HOME REPAIR RESOURCE CENTER

HOMEOWNER REPAIR GUIDE

PATCHING CONCRETE GARAGE FLOORS

For do-it-yourself repairs

Once again, that dreadful duty rolls around – cleaning out the garage. Well, after you have removed a couple of layers of junk and you begin to recall what the floor looks like, you may discover that you have a few more cracks than the last time you saw your floor. Don't panic – you can probably do some patching to save that floor and avoid an expensive replacement job.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

First, clean out the area around where you are going to be working. Then, you are going to need a little time and a few simple tools. Plan on about two hours to repair the cracks in the average two-car garage.

TOOLS	
2-lb. heavy hammer	Steel concrete chisel
Rough cleaning brush	Concrete mixing tub
Concrete hoe	Straight-edge (a wooden 2" x 4" will do)

MATERIALS

For crack patching, it's probably best to use a **ready-mix concrete** product, available from most area lumberyards, building supply, or local hardware stores. This mix will include everything that you need, except water.

PATCHING THE CRACKS

1. Using your heavy hammer and chisel, undercut the area to be patched at an angle (see Diagram 1), so that the newly-poured concrete will be formed in the shape of a wedge to prevent it from heaving up.
2. Clean the area to be patched thoroughly, and get it wet.
3. Mix the concrete according to the directions on the bag, and install it in the area you've prepared.
4. When you're finished, use your straight-edge to smooth the top of the wet concrete. Then, allow the new patch to rise about 1/8" above the existing concrete (see Diagram 2).

DIAGRAM 1

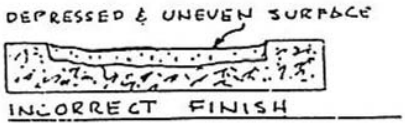


This patch will fall out or wear out as a result of freezing.

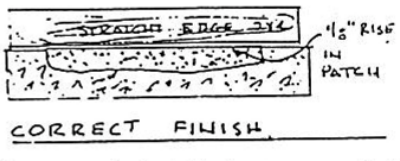


This patch can be used in the center of large concrete areas.

DIAGRAM 2



The patch surface has shrunk due to over-working the surface, excess water, improper tools, or fast drying.



Use a good straightedge to screed off excess material. A little rise in the new material will allow for shrinkage.

CLEANING YOUR FLOOR

After patching, why not try to clean and seal your floor? This won't take too much more of your time, and will probably keep you from having to patch your floor again next year. Here are a few ideas to make cleaning your concrete easier and more effective, especially if you need to remove oil or rust stains:

1. First, scrub the stain with paint thinner or grease solvent.
2. Then, mix a cleaner using one part sodium citrate to six parts water and six parts commercial glycerine. Mix this to a thick paste and put this paste on the stain.
3. Keep the paste on the stain for a week; when the paste dries out, add some more.
4. At the end of the week, take your hose and flush away the stain and the paste. You may need to repeat this process a couple of times to get out really stubborn stains.

> **ANOTHER OPTION: TSP**
> Trisodium phosphate (TSP) is another good cleaner to use. It is easy to find (try the hardware store) and works well with boiling water and a stiff scrub brush.

SEALING YOUR FLOOR

After you have gotten out those ugly stains, go ahead and seal your concrete. A concrete sealer will keep the water from entering the pores of your concrete and causing it to crack, and will keep any stains on the surface of the concrete so they won't set in. There are a number of brands of good quality concrete sealers available. Just follow the directions on whatever sealer you buy, and you'll go a long way towards extending the life of your concrete.

So, don't spend your time maneuvering the junk in your garage around those cracks (or strategically placing it to hide the worst offenders). Patching, cleaning, and sealing that floor can simplify your life and extend the life of your garage. Most likely, you will still have to clean out your garage periodically, but you may be able to avoid any unpleasant surprises.

HOME REPAIR RESOURCE CENTER

Home Repair Resource Center empowers homeowners to maintain their homes for sustainable and diverse communities.

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