

50plus Handyman

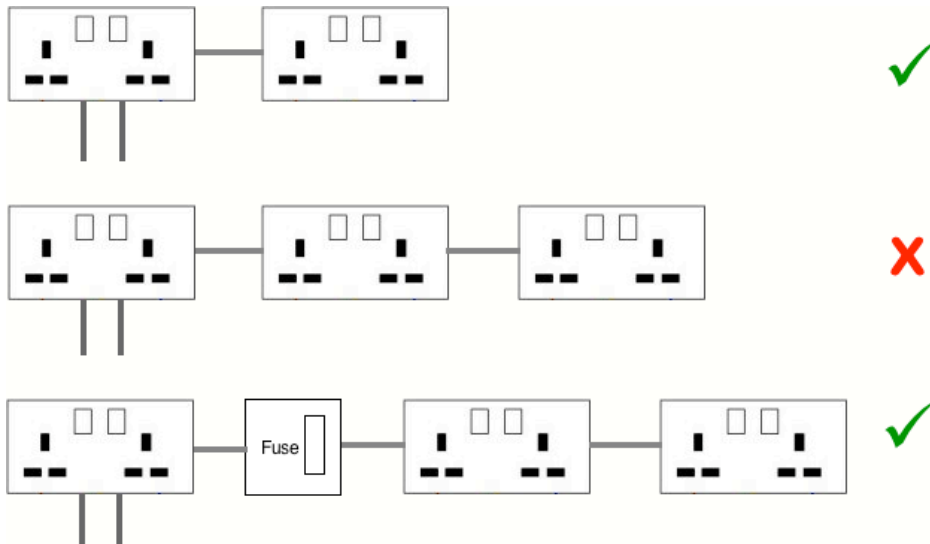


Additional power?

50plus Handyman director Roger Runswick looks at fitting additional power sockets

The number of electrical gadgets in homes continues to increase and to power them many of us find we need additional power sockets. Before undertaking the fitting of an additional socket a few points need considering:

- (i) If what you have is a single socket that needs making into a double (or a double to a triple) a simple replacement 'converter' can be fitted that negates the need to change the backing box in the wall.
- (ii) Does the work need approval under Part P of the building regulations? Generally only if the socket is in a kitchen (unless you are just fitting a converter). Most other areas don't need specific approval so you could do the work yourself if you are so inclined and can do so safely.
- (iii) Where is there an existing point that the new socket can be connected to and is it on a ring main? The answer will determine the cost of the work. If there is a point nearby or on the other side of the wall and that has two cables going to it (a ring main usually) the job is made a lot easier. If the nearest point is a long way off then other and typically more expensive cabling will be required. Having floorboards helps (modern house typically have large sheets flooring which need to be cut into). If the floor is downstairs and concrete then the cable may need 'channelling' into the wall.



- (iv) ANY additional wiring that is embedded in a wall (unless in drill proof conduit) MUST be protected by an RCD; that's a trip with a test button. If you don't have one of these you must fit one to power the new cabling. Consult an electrician if there are any doubts.

In some cases a simple plug in extension can suffice. But do remember trailing leads can be a hazard, particularly for the more elderly.

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