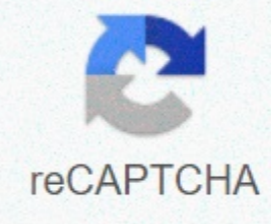




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Photo: istockphoto.comHas your old kitchen faucet seen better days? Whether your leaking water or is simply obsolete, replacing a kitchen faucet is among the most popular do-it-yourself projects in the grand scheme of a full kitchen renovation. Unfortunately, it's not always as simple as it sounds, replacing an old chrome faucet for one with a trendy brushed nickel finish. The entire replacement task can go without problems, but since faucet configuration (and under sink conditions) varies, chances are you'll run into a catch or two during the process. By knowing what to expect—and what could potentially go wrong—you can avoid common pitfalls and recognize when it's time to throw in the towel and call a plumber. Here, we have outlined six necessary considerations before getting started on a kitchen faucet replacement. Some jobs are better left to the pros: Get free, no commitment estimates from licensed plumbers near you. + 1. Always turn off the water before replacing a kitchen faucet. Before work can begin in earnest, you need to turn off the water to the existing faucet. Most of the time this is a cinch, accomplished by simply turning the On/Off valves located on the hot and cold water supply lines (connected to the underside of the faucet) to OFF, with just your fingers. If your existing faucet is at least a few years old, it is not uncommon for the valves to get stuck or rusty, making them virtually impossible to fold. Applying heat to the valve with a hairdryer will often loosen the valve enough that you can close it. Alternatively, use locking iron to grab the valve and gently coax it into the Off position. However, be aware that excess torsional pressure may break the valve and/or supply line, which will result in water protruding and flooding the cabinet. For this reason, before trying to loosen a jammed shut-off valve, it's a good idea to turn off your home's main water valve (often located inside a basement or crawl space where the water pipe enters the house). If you are unable to locate the main valve, you can always use pliers to turn off the water at the meter (located on your farm under a small well-like lid). Photo: istockphoto.com2. Removing the old faucet is often more difficult than it sounds. When the water is turned off, removing the old faucet is a matter of loosening the nuts that hold it in place (from below the sink) and then lifting the faucet out of the holes. Unfortunately, this step may be easier said than done. The space under the sink where the faucet attaches is often narrow and, because of its location, pitch black. You need a bright working light to illuminate the area and an adjustable wrench to loosen the nuts. RELATED: 10 Plumbing Tips Everyone needs Know Like shut-off valves, the nuts holding the faucet in place can be jammed or rusty. If you come across this you can try brushing brush as much corrosion as possible with a wire brush and then injecting oil, such as Liquid Wrench (available from Amazon), onto the nuts to help dissolve the corrosion. It can take from 30 minutes to overnight for the oil to work. If you try to loosen the nuts again with the wrench and they still won't turn, they need to be cut off with a reciprocating saw or a hacksaw. Some do-it-yourselfers choose to call a plumber at this point.3. Spare your aching return with the help of scrap plywood. Of all the repair projects you can commit to around your home—even those like painting baseboards where you have to bend and stoop or clear out gutters where you have to climb and stretch-get them off are as uncomfortable as trying to wiggle in the confined space under a sink. In addition to crawling into the cabinet to see where the faucet attaches to the countertop, you are also lying over an uneven surface: The inside floor of the cabinet is generally a few inches taller than the kitchen floor, so the back has to contort to the difference, which never feels good. A small trick to relieve the discomfort is to insert a small sheet of plywood inside the cabinet. The sheet should be narrow enough to fit through the door opening, but wide enough to hang up and long enough to support your back and rear end. Use six to eight quarter-size paint jars (or jars of similar size) to support the end of plywood sheets that stretch out into the kitchen—which should give you a flat surface on like lying as you change the faucet.4. Know your limits. Sometimes, you simply can't wedge your body far enough under the sink to have a clear path to reaching the nuts holding the old faucet in place. When it looks like you need to remove additional plumbing like sink drain trap or garbage disposal, what should be a two-hour faucet-replacement job can quickly turn into a full weekend plumbing project. If you don't have the plumbing experience, it's often better to call a plumber rather than try to remove and then reinstall additional plumbing elements. RELATED: 12 Things Your Plumber Wants You Knew Photo: istockphoto.com5. Choose the right replacement mixer. Before heading to the home improvement center to buy a faucet based simply on its shape and finish, get to know your current sink hardware. The best way to do that is by removing it: With the old faucet removed, you can note the number of holes in the sink and the distance between the center of the left-most holes to the center of the hole on the far right. This is called measurement on center (OC) and is the industry standard for measuring the hole of the sensior. The actual diameter of the holes does not matter. Installation of the replacement faucet will go smoothest when choosing one that fits the same hole configuration. Plus, with the old faucet removed, can also take it with you to ensure that you get an exact match. A typical, two-handle kitchen faucet installs over a set of three holes, with the two outer holes being eight inches apart. Updating to a neat single-handle faucet that requires only one hole to install when you have three is still possible. For this, you would need to buy a separate base plate, called an escutcheon plate, which matches the finish of the new faucet and extends long enough to cover up the unused holes. The reverse situation occurs when you want to go from one handle to two, which necessitates two additional holes. In this case, you can drill additional holes in the sink (or in the countertop behind, depending on your existing faucet configuration) to accommodate the new faucet. Note that this moves the project out of the do-it-yourself category, however: Boring new holes in a granite or quartz sink or countertop should be done by a countertop contractor who has equipment to drill the new holes cleanly without cracking the countertop material.6. Bring in a pro for wall-mounting a faucet. Faucets that attach directly to the wall behind the sink are the newest and trendiest faucets around, appealing to those who want Old World appeal as well as those looking to create a semi-pro chef kitchen by installing a wall-mount faucet with a rotating and expanding faucet arm. Unfortunately, this is one of the most dedicated replacements a homeowner can ask for. Making the transition from a sink-mounted (or countertop mounted) faucet to a wall-mounted faucet involves opening up the wall behind the sink and running new water-supply lines—definitely a job for a plumber. Not to mention, you'll probably want to replace your old sink or countertop to get rid of the faucet holes left behind. Some jobs are better left to the pros: Get free, no commitment estimates from licensed plumbers near you. + Jump to main content Home House & Components Fixtures Faucets Family Handyman The toughest part of replacing a kitchen faucet is to remove the old one. Unexpected problems always appear—corroded pipes, hard-to-reach nuts, and poor access to fittings. Otherwise, installing a new kitchen faucet is not tough at all. Actually, the directions that come with your new faucet are probably all you need to do that part of the job. Barring unforeseen problems, you can wash under the faucet for an hour or so. In this article, you'll walk you through a basic replacement process and tell us how to get through these tough parts. By DIY experts at The Family Handyman Magazine You may also like: TBD Time A Full Day Complexity Intermediate Cost \$101–250 Pick up key parts at the hardware store before you start How to replace a kitchen faucet Photo 1: Remove the sewer pipes from the faucet Disconnect the sewer lines and P-traps if they block your to the tap and water supply water supply (Place a bucket or coffee can under the P-trap to dump residual water after pulling it free.) Chances are, you have to make more than one trip to the hardware store for parts to learn how to replace a kitchen faucet, but to give yourself a fighting shot at completing the job with one-stop shopping, consult this list. We'll show you how to remove a kitchen faucet with the steps in this article. Shut-off valves Before shopping for your new faucet (see Choosing a faucet at the end of this how to replace an appliance faucet article), take a look under the sink and make sure there are shut-off valves feeding the faucet. If you don't have shut-off valves, add them. If you have them, confirm that they are in functional conditions by turning on hot and cold water at the tap and turning off the valves. If the faucet still drops, install new ones. Most likely you have 1/2-in. copper supply pipes. If so, add easy to install solderless compression suitable valves (Photos 9 and 10) to your shopping list. But if not, buy which valve type is compatible with your pipes. Supply tube: Next, measure the existing supply pipes and buy new stainless-steel-sleeved supply tubes (Photo 9). They are designed to provide burst-free service for years and can be routed around obstacles without kinking. Basin wrench: Also buy a basin wrench (\$15; Photo 4). This strange little wrench is made specifically to remove and install the difficult clamping brackets that squeeze older faucet assemblies to the sink. (Newer faucets have plastic Wing-Nuts that can usually be unloaded and tightened by hand.) A basin wrench spring-loaded jaws pivot so you can either loosen or tighten nuts in tight spaces. If you need to remove drain lines to access the faucet, get a pipe key or slip-joint pliers (Photo 1). To cut copper pipes, buy a conventional hose sniffer. But if your copper supply lines are within a few inches of the back of the cabinet, buy a special mini tube cutter (Photo 3). You also need a set of open wrenches to disconnect and connect the water pipes. Before you disconnect the drain lines, take a snapshot or sketch the layout to help you put it all back together. Plan on replacing your faucet during retail hours. Chances are better than 50/50 you need at least one more part for this how to replace a kitchen faucet project. Prop up a scrap of plywood on some 1-qt. paint cans in front of the cabinet. You will be much more comfortable lying under the sink during this how to replace a kitchen faucet project. Otherwise, the edge of the cabinet would be digging into your back Gain asset and removing the old faucet Photo 2: Disconnect the garbage disposal Unplug garbage disposal, or turn off the circuit breaker in the main service panel if the faucet is directly wired. Unplug the dishwasher discharge line and place a paint can during sweeping sleep with a few rags on top to dampen the spore when it drops freely. Release the starvation by tapping the retaining ring with a hammer in a counterclockwise direction. Close-up of Photo 2 Drea keep the ring to loosen it. Photo 3: Cut the water pipes, if you replace the valves Na Shut of the water under the sink if you have valves, or turn off the main water supply valve if your old faucet is plumbed directly without valves. Open the kitchen faucet and another lower faucet to bleed off any pressure and to drain the water. If you install or replace valves, cut the water pipes directly under the fittings with a pipe cutter or hacksaw. Photo 4: Loosen the tail nights with a basin key Reach up behind the sink, mount the basin wrench jaws on the tail piece nuts and turn counterclockwise to loosen. Then disconnect the spray nozzle hose, remove the faucet and clean the sink area under the old faucet flange. Close-up of Photo 4 Fit the basin wrench jaws around the lock nuts. After you pull out all of the cleaning machines, buckets and old vases from under the sink, go ahead and lie under there and see if you can easily access the faucet. If so, go right to photo 3. If not, it's time to start dismantling the things that block your path. Most likely, the main obstacles will be the pipes and P-traps that drain the sinks. Do not be afraid to pull them out, but more importantly, do not be afraid to replace them with new ones. If you have older, chrome-plated sewer lines, the pipe walls can be so corroded that they will smash into the jaws of a pipe wrench or slip-joint pliers. Once you have removed them, throw all the parts in a box to match them exactly in the store later. If you have plastic drain parts, be careful during removal—you will probably be able to reuse them. Sometimes a garbage can be a roadblock of 20 lb. Don't be discouraged—it's easier than you think to remove it and then reinstall it after the faucet is in (Photo 2). Unplug it and pull it out of the cabinet to get it out of the way. If it is hard wired, turn off the circuit breaker that controls the control, disconnect the slope from the sink and put it aside inside the cabinet with the electric cable still attached. The first step in removing the old faucet is to disconnect water pipes feed (Photo 3). If there are no shut-off valves and the water pipes are connected directly to the faucet supply lines, or if you replace defective valves, turn off the main water supply valve to the housing and cut off the pipes (Photo 3) under the connections with a hacksaw or pipe cutter. Make sure that new valves are closed before turning the water back to the house. Once the water lines are disconnected, use the basin wrench to loosen the old faucet and remove it (Photo 4). Sometimes, despite all your best it is simply to loosen the old faucet nuts. Calm down! Try soaking the threads with penetrating oil and try again. If it doesn't, it's time to pull out all the stops and pull the sink so you can get on the nuts. It's not that hard to do. Loosen the screws on the bottom of the sink rim for a clamp-down sink, or cut the caulk between a drop-in sink and countertop with a tool knife and lift out the sink. Then you will be able to go after these nuts with a locking pliers or a pipe key to release the old faucet. If you replace the sink with a new faucet, install the faucet before putting the sink in the countertop. Now install the new faucet Photo 5: Place the flange over the faucet opening Follow any manufacturer's pre-mounting instructions and place the optional flange (see Photo 8) over the faucet opening. Finger-tighten the flange nuts under the sink and check the alignment of the flange, faucet and sink holes from above. Photo 6: Tighten the faucet mounting nut. Check the operation of the faucet and handle to confirm that you do not put it in the back, and thread the supply lines through the flange and sink holes. Then slide on the faucet washer, and wire on and tighten the faucet-mounting nut from below, gently spreading the faucet supply pipes if necessary to get tool clearance (sometimes manufacturers provide a special tool for this). Photo 7: Tighten the flange nut Hand-tighten, then tightly up the flange nuts with an open-end wrench. You can only turn the wrench about a one-sixth revolution at a time. Photo 8: Attach the spray hose to the faucet supply tube. Thread the spray nozzle line through the faucet body, then thread the spray hose mounting on the faucet supply tube and tighten it. Pull the nozzle out of the tap to make sure that the hose under the sink works freely, then attach the counterweight according to the manufacturer's instructions. Photo 9: Mark the feed lines where you want to cut them Pull the new valves on the feed tubes and mark the feed lines just above the compression nuts on the cut-off valves. Photo 10: Connect the feed tube to the supply lines. Clean the copper hose with fine sandpaper, then slide the nut, compression ring and valve body over the tube and tighten. Close the valve, turn on the main water valve and check for leaks. Place a bucket under the faucet and turn the faucet on to check for leaks. Assemble the garbage collection, P-traps and sewage pipes. Follow the manufacturer's instructions to install the new faucet, then reassemble the sink (with the new faucet) and connect the water pipes as we show in this how to replace a kitchen faucet project. With most faucets, only three of the four holes are covered, so you either need to get an empty insert or use extra holes for a liquid soap or instant hot water dispenser. Plan to do the installation while you are under with everything torn apart. If you have a leaky faucet, consult this article on how to fix a leaky faucet. When you buy a faucet (as with most other things), you get what you pay for. Faucets that cost less than \$100 can be made of chrome-plated plastic art with seals and valves that wear. They are OK for easy use but won't stand up long in an often used sink. Faucets that cost more than \$100 generally have solid brass bodies with durable plating and washerless controls that will provide leak-free service for many, many years. Some even come with a lifetime warranty. Quality continues to improve up to about \$200. Spend more than \$200 and you're mostly paying for style and finish. Stick with brand projects so spare parts will be easier to find—in the unlikely event you'll ever need them. Required Tools for this how to replace a kitchen faucet Project Have necessary tools for this how to replace a kitchen faucet DIY project lined up before you start—you save time and frustration. 4-in-1 screwdriver Pre-adjust wrench Hammer Handsaw Pipe wrench Slip common pliers Tube cutter Wrench set Basin wrench Kres required Material for this how to replace a kitchen faucet Project Avoid last minute shopping trips by having all your materials ready in advance for this how to change a kitchen faucet. Here is a list. 150-grit sandpaper Braided stainless steel delivery tube New faucet P-trap Shut-off valves

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