Replacing a radiator

Try to obtain a new radiator exactly the same size as the one you're planning to replace. This makes the job relatively easy.

Simple replacement

Drain the old radiator and remove it from the wall. Then unscrew the two valve adaptors at the bottom of the radiator, using an adjustable spanner or a hexagonal radiator spanner. Next, use a bleed key to unscrew the bleed valve; then remove both of the blanking plugs from the top of the radiator, using a radiator spanner **(1)**.

Clean any corrosion from the threads of the adaptors and blanking plugs with wire wool **(2)**, then wind four or five turns of PTFE tape round the threads **(3)**. Screw the plugs and adaptors into the new radiator; and then screw the bleed valve into its blanking plug.

Hang the new radiator on the wall brackets and connect the valves to their adaptors. Open the valves, then fill and bleed the radiator.

1 Removing the plugs
Use a radiator spanner to unscrew the two blanking plugs at the top of the radiator.

2 Cleaning the threads
Use wire wool to clean any corrosion from the threads of the blanking plugs and valve adaptors.

3 Taping the threads
Make the threaded joints watertight by wrapping four or five turns of PTFE tape round the plugs and adaptors before you screw them into the new radiator. Use a hacksaw blade to roughen the threads, in order to encourage the tape to grip.

Installing a different-pattern radiator

More work is involved in replacing a radiator if you can't get another one of the same pattern. You will probably have to fit new wall brackets and alter the pipe runs.

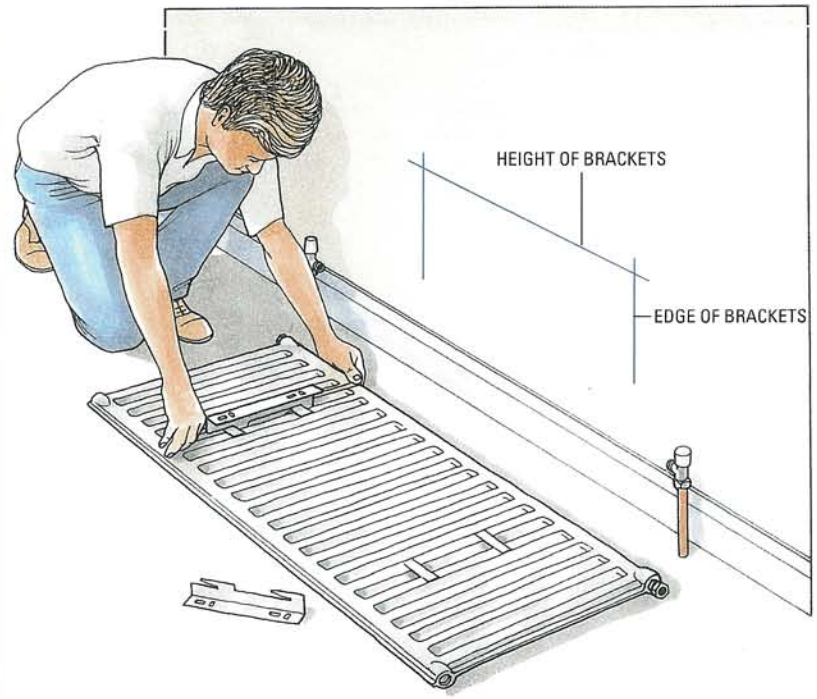
Drain your central-heating system, then take the old brackets off the wall. Lay the new radiator face down on the floor and slide one of its brackets onto the hangers welded to the back of the radiator. Measure the position of the brackets and transfer these measurements to the wall **(1)**. You need to allow a clearance of 100 to 125mm (4 to 5in) below the radiator.

Line up the new radiator brackets with the pencil marks on the wall, and mark the fixing-screw holes for them. Drill and plug the holes, then screw the brackets in place **(2)**.

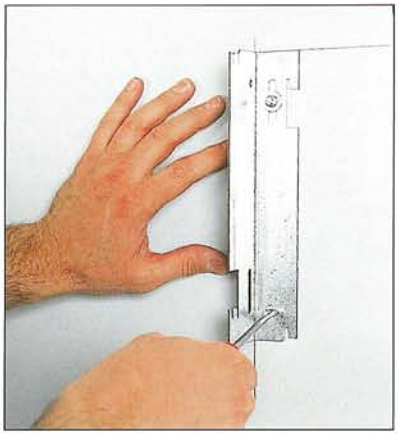
Take up the floorboards below the radiator and sever the vertical portions of the feed and return pipes (either cap the old T-joints or replace them with straight joints). Connect the valves to the bottom of the radiator and hang it on its brackets.

Slip a new vertical pipe into each of the valves and, using either capillary or compression fittings, connect these pipes to the original pipework running under the floor **(3)**. Tighten the nuts connecting the new pipes to the valves.

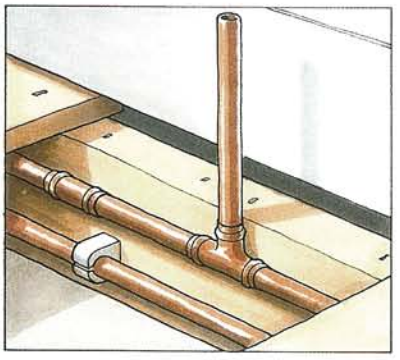
Finally, refill the system with water, and check all the new connections and joints for leaks.



1 Transferring the measurements
Measure the positions of the radiator brackets and transfer these dimensions to the wall.



2 Securing the brackets
Screw the mounting brackets to the wall.



3 Connecting the new pipework.
Make sure the vertical section of pipe aligns with the radiator valve.

SEE ALSO: Connecting pipes 20–3, 25–7, Draining the system 59, Bleeding radiators 61, Removing radiators 61, Adjustable spanner 77, Radiator spanner 77, PTFE tape 81