

SMALL APPLIANCES

Appliances aren't cheap, so for many homeowners, fixing appliances when something goes wrong with them is the best thing they can do to increase the life of their investment.

Common Appliances in Need of Fixing

In most cases, smaller appliances end up needing repairs more quickly than larger, more expensive appliances. This is because they are often considered disposable appliances. Hand mixers, coffee makers, blenders, vacuum cleaners and other easily portable appliances take a lot of abuse compared to larger appliances like refrigerators, microwaves and dishwashers, which are relatively immobile.



Power Cord Repairs

The most common repair among appliances is the power cord. Due to the amount of use these appliances go through, the power cord's insulation sleeve may start working its way loose from the appliance's housing or careless use could result in a nicked cord. In either case, this is an extremely dangerous situation that needs to be repaired immediately.

First, unplug the appliance so it has no power going to it. Open up the wiring box cover on the appliance to expose the inner wire connections. Use a multi-meter to check the wires for continuity. This will determine whether or not there is a wire break inside the insulation. Touch one probe to one of the prongs on the plug and touch the other probe to the corresponding wire inside the appliance. For example, on the plug, the smaller prong is the hot side and the larger prong is the neutral, so touch one probe to the smaller prong and the other probe to the black wire terminal in the appliance. If the tester reads continuity, then test the neutral side. If either side does not ring for continuity, then the power cord should be replaced by one rated for the appliance.



Troubleshooting Small Appliance Controls

If the power cord is not the culprit, then the controls usually are. A multi-tester will be used to test the controls as well, preferably one that has probes that can be replaced with clips and like before, the power cord should be unplugged.

To test the controls, clip one probe to the input side of the control switch (the on/off switch) and clip the other probe to the output side. Press the switch on and the tester should read continuity. Press it off and the tester should read zero.

For variable controls, a multi-meter that can read resistance will be required, but the controller can be tested the same way.

For the majority of small appliances, these two problems will make up the bulk of the repair issues. As stated earlier, many of these appliances are designed to be replaced rather than repaired, but by taking the time to troubleshoot and repair small appliances, you can maximize the life of your appliances and save money in the long run.

Read more: www.doityourself.com

Information provided by Dave Donovan an electrician for more than 15 years who is now a full-time journalist