

There are plenty of choices of handy home-improvement gifts for dad

The Associated Press
 If your dad (or husband) is like most, he probably has enough neckties to last a lifetime. In contrast, we have yet to meet a dad who claims to have more than his share of tools or nifty gadgets.
 So when it's time for a present for dad, instead of heading out to the department store in search of the perfect tie, consider setting your sights on your local home center or hardware store. There you will find an almost infinite supply of gift ideas that are sure to satisfy even the most discriminating do-it-yourself dad.
 Of course, to maintain our editorial credibility, we spent the better part of a day combing the aisles of our local home center looking for the perfect gift. Needless to say, we came up with enough gift ideas for a

lifetime of Father's Days.
 Because of the limited size of this column we can share only a sampling of what we spotted. Our list includes a varied selection with a broad price range. We hope that our suggestions will make buying for dad a breeze.
Gloves and glasses:
 When it comes to working around the house, personal safety is job No. 1. A splinter in the hand or a speck of metal in the eye can turn an otherwise pleasurable project into a disaster. Consequently, personal safety gear has grown into a substantial retail category. It seems as if only a few years ago there were three basic styles of work gloves from which to choose — leather, cotton and rubber.
 Today, lots of retail space is devoted to what appears to be an almost

infinite selection of work gloves. Beyond safety, the gloves are project-specific (gardening, carpentry, cleaning, etc.) and double as a fashion item. They are available in a host of colors, styles and fabrics and range from \$5 to \$15.
 Bulky rubber or heavy plastic safety goggles now have great competition with fashion safety glasses. The glasses are designed to offer superior eye protection along with an eye on style. They come in an array of frame and lens styles and colors and range from \$5 to \$15.
Portable outdoor grill:
 An outdoor grill is always a safe bet for dad. However, some of today's high-end outdoor grills can be a bit more than your gift-giving budget will allow. A nice alternative is a portable gas barbecue that can be

used for tailgate parties, camping and picnicking. They are compact and collapsible, yet potent. Plan to spend about \$150.
Cordless driver drill:
 You can never go wrong with a power tool. And one of the single most useful power tools is a cordless driver drill. A driver drill can be used to drill holes, drive screws and, with various attachments, can be used to buff, grind and polish.
 Although they come in a variety of shapes, sizes and power ratings, most have some common must-have features such as a keyless chuck, variable speed trigger, reverse action and adjustable clutch. Some tools are being packaged as kits that include various drill bits and accessories. Comfort, ergonomics and balance are other important considerations.

Though we came across a 19.2-volt kit for just under \$20, prices generally range from \$49 to \$149.
Portable power and entertainment center:
 One of the coolest gifts that caught our eye was the portable power and entertainment center. Essentially, it's a boom box on steroids. Though the features vary by manufacturer, most of these products consist of an AM/FM radio, a compact-disc player, an MP3 jack, an on-board battery charger for cordless tools and multiple electrical outlets. One model even comes with a remote control — the ultimate when you want to change the channel or adjust the volume while perched on a roof. Prices range from \$75 to \$175.
Pressure washer:
 No dad should be without a pres-

sure washer. It wasn't too long ago that most people had to rent a pressure washer. Today they have become one of the most popular do-it-yourself tools. A pressure washer can be used for countless tasks, including cleaning window screens and siding; restoring decking, fencing and concrete, and they're great for washing cars, boats and RVs. Although pro models can get pretty pricey, do-it-yourself models range from \$100 to \$500.
 One non-tool that caught our eye and is worth mentioning was a hammock. It looked like the perfect spot for dad to take a snooze after spending the better part of a day working around the house.
 More tips and information are available on the Web at:
<http://www.onthehouse.com>

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