



Ten fix-it skills every household should have.

The shutoffs, resets and small repairs that turn an emergency into an errand.

1 Shut off the water main



- Often by the meter or where the line enters
- Round handle: turn clockwise until it stops
- Lever handle: a quarter turn closes it

2 Gas off, only for a leak



- Smell gas: get everyone out, call from outside
- 12-inch wrench, quarter turn to crosswise, if safe
- Leave it off; the utility turns it back on

3 Reset a tripped breaker



- Unplug what was running on that circuit
- Dry hands, stand to the side, push off then on
- Trips again right away: stop, call an electrician

4 Know your pilot light



- Pilot out: follow the owner's manual
- Smell gas: do not relight; leave and call
- After a meter shutoff, the utility relights them

5 Clear a drain, no chemicals



- A plunger first for a stubborn clog
- 1/4 cup baking soda, 1 cup vinegar, cover 15 min
- Rinse with boiling water; repeat if needed

6 Patch a small drywall hole



- Under half an inch: spackle and a putty knife
- Smooth it, let it dry, sand lightly, paint
- Up to 6 inches: a self-adhesive patch

7 Fix a running toilet



- Dye in the tank; color in the bowl means a leak
- Usually a worn flapper, a cheap rubber part
- Water off, flush, swap it, leave a little chain slack

8 Change a tire



- Flat lot or side street, hazards on, brake set
- Loosen lug nuts before you jack the car
- Tighten in a star pattern; spare under 50 mph

9 Jump-start a car



- Red to dead plus, red to good plus, black to good minus
- Last black clamp on bare metal, not the battery
- Cracked or bulging battery: replace, don't jump

10 Use a fire extinguisher



- Small fire, everyone out, 911 called, exit behind you
- PASS: pull, aim low, squeeze, sweep side to side
- Room filling with smoke: leave now

Find the valves today, label the panel this weekend, practice the rest once.

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