HOMEOWNER REPAIR GUIDE

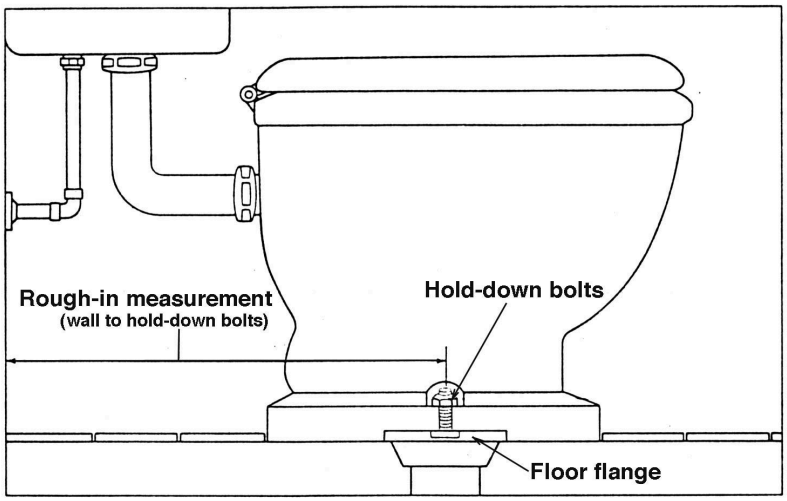
CHOOSING A NEW TOILET

Toilets come in many styles, shapes, sizes – and prices. There are both two-piece models and costlier one-piece toilets. If you want something different, you can get a toilet that hangs on the wall, or even a corner toilet with a triangular tank. Some toilets have the standard round bowl, while others feature an elongated bowl with an oval-like shape.

Most of these options are more decorative than functional, unless you are dealing with limited space – although some may require more intricate plumbing configurations. However, there are a couple of choices that can be significant.

BOWL HEIGHT AND ROUGH-IN

Bowl height	A model with a lower bowl height might be difficult for people with back or leg problems (or for those of us getting up in years).
Rough-in measurement	Except in new construction, you'll need to match the existing "rough-in" measurement (the distance between the center of the flange around the drain opening and the wall behind it – *see diagram*). Toilets vary in how far they sit away from the wall. You can select a toilet designed for a shorter rough-in measurement (you'll just have to add some supportive blocking between the back of the tank and the wall), but you can't install a fixture designed for a longer rough-in measurement without some complicated alterations to the drain line.



Rough-in measurement: wall to hold-down bolts

FLUSHING MECHANISMS

There are various types of flushing mechanisms, but the two better-known types are the gravity flush and the pressure-assist flush.

TYPE	HOW IT WORKS	REPAIRS
Gravity flush	Tanks with the gravity system are usually less expensive; they have the common fill valve and flapper with an overflow assembly.	Parts for the gravity units can be replaced easily and inexpensively.
Pressure-assist flush	The more costly pressure-assist units have a one-piece plastic chamber inside the porcelain tank. These units flush more efficiently, because each flush is pressure-assisted with compressed air; the solid wastes are *pushed out,* instead of being *pulled out* by the siphon action of a gravity unit.	Because the trip lever is the only moving part on a pressure-assist unit, when this type of toilet fails, the flush unit inside the tank – and sometimes the entire tank – must be replaced.

WATER CONSERVATION

With rising water and sewer prices, a new toilet can help reduce utility costs. Due to recent federally-mandated water conservation measures, the only new toilets you can buy are 1.6 gallon models.

LOOK FOR QUALITY

With these lower-capacity toilets, it's important to get a better-quality model that has a larger-diameter trap. Make sure the toilet is *glazed throughout*, including all surfaces of the trap. A siphon jet (included on nearly all current models) will produce better elimination of solid waste.

MATERIAL ISSUES

Bolts	Whether you're installing a new toilet or replacing an old one, pay attention to the bolts you're using. For attaching the stool to the flange, **5/16" bolts** (instead of the 1/4" bolts generally provided) will give you a more secure hold. Both these bolts and the tank bolts (used to mount the tank to the stool on a two-piece model) should be **solid brass** – not brass-plated steel, where the heads can rust away.
Flange	Finally, check the flange itself. Make sure it is firmly attached to the floor to keep the toilet from rocking. If you have added a layer of flooring atop the original surface, you may need to buy an extension flange to accommodate the extra height.

Paying attention to these "material issues" will help ensure that you'll have fewer problems with the new toilet you select.

Home Repair Resource center

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

WWW.HRRC-CH.ORG **+1.216.381.6100** **2520 Noble Road, Cleveland Heights, OH 44121**

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