Handyman Business Startup Checklist

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Key takeaways

- Check your state's contractor license limits before advertising
- Leave electrical, plumbing, gas and structural work to licensed trades
- Use flat rates for common jobs like TV mounting and furniture assembly
- Landlords and property managers send steady repeat work

1. Plan

- [ ] Choose your niche and the services you'll offer first
- [ ] Define your service area (keep it tight to cut drive time)
- [ ] Write a one-page plan: who, where, what you charge, how you'll get 10 clients
- [ ] Check local competitors' services and prices

2. Register & insure

- [ ] Pick a business name and check your state registry, trademarks and the .com domain
- [ ] Choose a structure (sole proprietor or LLC)
- [ ] Get a free EIN from the IRS (irs.gov)
- [ ] Check city/county business license requirements
- [ ] Open a separate business bank account
- [ ] Get general liability insurance before your first paid job
- [ ] Many US states require a contractor license once a job goes over a certain dollar amount, or for specific trades. Check your state's contractor licensing board before you advertise, and carry general liability insurance. Some clients will ask for proof.

3. Equipment

- [ ] Cordless drill/driver and impact driver
- [ ] Hand tool set: hammer, levels, tape, utility knives
- [ ] Stud finder and multi-tool
- [ ] Drywall repair kit and caulking gun
- [ ] Ladder, drop cloths and shop vac
- [ ] Vehicle storage organizers

4. Pricing

- [ ] Track your real job times on your first jobs
- [ ] Set a target hourly rate that covers pay, taxes, insurance, fuel and admin time
- [ ] Create a simple price menu and a minimum charge

- [ ] Use estimate and invoice templates for every quote
- [ ] Check your numbers with the free calculator on ServiceStartKit.com

5. Get online

- [ ] Register a short domain and set up a professional email
- [ ] Launch a 4-page website: home, services & prices, reviews/photos, contact
- [ ] Create a Google Business Profile with photos and your service area

6. First clients

- [ ] Google Business Profile listing your services
- [ ] Partner with property managers and landlords
- [ ] Post in local Facebook groups and Nextdoor
- [ ] Offer a 'honey-do list' half-day package
- [ ] Ask every client for a review and referral
- [ ] Ask every happy client for a review and a referral

7. Money

- [ ] Invoice every job and log every expense
- [ ] Keep a mileage log for business driving
- [ ] Set money aside for taxes each month
- [ ] Review prices at least once a year