

10 Essential Plumbing Tips Every Apprentice Must Know

written by Jude Campbell | August 29, 2024



Here are some pieces of advice or wisdom that experienced plumbers might pass on to their apprentices

These nuggets of wisdom not only help in mastering the trade, but also in navigating the professional world of plumbing. They combine practical advice with a bit of life philosophy, tailored to the unique challenges faced by plumbers.

1- “Measure Twice, Cut Once”



is the sacred scripture in the holy book of plumbing, where ‘twice’ is just the starting bid, and ‘once’ means you’ve probably already messed up. Here in the realm of pipes, fittings, and the ever-present threat of an impromptu indoor water feature, this phrase isn’t just friendly advice; it’s your lifeline. Forget it, and you’re not just looking at a redo, but potentially auditioning for a role in “Waterworld: The Home Edition.” So, grab your measuring tape like it’s the Excalibur of plumbing, because in this game, precision isn’t just a virtue; it’s your only defense against turning a client’s basement into an accidental aquarium. For more tales from the trenches of tape measures and pipe cutters, swim over to the Measure Twice page, where we measure our success by how dry the floors [Visit the Measure Twice blog post](#)

2- “Righty Tightly, Lefty Loosey”



isn't just a catchy rhyme to keep you from looking like a fool with a wrench; it's the alpha and omega of screw-based wisdom, the bread and butter of bolt behavior. Imagine it as the secret handshake of the hardware world. Turn it to the right, or as we say in the biz, clockwise, and you're in for a snug relationship between nut and bolt – it's like they're holding hands tighter than teenagers at a horror movie. But, should you desire freedom, a release from this mechanical embrace, you go left, counterclockwise, where things loosen up faster than a belt after Thanksgiving dinner. This isn't just advice; it's a universal law, like gravity, but for anyone who's ever faced the existential crisis of a stuck jar lid or a stubborn screw. Remember, in the dance of the threads, getting the direction right means you lead; get it wrong, and you're stepping on toes, or worse, stripping screws.. [Visit the Righty Tightly Blog Post](#)

3- Always Have Spare Parts



Keeping extra fittings, washers, and common repair parts on hand can turn a two-trip job into a one-trip success. In the plumbing world, time is as precious as water, and nothing eats into your schedule like an unexpected second trip for parts. **A Plumber's Best Friend: The Spare Part Stash** isn't just advice; it's a mantra for efficiency. By stocking your van with extra fittings, an assortment of washers, and those frequently needed repair components, you're not just prepared; you're setting the stage for a one-trip success story. This proactive approach not only saves you the hassle and time of additional store runs but also elevates your service quality, ensuring you can fix issues on the spot. This readiness transforms potential setbacks into seamless, swift resolutions, enhancing customer satisfaction and your reputation as a reliable plumber. [Visit the Always Have Spare Parts blog post](#)

4- The Customer Is Not Always Right



But They Are Always the Customer – Teaching how to handle disputes or misunderstandings with professionalism. In customer service, the adage “the customer is always right” often leads to unrealistic expectations. Instead, acknowledge the customer’s perspective with humor and empathy, even when correcting them. Offer solutions professionally, maintaining the balance between satisfaction and policy integrity. Remember, they’re always the customer, deserving respect, not always agreement. [Read The Ultimate Plumbing Pro’s Guide to Problem Customers blog post](#)

5- Water flows downhill, the Importance of Gravity



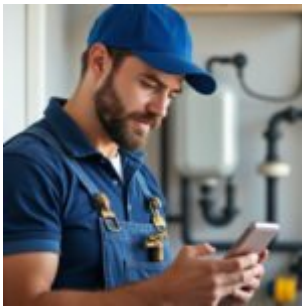
Gravity, the unsung maestro of the plumbing world, dictates that water flows downhill, shaping the very essence of how we design, install, and troubleshoot plumbing systems. This fundamental force ensures that wastewater leaves our homes, that drainage systems function without pumps, and that the integrity of our structures is maintained through proper water flow management. Beyond the pipes, this principle serves as a metaphor for life and business; just as water seeks the lowest point, problems often originate from overlooked or higher-up issues, cascading effects throughout any system. Understanding and respecting gravity’s role is not just about preventing floods or backups; it’s about recognizing the flow of consequences in every action taken upstream. [Read the full blog post on Water flows downhill, the Importance of Gravity](#)

6- “The Snake is Your Friend”



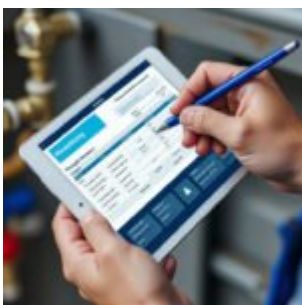
The drain snake isn't just a tool; it's your trusty sidekick in the battle against clogs and earning easy money (or at least 50% of the time). Think of it as the lightsaber of your plumbing toolkit, cutting through the dark side of hairballs, grease, and who-knows-what-else. Master the art of the snake, and you'll unclog drains with the finesse of a Jedi, avoiding the dark path of chemical drain cleaners which promise quick fixes but often lead to bigger woes. Remember, with great power comes great responsibility – use your snake wisely, young padawan. Visit the [The Most Profitable Tool For Plumbers, The Drain Snake](#) blog post.

7- “Know Your Plumbing Codes”



Plumbing isn't just about making things work; it's about making them work legally. Building codes are the commandments you didn't know you needed in your life. They dictate everything from pipe sizes to venting requirements, ensuring that your work not only functions, but does so safely. Ignoring these can turn your masterpiece into a code violation faster than you can say “back to the drawing board.” So, study them like they're the latest blockbuster movie plot – because in plumbing, knowing the codes is knowing the future. [Check out the “The Plumbing Code: Secrets to Legally Awesome Plumbing” blog post.](#)

8- “The Art of the Estimate”



Pricing your work is an art form, not just a number game. You're not just

selling your time; you're selling peace of mind, expertise, and the promise of a leak-free future. Always factor in the unseen – those sneaky issues that love to hide until you're elbow-deep in a project. Your estimate should be like a good story: compelling, believable, and with a bit of buffer for the unexpected plot twists. [Learn to quote like a pro with "Estimating Excellence: The Plumber's Guide."](#)

9- "Respect the Tools"

Let's talk about the indispensable tools that every plumber relies on to tackle everything from leaky faucets to complex pipe systems. Discover how these tools not only enhance efficiency and precision, but are crucial for maintaining the integrity of our daily water systems. We'll cover the must-have gadgets, their uses, and why investing in quality tools is as vital as the skills of the plumber themselves. Whether you're a DIY enthusiast or a professional, understanding these tools will give you a deeper appreciation for the art and science of plumbing. [The Tools of The Trade, a New Plumbers Guide](#)

10- "The Leak is Never Where You Think It Is"

This isn't just a tip; it's a plumbing proverb. The source of a leak is often as elusive as a good pun in a serious conversation. When water appears, remember, it's just the symptom. The cause could be lurking anywhere, from behind walls to under floors. Your detective skills are as crucial as your wrench-turning abilities. Follow the trail of moisture, listen for the whispers of drips, and you'll uncover the truth. For more on this, check out "The Leak Detective's Handbook."

Here are a few bonus T.I.P.S for good measure

Never Bite Off More Than You Can Chew – Know your limits. It's better to ask for help or refer a job you can't handle than to make costly mistakes.

Cleanliness is Next to Godliness – Keeping a work site clean not only prevents accidents but also shows professionalism. Also, clean joints make for better solders.

Learn to Use Your Tools Properly – Knowing how to use tools efficiently and safely can make a huge difference in job quality and time management.

Always Turn Off the Water – Before starting any work, ensure the water supply is off to avoid unexpected floods.

Plumbing Isn't Just About Pipes; It's About People – Understanding customer service, explaining issues in layman's terms, and ensuring the client feels heard and respected is as important as the technical work.

These nuggets of wisdom not only help in mastering the trade but also in navigating the professional world of plumbing. They combine practical advice with a bit of life philosophy, tailored to the unique challenges faced by

plumbers. There you have it, the complete set of plumbing commandments for the modern apprentice. Follow these, and you'll not only keep the water where it belongs but also keep your sanity intact in the face of plumbing's unpredictable nature. Remember, in plumbing, as in life, always be prepared for the unexpected – because that's where the real adventure begins!