetti dinner goo up the floor, and the high chair — shudder — smells permanently of sour milk.

And that's the sad state of affairs before I even stare blankly into the freezer for meal inspiration at 5:30 p.m., banish my daughter to watch Treehouse and empty the Tupperware drawer to amuse my son.

Life at home with kids under five, in the kitchen, is one big recipe for disaster.

But it doesn't have to be. Julie Van Rosendaal laughs as I relay my kitchen angst.

She can relate, she says, which I find reassuring, if hard to believe. This is the same Calgary food writer, after all, who has her own

cooking show and whose website, dinnerwithjulie.com, gets 1,500 hits a day.

Van Rosendaal is also mother to Willem, 3, whose enthusiasm for pizza is balanced by his disdain for lentil soup.

How does Van Rosendaal manage to whip up lime-cumin chicken with corn and black bean salad (for lunch!) while Willem and her baby — a six-month-old husky-border collie cross named Lou — cavort madly around her Ramsay character home?

Granted, she cooks for a living. But still.

"It's funny, I don't always have a plan," she admits.

"A lot of the time it's 5 or 6 p.m. and I'm looking in the fridge thinking, 'Crap, what's for dinner?'"

Or she plans an entire meal around cilantro because it's about to go smelly.

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Cougar Ridge, \$575,000 – 90 Cougarstone Terrace, SW
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Location, location: City views, South backyard, across from the ravine + siding treed green space! 2223 SF, tastefully renovated, 3 bdrms, jetted tub in master ensuite, jack n' jill ensuite, wood burning f/p, hardwood floors & granite counters in kitchen!



Elbow Park, \$2,195,000 – 130 Garden Crescent, SW
Architecturally designed, as new, an exquisite renovation, a fabulous downtown retreat in tranquil location backing ravine, steps to river & Glencoe Club. Features dual master suites, amazing kitchen, beautifully appointed wine cellar & media room.



samcorea

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