

When the great Irish poet William Butler Yeats wrote that "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold", he wasn't necessarily talking about the average home or apartment in the New York area, but he may as well have been. No matter how new your home is or in what condition you strive to keep it, there will always be small repairs, improvements, additions or replacements needed all year round. Because this is the case, cityhammer.com, New York's #1 Remodeling Directory, is proud to present an all-encompassing guide to hiring a handyman in New York and getting the job done right the first time.

[For a list of New York Area Handymen, Click Here!](#)

What is a Handyman and What Can They Do?

The definition of a handyman is up to interpretation, but speaking generally, it is someone who can come into your house or apartment and do a variety of small home improvement tasks for an hourly fee.

In urban areas of New York, such as Brooklyn or Manhattan, many residents will call their building's super or maintenance man to handle these types of tasks, but the truth is, in many cases hiring a handyman is a better bet. The handyman will usually be more experienced and will be able to complete a much wider variety of tasks. He will also have more of an incentive to make you happy with the finished work because of the potential for referrals, whereas the super is just looking to get the job over with as quickly as possible.

In the suburbs, such as Nassau, Suffolk or Westchester Counties, many of your neighbors will use local handymen who are picking up extra work on the weekends.

There are also national franchises who send handymen to your home that have been vetted by the corporation beforehand, although many of these companies will charge by the task and these prices will not be negotiable.

Are There Different Types of Handymen?

There are all different types of handymen, so don't be afraid to make sure that the one you've called has a level of expertise in the particular area in which you need assistance. Handymen can come from all walks of life and professional backgrounds, from plumbing to carpentry to electrical work. If you are looking for someone to do a complete tune-up of your home or to handle a variety of tasks in multiple rooms, you are better off paying up for a well-rounded, full-time handyman as opposed to a guy that happens to be handy and is looking for some moonlighting jobs in the neighborhood.

How Do I Check Out a Handyman?

Start with a directory like **cityhammer.com** to build a list of possible candidates. After narrowing down your list, don't be shy about asking for personal references, checking with the Department of Consumer Affairs, Better Business Bureau or even the local chamber of commerce for any complaints. Make your life easier by asking for estimates from several handymen over the phone before having them come over, as some will ask to be paid for their time whether they end up doing the work or not and this is something you want to avoid.

How Do Handymen Get Paid?

Never pay up front for a job and try to get as specific as possible as far as how the handyman charges before the work begins. In the Northeast, you can expect to pay anywhere from \$50 to \$75 per hour for a professional handyman, although some handyman companies and services charge a flat fee per job.

One way to keep prices down would be to try to pick up as many of the materials on your own. This is because handymen may include a markup on materials needed for the job of anywhere from 20% to 100%. That being said, in certain situations, handymen may be able to get wholesale or discount pricing for certain

goods, which, even when marked up, may still save you some cash...so don't be afraid to ask questions in advance.

What Tasks Can A Handyman Handle?

You will want to have a complete list of what you need done prior to contacting handymen for estimates. Let's break down the different areas of the home and then list the types of tasks associated with each room.

Kitchen and Bathroom Tasks can include:

Caulking tubs, sinks, and tiles on the floor or walls.

Replacing exhaust fans and covers, toilets and toilet tank hardware, shower cartridges and valve seats, medicine cabinets, and damaged sub flooring and laminates.
Repairing broken tile, leaky faucets and broken drawers.

Installing counter tops, range hoods, cabinets, back splashes, trash compactors or garbage disposals, vanities and vanity tops, shower doors, and towel racks.

Adjusting cabinet doors

Replacing fixtures, faucet aerators, toilets and hardware, and sinks.

Exterior, Door and Window Tasks can include:

Building and repairing decks fences and gates

Replacing damaged soffet, damaged fascia and trim, screens, damaged window panes, doorknobs

Installing lighting fixtures, mailboxes, French doors and patio doors, vinyl replacement windows, locks and deadbolts, pet doors, weather stripping, security locks on windows, and storm doors

Painting doors, windows, and exteriors.

Cleaning and repairing rain gutters.

Repairing the roof, pergolas, siding, damaged brickwork, concrete, door casings, stucco, sun porches and doors that are hard to open.

Detecting and repairing exterior leaks.

Adjusting door thresholds and sliding doors.

Re-glazing windows.

Garage-related Tasks can include:

Replacing or installing garage door openers or garage door springs.

Lubricating garage doors.

Cleaning and painting garage floors.

Insulating and sheetrocking garage walls.

Installing attic access stairs.

General Interior, Closet and Laundry Room Tasks can include:

Finishing basements.

Constructing custom wall units and shelving.

Hanging pictures, clocks, plants, draperies and curtain rods.

Replacing hard to access light bulbs, old/broken appliance plugs , ceiling tiles, baseboards, damaged tile linoleum flooring, heating and air conditioning filters, and bi-fold doors.

Repairing drywall with exact texture and paint match.

Painting doors, windows and interiors.

Installing water heater straps and insulation blankets, ceramic tile on floors and walls, attic ladders, wainscoting and crown molding, dryer hoses and vents, shelving and hanger rods, lights and ventilation fans and ceiling fans or chandeliers to existing fixture receptacles.

Hooking up washers and dryers.

Lining closets with aromatic and protective cedar.

Assembling closet organizers.

Adjusting and lubricating closet doors.

How Do I Show My Appreciation For a Job Well Done?

Keep in mind that as long as you live in your current home, you will, from time to time, require the services of a good handyman, so when you come across one, be sure to keep his information handy (no pun intended). Most independent handymen rely on good word-of-mouth and referrals to stay in business and pick up new customers, so if you're satisfied, tell your friends. Its also a nice idea to go online and write a favorable review on a site like cityhammer.com or even to offer your name as a reference. Any of these will be greatly appreciated by your new, reliable New York handyman!

By Mitch Mayer
cityhammer.com Staff Writer