

# Today's Woman is Home Savvy in a Whole New Way

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## Lowe's Annual Survey Reveals Women Homeowners Prefer Less Sewing, More Mowing

Gone are the days when women preferred sewing over mowing -- or when buying a home as a young, single female was inconceivable. Today's woman is more independent than ever when it comes to the home, according to the fifth annual national survey of female homeowners and females considering homeownership commissioned by Lowe's. The survey findings reveal that 81 percent of female DIYers surveyed perform landscaping and gardening projects, and nearly half (48 percent) engage in exterior maintenance work. Furthermore, 56 percent of women surveyed report that they maintain or work in their yard and garden at least once a week, and 41 percent surveyed would rather mow their lawn and perform outdoor activities, compared to 14 percent who prefer sewing and clothing repair.

"Now more than ever, women are confident in their abilities to take on home improvement projects, particularly those that are traditionally thought of as tasks men handle around the home like maintaining the lawn, grilling or even cleaning gutters," said Melissa Birdsong, vice president of trend forecasting and design for Lowe's. "With 26 percent of all home purchases in 2004 made by single women, according to a survey of buyers and sellers conducted by the National Association of Realtors (NAR), today's woman is more eager to roll up her sleeves."

From fashionable chimineas and cozy lounge chairs to mood-setting string lights and vibrant flora, women are also taking entertaining al fresco to a whole new level. An overwhelming majority of the women surveyed (83 %) are especially active in entertaining outdoors during the summer, confirming that women homeowners will spend more time outside this summer improving and maintaining the appearance of their house.

In preparation for entertaining outdoors, the most popular areas of the home to be groomed are the garden (listed by 31 percent of female homeowners surveyed), the lawn (19 percent) and the deck (14 percent). Also, 76 percent of the women surveyed deem the décor of their outdoor living space as important.

## Do It Yourself

Findings reveal that 91 percent of women DIYers surveyed are responsible for the majority of home improvement decisions in their household, either solely or jointly. However, the role of women in home renovations is not limited to making decisions. The modern woman is very much in step with upgrading her home with nearly one-third (30 percent of female DIYers surveyed) managing projects and another 48 percent collaborating with their spouse on projects around the house.

The Lowe's survey also indicates that 88 percent of female DIYers surveyed undertake home improvement projects by themselves, primarily to cut costs, representing a jump of nearly 10 percentage points from three years ago. In addition, 69 percent of these women consider themselves experienced do-it-yourselfers, proving that most women do-it-yourselfers are eager to take on many types of household DIY projects.

However, even adept women do-it-yourselfers agree that certain areas of the home require a professional's touch. Forty percent list the kitchen as the space where they would hire a contractor, compared to 32 percent who would use a professional for the bathroom.

## It's What's Inside That Counts

As women become more proficient in the home improvement arena and venture outdoors to tackle projects, the inside of the home still reigns as the location where women conduct the majority of maintenance and improvement work.

According to the survey, 82 percent of the women surveyed handle basic repairs inside the home, and 81 percent undertake interior decorating projects such as wallpapering or painting. In fact, 41 percent of those women often look to newspapers and magazines for home renovation ideas. In addition, 77 percent say they are likely to visit their home improvement store for project ideas and trends.

Other key findings from the Lowe's survey include:\* At 72 percent, more women homeowners today feel prepared to be solely responsible for their home, including maintenance, repairs and improvement -- a five percentage point increase from 2004.\* Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of female do-it-yourselfers are more likely to take on a home improvement project if they know it can be started and completed within the span of a weekend.\* More women own power tools today (78 percent)-24 percent have an extensive collection of hand and power tools; 21 percent own hand tools, some small power tools and one or two major power tools; and 33 percent own a few basic hand and power tools.

This study of female do-it-yourselfers age 18 and older in the United States who are homeowners or plan to purchase their own home in the near future was conducted between May 30 and June 1 by Ipsos Public Affairs, a North American based Division of the Ipsos Group, the world's third largest survey-based public opinion and market research organization. The margin of error for this study is +/- 4.9 percent.

#### About Lowe's

With fiscal year 2005 sales of \$43.2 billion, Lowe's Companies, Inc. is a FORTUNE(R) 50 company that serves approximately 12 million customers a week at more than 1,250 home improvement stores in 49 states. Based in Mooresville, N.C., the 60-year old company is the second-largest home improvement retailer in the world. For more information, visit [Lowe.com](http://Lowe.com).