

Fixing old appliances yourself

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One of the greatest difficulties we encounter when trying to fix an old appliance is where can you find the part. Hardware stores, even the massive box stores, rarely have much more than the very standard stuff like stove top burners and a selection of springs and fasteners that you hope might make do. Actually there are two almost hidden sources of parts to keep just about any appliance alive. The photo above shows a shot down the racks of Reliable Parts, an appliance parts store in Toronto. Here you don't wander through the shelves but go to the counter like in most contractor oriented stores. Stores like this can be found in every major city -- look in the appliance section of the Yellow Pages. Before you go, get all the information you can about your appliance -- brand name, model name and anything interesting on the identification label if it has one. I was pleasantly surprised to find an exact replacement for my mother-in-laws dishwasher rack recently. But don't forget to ask for the price and make a quick judgment call. Some parts can be almost as expensive as replacing the entire appliance. If your repair will make it like new -- ok. But if this is just one part and another might die soon, you might want to simply scrap the appliance. Unfortunately many smaller appliances under \$250 are not designed to ever be repaired. The second source is used appliance stores, which abound in every city. Here you can often find just what you need because these stores collect most of their stock out of demolishing dead machines. Here you will find some common new parts and many used parts which will cost less than new replacements. Sometimes the old good part is actually built better than its brand new replacement. Here you want to not only know the name and model of your appliance, but you probably want to bring in the part itself or at least a photo to save yourself un-necessary return trips.

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