

KNOW YOUR KNOBS - Save Money & Save the Day!

Knowing where your knobs are—and how they work—can save you time, money, and in an emergency, maybe even a life. Find them. Know them. Mark them. I've included a set of DIY labels on the last page to help you bulletproof your home.

EMERGENCY KNOBS

 **THE WATER MAIN** - *Locate: Start at the front wall of your basement, a garage corner, or look for a ground-box near the street or curb.*

The Action: Inside the house, you'll likely find a Wheel Valve (turn RIGHT until it stops) or a Lever Handle (turn 90°/Perpendicular to the pipe). Use a Sharpie to mark the wall with a bold arrow and the word OFF.

If you can't find it in the house, it's likely by the curb: If your main is at the street, you will likely need a screw driver to lift the round metal lid, and then a specific Meter Key (about 2 feet long). Pick one up at your local hardware store today—you don't want to be looking for it during a flood. **BUY THIS KEY NOW BEFORE YOU NEED IT.**

 **THE GAS MAIN** – *Locate: Usually outside near the gas meter. Look for the vertical pipe with a small, rectangular metal 'nub' or lug.*

The Action: You will need a wrench (keep one near the meter). Turn the nub 90° so it is perpendicular to the pipe. When the nub 'crosses' the pipe, the gas is OFF.

 **CRITICAL CAUTION:** If you smell 'rotten eggs' (sulfur), **DO NOT** stop to turn it off. Get everyone out, leave the door open, and call the gas company from the curb.

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Indoor Shut-offs: Know where your inside gas valves are located. These are typically on the gas lines leading directly to your Water Heater, Stove, Fireplace and Furnace.

 **THE MAIN BREAKER** – Locate: A grey metal box usually found in the garage, basement, laundry room, or utility closet. In some homes, it may be outside near the electric meter.

The Action: To kill power to the entire house, flip the large 'MAIN' switch at the very top of the panel to OFF.

 **SAFETY PROTOCOL:** Use only one hand to flip the switch. Keep your other hand in your pocket. This simple 'circuit-breaker' for your body ensures that if there is an electrical fault, the current won't travel through your chest.

Apartment Note: Your panel is often behind a door in a bedroom or in a closet. Locate it now.

IMPORTANT KNOBS

These are point-of-use fixes that can save you money at the best and cost you money if over looked. Let's prevent a \$10k insurance claim.

WATER: THE LOCAL SHUT-OFFS

The Toilet: Look behind the base, near the floor. Turn the silver knob RIGHT (Clockwise). Mark it with your Sharpie NOW.

The Sinks: Open the cabinet below. You will see two knobs (Hot and Cold). Turn BOTH to the RIGHT to kill the water to the faucet.

The Washing Machine: Look behind the machine where the hoses connect to the wall. Some have two knobs (turn RIGHT), while others have a single Panic Lever—simply slide it the opposite way to stop a flood.

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THE EASY FIXES - Save the service fee

GFCI Outlets: If a bathroom or kitchen outlet 'dies,' look for the RESET button between the plugs. Click it until it snaps. If one outlet is out, check the other outlets in the room—they are often linked to a single reset button.

Garbage Disposal: If it hums but won't spin, TURN IT OFF FIRST. Use a flashlight to check for jams (like a stray cherry pit or ring). Then, look under the sink at the bottom of the unit and press the RED RESET BUTTON.

- Pro Tip: If it's still stuck, look for the hex-key hole in the very center of the bottom to manually crank it loose.

Pilot Lights: Find the gas control knob. Turn it to 'PILOT,' hold the button down to flow gas, and ignite. Always read the specific instruction sticker on the side of the appliance before attempting."

EFFICIENCY KNOBS - Lower Your Monthly Bills

- Thermostat: Every degree closer to the outside temperature saves you roughly 3% on your utility bill. Upgrade to a 'Smart' Thermostat if possible, and take 5 minutes to program your 'Away' and 'Sleep' modes.
- Fridge/Freezer: Aim for 37°F (3°C) for the fridge and 0°F (-18°C) for the freezer. Too cold wastes cash; too warm wastes food.
 - Tip: Keep the coils clean for even more savings.
- Hot Water Heater: Set your dial to 120°F (49°C). This is the 'Goldilocks' zone—hot enough to kill bacteria, but low enough to prevent skin scalding and high energy bills.
- Humidistat: IF you have one and most of us don't, it is usually located on the side of your furnace or near the thermostat. Set it to 35% in the winter to prevent window 'sweat' (which leads to mold). In the summer, turn it up or off to keep your AC from working overtime."

PRO TIP: Now that your knobs are marked, take a photos. Keep them in a "Home Info" folder on your phone. If you're ever away and a house-sitter calls in a panic, you can show them exactly what to do from anywhere in the world.

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THE LABEL KIT

Print this page and grab a permanent marker. 1. **Fill in the blanks:** Write your emergency contact numbers clearly. 2. **"Laminate" them:** Cover both sides of the cut-out label with clear packing tape to waterproof them against leaks or humidity. 3. **Mount them:** Tape them directly to the pipes, walls, or appliance covers. 4. **The Sharpie Rule:** Use your marker to draw a **BIG ARROW** on the wall pointing in the "OFF" direction for every valve.

 EMERGENCY WATER SHUT-OFF 
ACTION: TURN HANDLE RIGHT
LOCATION: _____
PLUMBER#: _____

 EMERGENCY GAS SHUT-OFF 
ACTION: TURN LUG RIGHT 90 DEGREES
LOCATION: _____
GAS CO# : _____

 EMERGENCY ELECTRIC SHUT-OFF 
ACTION: FLIP MAIN BREAKER TO OFF
LOCATION: _____
ELECTRICIAN: _____

 EMERGENCY	SHUT-OFF 
ACTION:	
LOCATION: _____	
CALL: _____	

 EMERGENCY	SHUT-OFF 
ACTION: TURN HANDLE RIGHT	
LOCATION: _____	
CALL: _____	

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THE "KNOW YOUR KNOBS" ESSENTIAL TOOLKIT

I only recommend tools I've personally used. These Amazon Affiliate links help support this free guide and help you to see what I am talking about.

1. THE PANIC TOOLS (Must-Haves)

[The Curb Key \(Water Meter Key\)](#): The 28-inch T-handle version is best—don't get the short one; your back will thank you.

[Adjustable Wrench \(Crescent Wrench\)](#): A 10-inch or 12-inch wrench is essential for the gas main lug. Keep one near the meter.

[Head Lamp](#): You can't turn a knob you can't see. Get one that sticks to the breaker box or your furnace.

2. THE "LABEL & MARK" KIT

[Sharpies](#): The industry standard for marking pipes and walls. Get the 2-pack; you'll lose one.

[Clear Packing Tape](#): The DIY lamination tool. Use this to protect your 'Know Your Knobs' tags from moisture.

[Neon Duct Tape](#): Use high-visibility tape to wrap the pipes leading to your main shut-offs so you can find them in the dark.

[Label Maker](#) - Costs more than my print out with a pen but is easier to read

3. THE "GHOST FIX" HEROES

[Garbage Disposal Wrench \(Hex Key\)](#): A specialized tool that fits into the bottom of the disposal to break free a jam. Cheaper than a plumber.

[Contactless Voltage Tester](#): The 'No-Fear' tool. Point it at an outlet or wire to see if it's 'live' before you touch anything.

4. THE EFFICIENCY UPGRADES

Smart Thermostat: The #1 way to automate the savings mentioned above. Also super convenient. [Honeywell](#) or [Nest](#)

[Water Leak Sensors](#): Place these near your water heater & washer. They'll ping your phone the second something starts leaking.

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