

## Home energy Carbon monoxide detectors can alert you



**James Dulley**  
Cutting Your  
Utility Bills

**QUESTION:** We have a newer home with a gas furnace, water heater and hot water tank. A nearby family almost died from carbon monoxide poisoning. Are we at risk with our appliances? Are home detectors available?

**ANSWER:** Although the chances of experiencing a problem with CO poisoning are not great with newer gas appliances, a risk remains. A flue can get blocked by an animal or debris, and an appliance many just won't notice.

Your gas range is much less likely to create CO gas because it has an open flame with plenty of oxygen available. Never use a gas stove or oven to help heat your home, even during an emergency. In a newer airtight home, the flame can lower oxygen levels in the air and CO levels can begin to form. CO is a silent killer because it is odorless, tasteless and at night while people are sleeping, its symptoms at low levels (headache, dizziness, nausea, sleepiness, irritability) can be mistaken for a cold or the flu. Without a CO detector, your home might be slowly poisoned. Many designs of CO detectors are available for home use. Some are battery operated, some are hardwired into a wall outlet, and some are simple tablets that change color in the presence of CO.

CO detectors are built into a clock radio for a bedroom. When CO is detected, a loud alarm beeps four times, followed by a voice message to leave the room. This repeats every six seconds. Electronic CO detectors are effective and can store the history of the CO gas levels in memory. If the alarm sounds, the fire department can access the recent CO concentration history in your home to help diagnose the source and determine the length of your exposure.

Two-stage CO detectors provide a warning signal at low CO concentrations and the full alarm at dangerous levels. A flashing light or audible tone alerts you to a possible problem before the level gets too high. Write for — or download at [www.dulley.com](http://www.dulley.com) — Update Bulletin No. 503, a buyer's guide to eight CO detector/alerts and tablet manufacturers listing number of stages, alarm type, warranties, features and CO exposure warning symptoms.

Include \$3 and a business-size self-addressed, stamped envelope and write to: James Dulley, c/o The State, 6906 Royalgreen Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45244.

## Outdoors

### What you can do to attract migratory birds

The Nature Conservancy's Migratory Bird Program suggests ways to assist bird conservation.

- **Build a birdhouse** — with proper ventilation — in your yard. In two dozen bird species, the purple martin, house wren and Eastern bluebird will use birdhouses.
- **Provide a bath** in your yard to attract birds. A year-round source of water for drinking and bathing water is important in winter where open water is scarce.
- **Use bird feeders and nectar dispensers** — in proper locations and at proper distances where they will not be ambushed by predators.

— Source: [nature.org/earthday/issues/](http://nature.org/earthday/issues/)

Denim isn't limited to furniture and bedding; try it on your walls, too. You can find denim wallpaper or borders, or you can paint a wall with a technique that emulates the look of denim.

### What you need

- Denim glaze (available pre-mixed at paint and home improvement stores)
- Base-coat paint
- Paint roller and tray
- Wallpaper brush (or stiff-bristle paintbrush)
- Paintbrushes
- Masking tape
- Rubber gloves

## DENIM

FROM PAGE G1

casual, comfy-cozy feel. Most people choose denim for a den or family room or a guest or child's bedroom.

"It's great to mix and match different types of throws" with denim, Bogle said. "You might want to use different textures of pillows — plaids or prints or different solids — to add color."

And you can change them out seasonally, she said. Denim isn't just about blues, either.

"The cool thing (is that) they're coming in so many different colors now," Britt said. Among the 15 colors of denim Storehouse carries are putty, taupe, khaki, bright red, butter and ice blue.

"We've got a lot more than traditional blue denim," she said.

Red denim, corded in yellow, is a popular choice to brighten up a room, designers say.

Denim also works paired with the jungle or tropical theme prints popular now. For example, denim in khaki or sage in the guest bed-

## DENIM ON YOUR WALLS

### How to do it

The first step is to paint your wall with a base coat. Since the base coat will need to be lighter than the denim-colored paint — to create the look of lighter underside stitching characteristic of denim material — use a satin or semigloss ivory or pale yellow paint.

Once the base coat has dried, apply the denim glaze over it using a paint roller.

As soon as the denim glaze has been rolled on, use a wallpaper brush to create the denim-fabric "pattern" in the wet glaze.

Ideally, this paint technique is a two-person job — with one person rolling on the glaze and the second person standing by, ready to use the brush to create

the brushed pattern while the glaze is wet.

With the denim glaze applied, use the wallpaper brush to comb it, creating vertical strokes to mimic the vertical lines of the material. A stiff-bristle paintbrush can be used, but the wallpaper brush is wider and makes the job go faster and easier.

As the stiff bristles remove some of the denim glaze, they partly reveal the base coat underneath. This is termed a negative paint technique since the pattern is achieved by removing paint.

With the vertical comb-strokes done, use the same technique in horizontal strokes to mimic the horizontal lines of the material. The crisscrossed brush-strokes create the textured pattern that emulates denim fabric.

## USING DENIM

■ Pair upholstered denim furniture with casual wood pieces — pine and painted wood work well, particularly the white, cottage look. Iron and wood accessories look great with it, too.

■ Try to keep furniture covered with denim out of direct sunlight, which can fade the fabric.

■ Still want some more denim, beyond furniture, wallcoverings and bedding? Ralph Lauren and other manufacturers make blue denim-colored dinnerware.

room can be paired with palm wallpaper in the adjoining bath, Bogle said.

In the bedroom, you can find denim comforters by everyone

If your wall already has crumpled molding or a chair rail, you need to protect the wood with masking tape.

Use a paintbrush to carefully brush or stipple to create brushed pattern in the area adjacent to the molding. For an added touch of realism, use a check roller to enhance the brushed pattern with a "wet denim" look.

Roll the check roller — applying firm pressure — across the denim glaze after the brush effect has been applied but before the glaze has had time to dry.

Once you're done, allow the glaze to dry thoroughly according to the manufacturer's instructions.

from Ralph Lauren and Tommy Hilfiger to Pottery Barn.

It's also an option for the kitchen, Hanby-Robie said.

"We live in our kitchens and want them to be comfortable," she said, suggesting denim wallcoverings, window treatments or sea cushions for the room.

As for prices, denim sofas at Storehouse start at about \$1,100 depending on the style. Some are sold upholstered, some slipcovered.

At Pottery Barn, an L-shaped sectional denim sofa is \$2,799, and individual chairs with denim slipcovers are \$699. A patchwork denim quilt is \$299 for full/queen size.

Wherever you use it, designers say it's hard to make a mistake with denim.

"It's like a pair of jeans," Sowards said. "You know that cute top you have, but nothing else you have goes with it? You can always wear it with your jeans."

## building...remodeling?



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**220 SERENITY DRIVE**  
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**224 SERENITY DRIVE**  
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**108 MOONBIDE COURT**  
\$217,500. Lake access available. 4BR

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