

# Home Tips<sup>®</sup>



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## Q & A

### Bouncy Floor?

*We have an extremely bouncy floor. Every time we walk through the dining room the dishes in our china cabinet shake. How can we fix it*

It sounds like you need to stiffen the floor joist. This isn't an easy project but can be done by some homeowners. There are many different ways to accomplish the goal, depending on what is below the dining room floor, and here are a couple that you can try.

If you have a crawl space below, add a 4 x 6 treated wood beam under the existing joist at the mid span. Support the beam with steel screw jacks at 6 to 8 foot spacings. If the ground is dry and hard, the only support you will need, under the steel post, is a 4" cap block laid on top of level ground. If the ground is damp or soft, pour a 16" x 16" x 6" thick concrete footing. Be sure not to over tighten the screw jacks. You could raise the entire floor causing damage to the room. Just tighten enough to secure the beam under the joist. The screw jacks also allow you to adjust the tension if the footing supports settle any.

If you have a finished room below, the process becomes more difficult. First, you will need to remove part or all of the ceiling. If you don't mind the support posts, use the same method as the crawl space above. You will just need longer screw jacks and just set them on the concrete slab. If you want to eliminate the posts, then, you will have to remove all the wiring and piping that run through all of the joist. This will allow you to attach new joist along side of the old ones. For instance, if you have 2 x 8 floor joist, then attach one size larger, or 2 x 10 joist, along side and nail securely with two rows of 16d nails at 8" on center. Redrill all of the holes and reinstall all of the wiring, piping and finally the ceiling.

### Water Stains Keep Coming Back?

*Several months ago we had a roof leak repaired and have tried to paint over the stain left in the ceiling. After a couple of weeks the stain bleeds through the new paint. How can we prevent this from happening again?*

It is quite common for water stains, markers, ink pens and even dark colored paints to bleed through lighter colored

paints. To prevent this from happening just apply a sealer-primer stain blocker. One of many products on the market is Kilz manufactured by Masterchem Industries and is readily available at most paint stores. Two thin coats provide a better sealer than one thick coat. After the sealer has dried it is recommended to paint the entire ceiling to avoid any unsightly touched up areas.

### Are Gutters Really Needed?

*The gutters on my house are constantly getting clogged with tree leaves, forcing me to climb a tall ladder to clean them. What I don't understand is why a house with a 16" eave overhang needs to have gutters at all. Can I just take the gutters off?*

We don't recommend it. Your gutters were installed to prevent water from collecting around the foundation and to prevent erosion. Unless you're sure that removing them won't create the bigger problem of a wet basement or crawl space, we recommend that you leave them on.

Have you tried gutter shields? They may solve the problem. Gutter shields are available at hardware stores and home centers, or from a gutter contractor. The most common ones are made of wire mesh and fasten to the top of the gutter. This prevents most debris from getting into the gutters and downspouts. The only draw back is pine needles have a tendency to stick into the mesh causing a harder cleaning job than the gutters themselves.

The cost of the shields vary but should run around 75 cents per foot for the shield itself and \$2.00 per foot if you have them installed. Stiff shields work best.

Whether gutter shields are worth the cost depends on how hard it is to clean your gutters. They do not eliminate the need to clean your gutters, they just reduce it. If you normally clean your gutters twice a year, with gutter shields you may be able to go a couple of years between cleanings.

In some cases, debris can also collect on top of the shields causing water to just run over the top, defeating the purpose of the gutters. Your gutters are a very important part of the house and if they are well maintained, they will prevent many of the problems associated with water and damp basements or crawl spaces.

Also, be sure to periodically inspect your gutters for rust and leaking. The outside corners seem to be the first place to develop leaking. If the leaking continues, it could develop into a costly repair.

