

Top 20 DIY stores in Britain

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Planning to renovate a kitchen or conservatory in the New Year? Here are the best shops to buy your DIY equipment, from B&Q and Homebase to independent gems.



Top tip: when painting a room, use a long-handled roller for ceilings Photo: Alamy

We are a nation of Do-It-Yourselfers - and that's official. Six out of 10 adults claim to be good or very good at DIY but 12 per cent of people admit that creating a DIY disaster costing hundreds of pounds to remedy, according to an Alliance & Leicester poll.

So if your New Year's resolution is to lag that loft or erect that extension, here are 20 top hardware stores plus a list of jobs crying out for a DIY makeover - and a few you should leave to the professionals.

Top 20 hardware stores

1. [B&Q](#): 350 stores across the UK selling 40,000 products for in- and out-door DIY
2. [The Range](#): 80 stores and expanding, selling basic DIY and craft materials
3. [Maxwells](#): 10 north of England branches specialising in power tools
4. [Hunts of Marlow](#): Family-run business near the High Street, offering key-cutting too
5. [Pickles](#): Home and garden DIY stockists plus fuel supplies from coal to sticks, in rural Devon

6. [Firn's](#): Long-standing Cumbrian family hardware and ironmonger with gift-wrapping service available
7. [Evans of Saltash](#): leading Cornwall hardware shop with extensive household section too
8. [ScrewFix](#): 255 stores selling 11,000 items and with a click-and-collect service
9. [Crocket The Ironmonger](#): From Black & Deckers to Barbours, this Glasgow DIY heaven has an equestrian section too
10. [Toolstation](#): Over 50 stores from Inverness to Truro selling tools (of course), workwear and landscaping kit
11. [Langbridge Home Hardware](#): Bath's best, say customers - the website has a blog giving DIY and baking hints
12. [Homebase](#): 340 stores across the UK, mostly out-of-town with easy parking
13. [Worleys](#): Pet supplies as well as DIY, specialising in electrical equipment, plus a gift section. Cardiff-based
14. [Potters](#): Based in Hockley, Essex, with large garden, decorating, tools and plumbing sections as well as kitchen and cooking
15. [Partridges](#): On Ipswich High Street the shop has everything from home fencing to wheels and castors
16. [Lindleys](#): Family-run business in Castleford with extensive supplies and free local delivery
17. [Wickes](#): 200 stores aimed mostly at the serious well-informed DIY enthusiast
18. [Morrells](#): A DIY store just off London's Carnaby Street? Odd but true, with tools, decorating supplies and ironmongery
19. [Ray Grahams](#): Based in Newtownards, N Ireland, offering everything from duvets to downpipes
20. [Scats](#): Stores across South Wales and southern England, specialising in agricultural DIY - everything for those working on smallholdings and equestrian properties

Easy DIY jobs...

- Decorating. Make sure you unscrew electrical sockets and light switch covers to get the best finish, use a long-handled roller for ceilings (and a mini one for behind radiators);
- Bleed radiators. Buy a key from a radiator shop, turn heating off and open each radiator valve - air escapes but as soon as water seeps out, the job is done;
- Putting up shelves. Get appropriate size and strength brackets and timber, use a spirit level to get it straight and rawl plugs to keep those screws in;
- Filling wall cracks. Apply the wet filler, let it dry thoroughly, then sandpaper flat and smooth before you paint over;

- Seal window draughts. Old sashes or loose-fitting windows leak hot air out so fill with self-adhesive foam weather strips. Use the smallest size to do the task to keep it neat.

...but leave these to the professionals

- any work involving gas can produce leaks, fires or carbon monoxide poisoning and must be left a a Gas Safe-registered professional listed on www.gassaferegister.co.uk;

- complicated electrical work can also be dangerous if botched so use a professional electrician with certification to handle Part P buildings regulations;

- frozen water pipes have to be replaced by a professional familiar with cutting, bridging and welding pipes if necessary (but you can lag the new ones to prevent a repeat);

- roofing should be left to those who understand building regulations and best eco-practice regarding membranes, bitumen and tiles, and with access to appropriate scaffolding;

- unblocking drains is easy with the right length, diameter and strength of brush, but most DIY-ers use small makeshift items which get stuck and worsen the problem.

Link: www.telegraph.co.uk/property/renovatinganddiy/10525875/Top-20-DIY-stores-in-Britain.html