

REDISCOVERING YOUR HOME IN A PANDEMIC

What is DIY? Is it about fixing your roof, painting your bedroom or mowing the lawn? On the surface at least. It helps you perform very concrete actions that are necessary for the upkeep and safety of your home. After all, the DIY industry is sometimes called “the pharmacy of the home”.

But it is not just about that. It cannot be. Our fast pace of life has arguably made us lose sight of the much greater purpose it serves: helping you improve, create and love your home.

Home improvement appears to be an innate activity for mankind. Evidence for this can be found in the fact that it is rooted throughout human history: going as far back as Prehistorical times, even cavemen felt the need to take care of their “homes”.

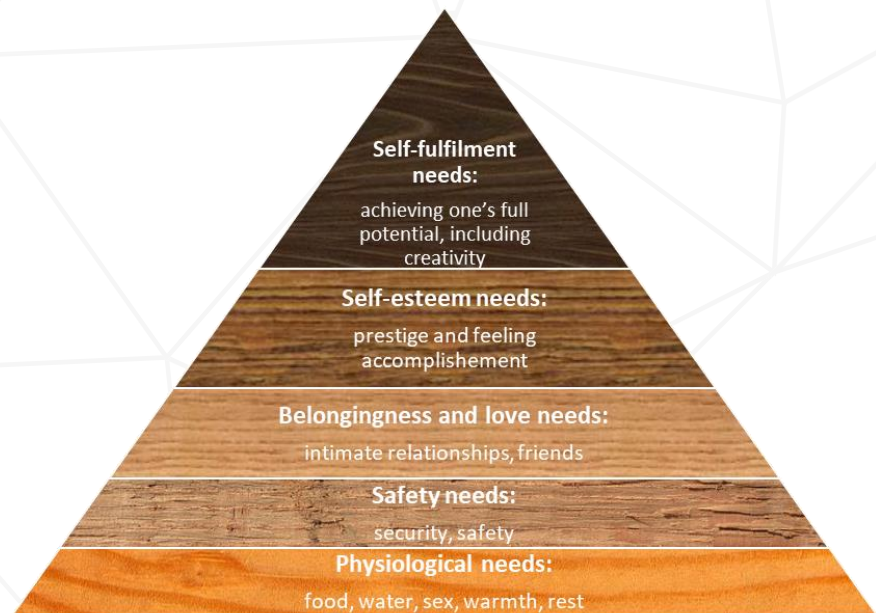


First home improvement project in the history of humanity?

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But why is it so essential to us?

Ever heard of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs²? It is a psychological theory that establishes a hierarchy of people’s needs, ranging from physiological needs like food and water to more psychological needs like self-esteem. Maslow argues that needs lower down in the hierarchy must be satisfied before individuals can attend to needs higher up. Taking a closer look, you will realize how omnipresent and essential a home is to fulfil these needs (*see right*).



¹ Prehistoric paintings from the Lascaux cave (France, circa 17,000 years BC).

² Abraham Maslow was a XXth century American psychologist.

Here are a few examples:

- 1) *Physiological needs*: we all need a home to find refuge from inclement weather conditions and to rest. Your home is your shelter.
- 2) *Safety needs*: we all need a home to protect ourselves from many forms of aggressions, be it physical (e.g. disease as proven during the lockdown) or psychological (feeling of security to have a roof over one's head). Your home is your castle.
- 3) *Belongingness and love needs*: we all need a home to create privacy and intimacy with our loved ones. Your home is your nest.
- 4) *Self-esteem needs*: we all need a home as a demonstration of our personal success in our eyes and in the eyes of others. Your home is your showroom.
- 5) *Self-fulfilment needs*: we all need a home to express our uniqueness. It is an outlet for our creativity. Your home is you.

Yet, despite our home being so essential to meet these needs, somehow, we lost sight of its importance to us.

But the COVID-19 outbreak, the social distancing measures and lockdown that followed changed this. It helped us rethink what home really means to us.

HOW A KILLER VIRUS MADE US REDISCOVER OUR HOME

Remember what happened on March 11th? The World Health Organisation declared COVID-19 a pandemic. This announcement marked the beginning of a series of worldwide decisions to stay at home in order to slow down the spread of the virus.

On April 2nd almost half of humanity was in lockdown³, only going outdoors for essential needs like shopping for food or appointments at the doctor's.

In our globalized world where economies are so intertwined, the lockdowns and social distancing measures have triggered a drastic change. Particularly, the economic recession and resulting unemployment that will no doubt follow will have a severe impact on people's lives. Besides, as people's financial situation may deteriorate, carrying out DIY projects could be a more affordable option. Becoming a DIYer will be a must.

Yet finding ourselves under lockdown has also brought something less expected with it by making us rediscover our home's intrinsic value and the need to look after it. Our home stopped being simply a place where we sleep and relax between social activities and appeared more to us as it really is: the keystone to fulfil our needs.

³ [Euronews: Coronavirus: Half of humanity now on lockdown as 90 countries call for confinement](#)

This rediscovery has triggered in us the desire to take greater care of our homes, whether by mending the tap that has been leaking for the past months, repainting the bedroom in your favourite colour, shampooing the carpet, building the treehouse that your kids harassed you about, putting a family picture up on the wall, creating your Eden on your balcony, or turning the jungle of your garden into a vegetable patch.

Adding to this, lockdown forced us to cancel journeys and outdoor activities. It also saved us time from commuting, leaving us with more time to devote to our homes and carry out needed DIY projects. We are also experiencing a new situation, for many being at work now means working from home: your home may need an office in the future....

But home improvement is not just about performing manual tasks. It is also the opportunity to acquire and solidify skills that will strengthen self-esteem. While our mental well-being was challenged by self-isolation DIY projects could support us through this difficult time. How accomplished we feel when we make something with our own hands!

Even more importantly, when deprived of outdoor activities where we can express ourselves, taking care of our homes offers an outlet for creativity. How fulfilling it is to express your personality and build a home that reflects who you are!

BUT WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE HOME IMPROVEMENT INDUSTRY IN ALL OF THIS?

Helping you bring your DIY projects to life is the sole purpose of the home improvement industry. To achieve this we provide a wide and personalised range of quality products as well as high-end customer service. More and more stores are also helping people acquire and develop DIY skills by arranging workshops for customers to tackle the general loss of skills amongst the population.

But DIY is also going through difficult times, the sector is responding to the challenges brought about by sustainability, as well as the increasing digitalization of our society. In this respect, the lack of level playing field with online market places such as Amazon and Alibaba is a major concern.

Moreover, despite home improvement being recognized as “essential retail” in almost all countries, the COVID-19 outbreak brought about a great deal of strain on our sector, which had to implement new hygiene standards to protect our customers and employees. An illustration of our industry’s key role is the increasing number of tax incentives by Governments for energy-saving DIY projects.

But these challenges will not make us lose sight of the key role that DIY companies play in helping you improve, create, and love your home. Aware of our mission, we remain in constant evolution to meet consumers’ expectations and desires, and will continue to do so.

EDRA/GHIN is the voice of home improvement retailers globally. Today EDRA/GHIN represents 214 home improvement companies operating over 32,000 stores in 74 countries.

If you want to know more about EDRA-GHIN, consult this [link](#).

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