



Master's
Hands



Affordable Remodeling & Handyman Services - 720.468.3225 www.amastershands.com

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BANG! – Garage Door Springs – When to Replace

Q: What was that loud noise in the garage? **A:** Probably a failed torsion spring.

Most homes built in the last 30 years have garage door systems that utilize *torsion springs*.

These springs are located on a shaft that sits above the garage door. The wound springs turn the shaft, which spins drums



located on each end of the shaft. Cables wound on these drums are attached to the bottom edge of the door; when the door is raised the tension on the springs essentially does all of the “lifting” of the door; when the door is closed again, the weight of the door re-winds the springs as it moves to the closed position. A garage door opener just “moves” the door from one position to another. A properly balanced and lubricated door can be moved with only a slight nudge, and can be stopped and left “suspended” at any point in its travel in its tracks. Proper balance is achieved through correct torsion settings of the springs during installation.

In systems using torsion springs, there are *usually* two springs, one on the left and one on the right of the center mounting bracket. These springs are sold in matched pairs – one *right-hand wind*, and one *left-hand wind* spring. It takes one spring of each type to properly operate the door, and they must be installed with the proper amount of torsion applied (during winding) to properly operate the door and not put undue strain on the garage door opener.

A question we often receive is “Do we need to replace both springs if only one of them has failed?” The answer is *yes*. We always recommend replacing both springs when one of them snaps (they almost never both snap at the same time). The reason for our recommendation is four-fold:

1. The labor to disassemble the shaft assembly and remove/replace one broken spring is essentially the same as if we also replace the other spring at the same time. It’s an almost trivial amount of incremental work to install *two* new springs on the disassembled shaft (versus one). Further, installing two new springs allows us to ensure that the two torsion springs are identical, so they’ll be equal in strength.
2. If we replace only one spring, then the new spring will end up carrying more than half of the load, because the old spring will have stretched out and won’t provide as much pressure for the same number of windings put on it during the

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How to (NOT) Ruin a Garbage Disposal

Your garbage disposal is a hard-working part of your kitchen. It can seemingly chop up anything put into it, and make it all vanish in seconds! But it does take some care to keep your garbage disposal from becoming damaged or broken. To keep your disposal running at its peak, keep these tips in mind.

- First, *never* run your garbage disposal without also having a strong flow of cold water running into it. After the grinding action has stopped, continue running the water for another few seconds to ensure the disposal is clean. Adding a squirt of liquid dish



detergent every so often will help with the cleaning, and also keep your disposal from smelling like garbage.

- *Never* put your hand into your garbage disposal, even when it’s turned off. Also, avoid leaning over the disposal while it is running.
- *Never* run the disposal continuously...if you can limit running your disposal to only 45-60 seconds (max) at a time, that will prolong its life. Most disposals are designed for intermittent duty, requiring time to cool off between uses.

torsion process.

This will reduce the effective life of the one new spring and can also cause undue strain on the garage door opener, the door and the tracks, due to unequal force being applied on both sides.



3. The incremental cost for the additional spring is probably only about \$50-\$60...so it's best to go ahead and buy and install it with the other one so that both are new.
4. If one of the two springs just failed, the other one (probably the same age) is likely ready to fail too. The time it takes for springs to fail is usually a function of the number of cycles they go through, the relative humidity, how well they are matched to the door weight when installed (properly matched or not), and how well they are maintained (kept clean, etc). So, given that the old springs were probably installed together and have been subject to the same environmental factors over their lifetimes, when one spring fails, the other spring is *ready to fail*.

Bottom line: If you wait to replace the other spring, then you'll be paying the same labor fee again to disassemble the shaft and replace the other spring in a few weeks or months. Does that make sense?

Most torsion springs for residential garage doors are rated by their manufacturers for ~10,000 cycles. So, if a household has two vehicles leaving coming back home one time each day (and not simultaneously), that would yield four up-and-down "cycles" per day. If that occurred (on-average) every day, year after year, the springs could be expected to fail in roughly 6.8 years. If you've gotten more than 7-8 years out of your torsion springs, you've either averaged much fewer cycles, or you've been very lucky! If you only have one vehicle and only leave and return once a day, then 12-15 years of life would be reasonable to expect for torsion springs. Anyone with garage door torsion springs approaching that age should be expecting to replace them at any moment, regardless of the current cycles being put on them. Questions? Give us a call!

WARNING: *Torsion springs contain tremendous amounts of stored energy and thus can be very dangerous to work on without proper tools and training – you can lose fingers, a hand, or even your life if something goes wrong. A Master's Hands **does not** recommend that clients attempt to work on garage door torsion springs themselves, due to the safety risks involved.*

If you have questions or would like more information call 720.468.3225 or email us at jim@amastershands.com

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Increasing Comfort - With a Ceiling Fan

Ceiling fans can increase air circulation and keep you comfortable, while also saving on heating/cooling costs. In summertime, a



ceiling fan can reduce the cost of running your AC by as much as 40 percent, so most people think about adding and using fans in summer. But during winter months a

- Don't allow silverware or other utensils to drop into the garbage disposal. If one does, use long-handled tongs to remove it.
- Do not grind large bones or fibrous materials like corn husks, celery, asparagus ends, etc. in the disposal, as they may cause a clogged drain. Also, avoid putting liquid fats or grease into the garbage disposal, as these can lead to sink clogs.
- Don't let food scraps sit inside your garbage disposal. Run the disposal until clear each time food is fed into it.
- If your disposal suddenly stops working (just hums, no motor action), don't leave it turned on – shut it off immediately and call for service. Leaving it on for more than a few seconds when "jammed" will burn out the motor windings, forcing a replacement. Jams can often be cleared by inserting a special tool into the bottom of the disposal and rotating against the jam. We perform this service for clients needing assistance.
- Last, if a small foreign object such as a wedding band falls into the disposal, immediately stop water from flowing into the device and leave the power OFF, but don't try to fish the object out. Call for service – the disposal can easily be removed and inverted, allowing the object to fall back out of the mouth opening.

Comparing / Selecting Types of Light Bulbs

Light bulbs come in all sizes, shapes and levels of energy efficiency. Here's a short guide to make your selection easier.

Incandescent bulbs are less energy efficient (and less expensive initially) than other light



sources. They are best used for task lighting situations that require a high level of light. Using technology that's been essentially unchanged for nearly 100 years, these bulbs are the least efficient currently available.

Compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) are bulbs that use roughly *half* the energy that a traditional incandescent bulb requires, to produce a *comparable amount of light*, they run much cooler, and

ceiling fan can still help circulate heated air throughout your home, assisting your HVAC system in keeping your living spaces evenly heated. Heat from all sources (furnace, stove, fireplace, etc) all add warmth to your home -- a ceiling fan just helps circulate that warm air.

Since heated air rises, using a ceiling fan helps prevent stratification, where hot air accumulates near the ceiling while cooler air sits below. Most fans feature a direction-reversing switch. In the summer, you want to spin your ceiling fan so it pulls warmer air up. During winter, you'll want to do the reverse and spin your fan so it pushes warm air down.

Place ceiling fans in the most frequently used living areas, such as the master bedroom, kitchen, and family room.

Most 52-inch ceiling fans use between 13-60 watts of power, depending on the speed.

Affordable models are available at Home Depot, Lowe's, Ace Hardware and other outlets. They come in many colors and styles, so you should be able to find one that fits your decor and budget. Ceiling fans are pretty simple to install and most come with their own instruction manuals, but if there's not a ceiling box and wiring already in place, or if you want a remote control or other options added, professional installation may be the best option.



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Quick Internet Tip - Checking on Rumors

Ever receive emails from friends or family members warning you of an impending doomsday event, or dangerous virus? Most of us experience receipt of these kinds of "warnings" on a regular basis. We suggest you never forward these emails unless you're confident they are a) accurate, b) necessary, and c) CLEAN (don't contain an imbedded virus)! Most are nothing but hoaxes!

Virus hoaxes are false reports about non-existent viruses, often claiming to be able to do impossible things to your computer. Unfortunately some recipients occasionally believe a hoax to be a true virus warning and may take drastic action, sometimes making things much worse than if they did nothing.

Often, email "warnings" about dangerous new legislation or government plots are flat-out fiction. Frequently a quick search can verify that although they sound legitimate, they are nothing more than recycled Internet rumors -- or worse -- may even contain hidden viruses themselves!

One of the best tools we've found for verifying the legitimacy of any warnings, threats, viruses, etc., is Snopes.com. Check out the next doomsday threat you receive that seems so real you think it must be true.

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they last several times longer in most applications before requiring replacement. So, maybe CFL really stands for Cool, Frugal and Luminous! With CFL prices falling dramatically over the last few years, they truly do make good sense today for many applications. All fluorescent bulbs contain small amounts of mercury, however, so proper disposal is very important. Home Depot accepts used CFLs for recycling at its retail locations.

Light Emitting Diode (LED) based bulbs are perhaps the most efficient lighting solution, requiring less power than CFLs to generate the equivalent light output, and they can last 10-25 years in most applications.

Prices for LED lights also have been falling; however, the return on investment for LEDs is still not as good (today) as CFLs in most instances. But pricing for these bulbs are continuing to fall, so keep an eye on these. LEDs have already been developed for many uses around the home, and new LED-based products are being announced almost every day!

High intensity discharge (HID) bulbs are long lasting and energy efficient but their colors are not as appealing as other bulbs, so they are usually used for outdoor area and security lighting. They're also a common light source for indoor gardening projects.

Clients seeking more information on CFLs and LEDs, or wishing to understand how to calculate the return-on-investment (ROI) for converting to CFLs or LEDs should feel free to contact us....we've authored a free white paper that explains energy expenditure differences in detail and shows how to calculate the pay-back.

Questions?

Contact us by phone: 720.468.3225, by email: jim@amastershands.com, or visit us on the web at www.amastershands.com

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