

## Appliance Repair Show Transcript—October 12, 2008

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### Gas Cook Top Converted to LP but still has a Large Flame

JOHN MCCULLOCH

We're going to start things out this morning with a question on a [GE stove](#) with Brian, in Romulus, on the Appliance Repair Show. Good morning, Brian. Thanks for calling, and go ahead please.

BRIAN

Good morning. Here's my question: I've got a cook top with four [burners](#), and we're trying to make a portable cooking unit for a church project. Somebody else got the [cook top](#) and I told them I'd try to make it work for propane. So, there is no regulator on the unit, I've just got the pipe that comes from the cook stove itself. I went to [RepairClinic](#) yesterday and got the [orifices](#) to change it to propane from natural gas but when I hooked it up to my tank, I'm still getting flame jets shooting up like ten or twelve inches straight up. So, I don't know if that means I've got to get the regulator, or if I've got something else going on.

JOHN SOWDEN

Now, is this just a cook top or is it a stove?

BRIAN

It's just a cook top. It looks to me like somebody removed it from the stove itself.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. And you had to buy a separate orifice kit for this?

BRIAN

Correct.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. Yeah, normally what you have to also do is, on the [regulator](#) of the stove, you have to set it to LP.

BRIAN

Right, and I understand that because the paperwork actually came with it, it was inside the [cook top](#). I don't have the regulator because I'm assuming that was between the cook top and the stove itself, and whoever removed the cook top didn't grab that. So is that my problem, I have to purchase the [regulator](#)?

JOHN SOWDEN

I would start there. What you're trying to do is unconventional.

BRIAN

Yeah.

JOHN SOWDEN

What you're basically doing is you're running from natural gas to LP, and LP has a higher pressure behind it than the natural gas does. So, the [orifices](#) should be smaller, that you're putting in.

BRIAN

Right.

JOHN SOWDEN

Normally what happens is you're going to want to get a [regulator](#) and then convert the regulator for LP, which in most cases...it may or may not come with instructions.

BRIAN

Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

The other thing you might want to do is, there are RV places that can do this stuff for you, if you have any questions as well. They deal with—

BRIAN

And the regulator is on a regular, you know when you get an LP tank burner, like to do a deep fried turkey or something like that, that hose has got a regulator in it, but that doesn't seem to be doing it.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, it's a different animal, what you're trying to do.

BRIAN

That makes sense. By the time I purchase the [regulator](#) for this, I could probably go out and buy an LP camp stove.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, you're getting close.

BRIAN

Yeah, okay. Thanks for the information.

JOHN SOWDEN

Thanks for calling, and good luck.

### **Amana Side by Side Refrigerator Bottom Fills Up with Water Every Other Day**

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And here's Pat, in Huron, with a [refrigerator](#) question, on the Appliance Repair Show. Hi Pat, go ahead please.

PAT

I have an [Amana twenty cubic foot refrigerator](#) that's several years old. The bottom fills up with water every other day. I pulled the [vegetable and fruit bins](#) out and I caught the water. I don't know where it's coming from and I don't know where it's supposed to go.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. Well, it depends on the vintage of the unit. What's happening is, the [defrost drain](#) is restricted and the water that's supposed to travel from the cooling coil, the trough underneath the cooling coil, and then travel to the underside of the refrigerator is restricted. Most often it's from ice. What you need to do to correct the problem depends on the unit itself. Some you have to replace the whole divider block, which is the styrofoam insulation between your refrigerator and freezer section. Once that gets really wet, it's probably not a bad idea anyway. With some of those units, you end up having to replace the whole divider assembly. Others, what you need to do is, clear out the drain with a [turkey baster](#) (part # 19950151) and hot water, just hot tap water. At times, there are other things you can put in: they have what they call a [drain kit](#) (part # 819043), which is just a small metal piece that goes around the [defrost heater](#) and then you route that down the drain which helps transfer heat down into the drain.

PAT

Where is that?

JOHN SOWDEN

That is in the back of your [refrigerator](#) at the bottom. So when you open up the freezer, if you were to remove the freezer wall, it's in the coils behind that. Some of them are in the freezer floor so it's a pretty big job. If you have somebody come out and do this, you're probably looking at a few hundred bucks, if they have to replace that divider block.

PAT

I see. Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

Sorry, I'm the bad news guy.

PAT

Yes you are, but thank you so much for the information.

JOHN SOWDEN

The other thing you can try, if it's just a restriction, is if you unplug the unit and let it sit for two or three days and completely dry out and put it into operation, it may start working again. But if the ice buildup is draining in your [refrigerator](#), again I recommend that you have somebody out and look at it.

PAT

Okay. Again, thank you so very much.

### **2003 GE Gas Range Takes Too Long to Get Up to Temperature**

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Here's Carol, in Toledo, with a stove question, here on the Appliance Repair Show. Hi Carol, go ahead please.

CAROL

Hi. I have a [General Electric stove](#) that has the digital electronic thermostat on it. When you set the temperature it seems to take forever to get to the temperature and then it doesn't hold the temperature in the oven.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. Is this gas?

CAROL

It's gas, yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. And how old is it?

CAROL

It's not that old—maybe four or five years old.

JOHN SOWDEN

When you set the unit to bake, and you set it, say, at 350 degrees, the "on" light comes on and it acts like it's trying to heat? Is that it?

CAROL

Correct.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. Well, most often, from what you're describing, taking a long time for it to heat up is caused by a weak [oven igniter](#). Sometimes it will work and sometimes it won't; sometimes it will work five or ten minutes to get the first ignition, and at times it won't re-ignite, so that might be where you're getting erratic temperatures.

CAROL  
Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

The [igniter](#) is basically mounted next to the burner in the underside of the unit. You might have to remove the oven floor in order to gain access to it. But the biggest misconception with igniters is, if you look at yours, unless it's broken, but yours is heating intermittently so it's not, it's probably glowing nice and bright red. So, everybody thinks if its glowing bright red then it can't be the igniter, it's working, but it actually works on current draw.

CAROL  
Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

So as it gets older it gets weaker and it doesn't, in the circuit, allow enough current to act on the [gas valve](#) and open it up. So, it's a fairly common problem. If you put the [model number](#) into [RepairClinic.com](#) you can see how much an igniter is going to cost, and you can have it shipped right to your door.

CAROL  
All right. Thank you very much.

### **1995 Jenn Air Range will Heat for Short Time and Then Shuts Off**

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And we'll go to the next call, which would be Don, in Bloomfield Hills, with an oven question, here on the Appliance Repair Show. Good morning, Don.

DON

Good morning! My question is in regards to a [Jenn Air oven](#), vintage mid-1990s. It's an electronic component like the keypad. When I go to set it on a bake or broil, whatever mode, it will turn on for approximately seven or eight seconds and start warming up, and then it will shut down totally. I can continue to set the temperature and it will continue to do that same thing, until it seems to get to an initial starting temperature of about 145 degrees, and at that point it will continue to work.

JOHN SOWDEN

Oh, that's a wild problem you've got going on there!

DON  
Yeah.

JOHN SOWDEN

There's three components, other than the [bake and broil element](#). Now when you say it starts to work, do you see the element glowing red in the oven bottom?

DON

It doesn't really glow, but when I touch it, it's hot.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. Really hot?

DON

Correct.

JOHN SOWDEN

So that's working. Those are like light bulbs: they're either good or bad. So the components you have in your system are, you've got an [oven sensor](#), that as it changes temperature in your oven it changes resistance and tells the [main circuit board](#) that it's time to turn off the oven. The main circuit board then sends a signal to a relay board, and that's what closes and sends power to the [bake element](#). So, you have three pieces in that whole circuit that can cause this situation.

DON

Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

I would start by checking it with an [ohmmeter](#) (part # DM10T). By checking the oven sensor, normally at room temperature it will check at about a thousand or eleven hundred ohms.

DON

Eleven hundred ohms?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes.

DON

Where's this [sensor](#)?

JOHN SOWDEN

The sensor is normally mounted in the upper corner of the oven. It looks like a pencil cut in half sticking out of the back. There are normally a couple of screws that retain it.

DON

Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

As the oven temperature changes, so does the resistance and the [control board](#) reads that resistance. Normally, as I say, a thousand to eleven hundred ohms is what you're looking at for that. Now, if that continues to be an issue, then either your circuit board is cutting out power to the [main relay board](#), or more than likely, you've got a relay that's not closing, and it's sticking. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. After it gets up to speed, does it seem to work all right?

DON

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay.

DON

Once it gets up to the, like I said, there seems to be a threshold temperature, that kicks in. When you originally set the temperature it will say, "Pre-bake", and then it says "140" as kind of its default mode. Then if I continue to re-do it, or actually then say "145", then at that point it will stay on.

JOHN SOWDEN

So, you're just forcing it to work.

DON

Correct.

JOHN SOWDEN

I would definitely start there. The only other thing it could be is, there is a high limit that could be intermittent and shutting it down, but normally that's something that will happen after it gets really hot, after a self clean or something like that.

DON

Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

There are several things in the system, but I would start with, first the [sensor](#), make sure it's within tolerance, and then the relay board basically is going to have a low voltage supply to it from the [main circuit board](#), and then it will close the relay to send power to the [bake and broil elements](#).

DON

Is it actually a relay you can replace, or is it the whole board?

JOHN SOWDEN

It's the whole board.

DON

It is? Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

It's one of those situations where you've got to spend the one hundred and sixty bucks to change the board. The other thing I would do is make sure that all the connections on both the boards are secure. You could have just a moisture buildup, over time corroding some of the ribbon connectors and harnesses, which could cause it to have a bad connection and work intermittently too.

DON

To test that [sensor](#), I basically unscrew it first, you're saying, and then go right across it?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah. They normally have a little disconnect plug on the back of them. Sometimes they very nicely come out of the small hole that's drilled in the back of the oven, and at other times they short wire it, where you have to pull out the whole unit to gain access.

DON

Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

But, I would start there and just make sure that's okay. Then you've limited it to the [circuit board](#), the [relay board](#), and then the connecting ribbons.

DON

Okay. To get to those boards, is it just a couple of screws off the face of the unit?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah. That's for the main circuit board. A lot of times the relay board will be mounted on the back of the unit, in a smaller control panel or copper plate. They hide them all over.

DON

Very good. I appreciate the information.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, with intermittent electrical problems, especially with the [circuit boards](#), at times you end up just kind of replacing things and see what happens.

DON

Yeah. Shotgun approach.

## **2003 Hotpoint Gas Range Won't Maintain Set Temperature**

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And here is Larry, in Saint Clair, with a question on a [Hotpoint stove](#) on the Appliance Repair Show. Hi Larry, go ahead please.

LARRY

Hi. I have a problem, similar to the gentleman before me. My wife cooks a great deal.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, good for you!

LARRY

Yeah, it is good for me, in a way. It's about five years old, but I imagine it's in about eight year old condition, with all the use it gets. I changed the [glow bar](#), and that seemed to be brighter than the one before it.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right.

LARRY

But then, the thing is, it won't stay at the temperature set. If she sets it for 400 degrees, it doesn't get back to 400 degrees the second time it cycles. But here's some information: she found out that when it comes to temperature, and it beeps, if she turns it off and turns it back to the temperature she wants, she can bake or cook, and it gets back to that temperature until it beeps again; she waits a minute, turns it off, and turns it back on. So, do you think it's the [sensor](#) or the [circuit board](#)?

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, the sensor is something that you can check and kind of rule it out by just checking it at room temperature. Again, they normally run between a thousand and eleven hundred ohms.

LARRY

The [sensor](#)?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes, the sensor. If that's within tolerance, then I would suspect the [circuit board](#). Now, the other thing is that, when she sets it up to cook, does everything stay on like it's supposed to but it's just not heating? Or does the board cancel out?

LARRY

No, it comes back on, but it's late. The [burner](#) comes back on, either it comes back on late, or doesn't stay on as long to get back to the set temperature. Until she turns it off and sets it back to the right temperature, and then it's okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right. I would start with making sure, whatever temperature you set it at, that you use an [oven thermometer](#) (part # 19950054) to see where you're at within tolerance. That might help as well.

LARRY

Well, we did. I did do that.

JOHN SOWDEN

And when you set it back to 400 degrees, it does get to 400 and shut off?

LARRY

No, it won't get back to 400 until she turns it off and sets it again; then it will get back to 400 degrees.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. You say you replaced the [igniter](#)?

LARRY

Right.

JOHN SOWDEN

All right. You said it's glowing brighter, and it probably is. As they get older they grow weaker. What I would do is, when you first start it up, see how long it takes for it to light the [burner](#). Normally, it should be within a couple of minutes that you'll hear it fire up. If it takes a long time—

LARRY

It does take a long time! Longer than a couple minutes, sometimes.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah. Did you get the [GE](#) burner—did you get the right [igniter](#) for it?

LARRY

Yes, I did.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay, because there are several different versions, because there's a difference in the current draw, so if you get the wrong one it won't work properly. There is also for your unit a bake burner and igniter kit that comes with a new [burner](#) and an igniter, which might answer some of your ignition problems, if it's still taking a while to light.

LARRY

Oh! Well, this one here is propane! Does that make it a little dirtier, over five years?

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, if it's adjusted right, it shouldn't be. But for your particular unit they have a redesign burner that might help the ignition.

LARRY

The flame is the perfect color.

JOHN SOWDEN

This is more for ignition, though: getting the gas to the [igniter](#) to light in the proper time.

LARRY

Oh!

JOHN SOWDEN

I would say, from what you're describing, I'd start with the [sensor](#), see if that works all right. If when you set it back to bake, if it's sending, if you see the igniter starting to glow and it's taking a long time to ignite, then I would say the problem is either in the igniter, which you've replaced, or the [gas valve](#) itself, which at times can stick and cause some issues.

LARRY

You mean the regulator?

JOHN SOWDEN

The gas valve itself, the part that the burner sits on top of.

LARRY

Oh.

JOHN SOWDEN

There are normally a couple of wires that go to it.

LARRY

Is that a replaceable part?

JOHN SOWDEN

Sure is. They're not cheap, but it is a replaceable part. But the only way to really know is to take a current draw on the stove and see what it's supposed to be doing. On most, and I do believe your unit, it should be drawing about 3.2 amps to properly open the [igniter](#). So if you set it up, the board is telling it to do that and it stays on while drawing that current, then I'd say you could have an intermittent [gas valve](#) problem. If it's firing properly, then I would say you probably have an intermittent [circuit board](#) problem. But again, the [sensor](#) can also be giving you some problems, too, so I'd start by making sure that is correct, because that, as I said, changes resistance with the heat, and if it's not sending the right signal to the board, it's going to shut down.

LARRY

And that's the cheapest of the three, right?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah! That's one of the more affordable ones.

LARRY

All right, I'll start there.

JOHN SOWDEN

Sorry I can't give you a one hundred percent answer, there.

LARRY

Thanks a lot, guys.

### **1991 GE Side by Side Refrigerator Ice Maker Not Producing Ice**

JOHN MCCULLOCH

We go to Toledo now, with an [ice maker](#) question from Charlotte, here on the Appliance Repair Show. Hi Charlotte, go ahead please.

CHARLOTTE

Good morning. I have a large [GE refrigerator](#) and the ice maker isn't working. It does do the water, but I can't get any ice cubes.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. And this is a 1991 model?

CHARLOTTE

It was made in '91, I think.

JOHN SOWDEN

Does it make the half-moon style cubes?

CHARLOTTE

It doesn't make anything now.

JOHN SOWDEN

When it did make ice cubes, did they look like a half-moon, or were they round?

CHARLOTTE

They were the whole ice cubes, or crushed. I could have crushed or the whole ice cube. But the water dispenser, I still get water out of it.

JOHN SOWDEN

So just your [ice maker](#) isn't working?

CHARLOTTE  
Right.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, a couple of things can cause the situation you're describing. One could be water related, meaning the [water inlet valve](#) has failed, which supplies water to the ice maker. There's a water valve, it actually has two outlets on it: one goes to the water in the door and one goes to the ice maker. So, it's possible for one to be working fine, and then the other one to fail. The other situation would be if the [ice maker](#) itself is not working properly, and sending the signal, or cycling properly. Now, the first thing to check is your freezer temperature: It should be between zero and eight degrees.

CHARLOTTE  
Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

I'd make sure that your freezer is okay. If that's fine, then it's either your ice maker or your [water inlet valve](#) that's causing the situation. Now, if you remove the ice maker and look at the little [tube](#) that puts water into the ice maker itself, if that's frozen then I'd lean more towards the water valve. But either way, you might want to have somebody come out and have a look at this one for you. If you need to replace the [ice maker](#), with the service call and everything else, it could be a few hundred dollars for that.

CHARLOTTE  
Oh boy. It wouldn't be the motor, would it?

JOHN SOWDEN

You mean the compressor for the unit?

CHARLOTTE  
Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

No, no, not if it's cooling fine.

CHARLOTTE

Because when I press the lever for ice cubes, I still hear the noise, but nothing comes out of it.

JOHN SOWDEN

You still hear it trying to fill? You still hear the ice maker turning, or you hear it trying to fill?

CHARLOTTE

When you push for ice cubes, I can still hear the motor running.

JOHN SOWDEN

No, that's a completely different part of the machine. All that is, is a little auger motor in the back, so when you press that lever in, it sends power to it and spins that little wheel inside the [ice maker bucket](#). That has nothing to do with it...it has something to do with dispensing the cubes, but if you don't have anything in the ice bucket to dispense, that's where you need to start.

CHARLOTTE

Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

So yeah, I would recommend, you might want to have somebody come out and have a look at this one, and see which route it is, the [ice maker](#) or the [water valve](#). At times you can get a replacement ice maker. They have one that fits all of the refrigerators now, and I think it's around one hundred bucks for the ice maker.

CHARLOTTE

Oh, boy. Okay. Thank you.

### **1998 GE Monogram Range Cook Top Burners Will Not Stop Sparking**

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Dan, in Grosse Pointe Park, has a question on a [GE Monogram stove](#), here on the Appliance Repair Show. Dan, go ahead please.

DAN

I have about a ten year old GE Monogram [cook top](#). It's one of those heavy duty things. I think the [burners](#) are around one hundred and thirty thousand BTUs or something. It originally had eight burners, but I had two taken out to put a gas grill in. About a month ago, I suddenly was not getting any spark to light the burners on four of the burners. The gas grill still worked, and the other two burners still worked.

JOHN SOWDEN

So you lost one side of it?

DAN

I lost one whole side of it, correct.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay.

DAN

And I determined that it was the spark module, and I got a new one. I replaced it, and it worked perfectly for about three weeks. Now what I get, on the same side, the left side, it lights but the [igniter](#) will not stop sparking.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. Have you had any spills or anything?

DAN

No. And I've actually cleaned all the contacts and everything else, thinking it might be a ground.

JOHN SOWDEN

It depends on what you have as far as the type of ignition system you have. Some have, what happens is, when you turn it on to spark, the actual flame will act as a ground and shut the unit off. Others—do you have to turn this to a high-light on position and then back it off?

DAN

Yes, that's what you do. And actually if you back it off almost all the way, the sparker will go off. You have to turn it past half and then the sparker starts and then it's supposed to turn on.

JOHN SOWDEN

What you're doing when you do that, there's normally a small switch that's mounted to the stem of the [gas valve](#), and it's just like a wall switch in your house, where when you turn the gas valve you're flipping that switch, and when you turn it back it's basically breaking the contact. So, I would suspect that you either have one of those [spark switches](#) that's sticking closed and doesn't stop sending current to the spark module. Or, and the reason I asked if you spilled anything is, a lot of times what will happen is you have a boil over or something and moisture or water will get inside one of those switches and complete the path of electricity, and then after it dries out a couple of days later it will start working again.

DAN

No, it's been a couple of weeks now. There was no major spill that I'm aware of. I took the tops of them all off and cleaned them off a little bit. Where are those little [switches](#)?

JOHN SOWDEN

The switches are mounted right on the [gas valve](#) itself, so the part that your [knob](#) goes on is the gas valve, the stem of that, and then behind that normally is where that little switch is mounted. It's normally a little plastic piece, about an inch to an inch and a half square, and there are wires that jump from each valve.

DAN

Are you talking about each individual burner?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes. They either set it up individually, or so when you turn that valve it will move a bar over and make a switch. But either way there's a switch that, when you turn it to high-light, you're turning on a switch to start the ignition system, and then when you turn it

back from the high-light then you're turning it off. If it isn't doing that, then I'd say that one of those switches is probably stuck.

DAN

Does it help to know that if I turn all of them on, on high, then it will stop sparking?

JOHN SOWDEN

Hmm, no unless you've got a situation where there's a short of one of the [switches](#). But normally, when you turn them all to high, or to high-light?

DAN

Well, to high-light.

JOHN SOWDEN

So, you turn them all to high-light and then it quits?

DAN

Yes, they'll all ignite properly and then they'll function properly, as long as I leave them all turned on, then they'll operate properly but if I turn one off, then they get sparking on all of them again.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. And this unit is properly grounded?

DAN

I've had it in for ten years. The only thing that's been changed is that spark module.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right.

DAN

And that has, what, seven or ten electrical connections to it. I suppose I could check those.

JOHN SOWDEN

I would start there, but if it worked for three weeks, I'd say you're probably all right. I'd lean more towards looking at the [switches](#). Check each one: you can check it with a [meter](#) (part # DM10T) and see if when you turn them on and off, does it make and break connection? If you have one that's sticking, depending on the unit, some come with a bank of switches, where you get all four.

DAN

I should be able to find them without any trouble.

JOHN SOWDEN

Just get the [model number](#) as it reads off of the unit and go to [RepairClinic.com](#). You can put the model in and see a picture of all the common parts, and that way you can see what you're looking at financially for this project.

DAN

Okay, very good.

### **1998 Kitchen Aid Electric Dryer Tumbles but Doesn't Heat**

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And now we're going to Tina, in Trenton, with a question on a [dryer](#), here on the Appliance Repair Show. Hi Tina, go ahead please.

TINA

Yes, I have a [Kitchen Aid dryer](#). It was here when I bought this place, so it could be about ten years old. And it runs and it turns around and [air comes in, but it doesn't get hot](#).

JOHN SOWDEN

Is this gas or electric?

TINA

It's electric.

JOHN SOWDEN

It's electric! So it tumbles, but you have no heat whatsoever?

TINA

Right.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, there are a few places where you want to start. The first one is, you want to make sure you're getting the proper voltage to the dryer. Just because it's turning does not mean that you do not have a blown circuit breaker, and/or loose connection to the [dryer](#).

TINA

Excellent. I'll try that.

JOHN SOWDEN

There are two legs of power, that's the term they use, that come in. One will drive the [motor](#), and the other one will help drive the [heating element](#). Without the one to drive the element, [it will tumble and not heat](#). It doesn't happen often, but I've seen people replace a lot of parts only to find out that they didn't have the right power going to the dryer.

TINA

I can just look at the circuit breaker?

JOHN SOWDEN

You could try re-setting it. Circuit breakers, normally if there's a short or something, then they'll trip but if it's burned and it's just not passing current, the only way to check it is with a [meter](#) (part # DM10T) at the outlet of the [dryer](#), which if you're not comfortable doing, I'd contact an appliance repair person. Now the other thing that you can do is, there are normally a couple of other components in the dryer that can cause it not to heat. One is the element itself which is broken. Or, they have a [thermal fuse](#) on most units, especially in the last ten years; what happens is, when the unit overheats, it will cut power. On some it's wired to cut power to the whole dryer; others just the heating circuit. So, it depends on your particular model to know which one. That's something that you can check, again, with a meter. Normally if you take it to a local place they can check it for you and let you know if it's good or bad. But if that were the problem, if you've got a blown thermal fuse, then I would start looking at the [dryer vent](#), because that's where most of these problems occur. The vent is too long, it's smashed behind the dryer, or it's just dirty.

TINA

Oh, it is all smashed behind the dryer!

JOHN SOWDEN

Oh, wow! We might be getting closer to your problem, Tina!

TINA

Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, there are several different venting configurations that you can buy. What you want to do is, you always want to go with the straight wall metal vent, if you can. There are a lot of transition pieces you can buy these days to help that out so you can slide the dryer against the wall and still have a solid metal frame rather than the flexible stuff, where you can push the dryer back and crush it. I always recommend that it...

TINA

So that can cut the heat? Because I think that's what happened!

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes. See, if the air can't get out of the dryer, it backs up inside and then the heating element, these [thermal fuses](#) are either mounted in the [blower housing](#) or on the [heating element](#), will overheat and then that's it, it shuts off. It's a one-time deal and you have to replace the fuse. How long is the vent going outside?

TINA

Well, it just goes maybe five or six feet.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. But it is sagged back there?

TINA  
Yeah.

JOHN SOWDEN  
I'd recommend replacing it and get some...is it the flexible style venting?

TINA  
Yeah.

JOHN SOWDEN  
If you can, I'd go with the straight [wall venting](#). It's an easy do-it-yourself project; it will save you a lot of money, since things have probably been running pretty inefficiently. I'd recommend doing that.

TINA  
But then I still have to replace the [thermal fuse](#)?

JOHN SOWDEN  
Yes, you've got to do that.

TINA  
Is that something I could do?

JOHN SOWDEN  
That's something that's kind of an entry-level do-it-yourselfer kind of thing; we do sell quite a few to the do-it-yourselfers. You obviously want to unplug the dryer, and if you remove the back panel, which is normally held in place by a series of screws, you'll see it there. The easiest way to know what you're looking for, is get the [model number](#) off the unit, open the dryer door and you'll see a model tag, go to [RepairClinic.com](#), put the model number in, and you'll see a picture of all the common parts, including the [thermal fuse](#), and that will let you know what you're hunting for.

TINA  
Well, if this works then I'm going to call you back!

JOHN MCCULLOCH  
We love to hear success stories!