

Best methods to repair damaged driveways

Asphalt and concrete driveways are common throughout suburban neighborhoods. They are as much a part of a home as lawns, decks and other exterior elements. Regardless of how they're utilized, driveways need to be cared for and maintained to retain their appearance and function.

Even the most durable driveways can suffer from cracks and pits over time. As cracks form, they pave the way for more deterioration if they are not addressed. Driveway repair can be a do-it-yourself project, but pay attention to the details to ensure the job is done right.

Asphalt

The home improvement resource The Family Handyman says it is key to first repair cracks and pits in an asphalt driveway before planning to topcoat it, which is

generally done every year or so to maintain its appearance and durability. A variety of topcoat products are available at various price points. Experts recommend investing in a quality product that will not shrink and crack. A melt-in material that is similar to products used by highway crews can be purchased for around \$100. This product also will require use of a propane torch. Caulk-style crack repair products may not require as many tools, and are much easier to apply. They may not last as long, however.

The experts at Popular Mechanics say that there also are other asphalt patch mixes available at home supply retailers. Serious holes, rather than cracks, can be addressed with a coarse-aggregate filler commonly referred to as cold patch.

After cracks and holes are filled, use a sealer to lock ev-

erything in place and create a smooth topcoat appearance.

Concrete

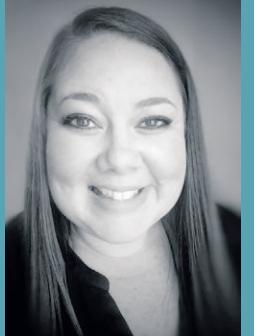
The process is similar with concrete driveways, yet the products differ. Small driveway cracks can be repaired by scrubbing out the crack to remove debris and then filling using a mortar repair compound, suggests the repair advice site Home Guides. Larger cracks and potholes should be cleaned. Once that's done, apply a painted-in bonder to the crack or hole, followed by a dry concrete patching product mixed with water. The material can be worked into the damaged area with a trowel, and then leveled using a wood board. Afterward, a liquid concrete sealer can be applied to help prevent future cracks and holes.

Homeowners who are hesitant to fix their driveways

can contact masons or asphalt specialists to perform the job. Keeping up on driveway repair can prolong the

life of the surface and help delay a complete driveway replacement for several years.





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