


# How to Rewire a Lamp

 [thisoldhouse.com/electrical/21016561/how-to-rewire-a-lamp](http://thisoldhouse.com/electrical/21016561/how-to-rewire-a-lamp)

Liz Seymour

December 1, 2010



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## Skill

Moderate Matching the proper wires to the socket terminals requires careful attention

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## Cost

\$15

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## Estimated Time

2 hours



- Screwdriver



- Wire stripper



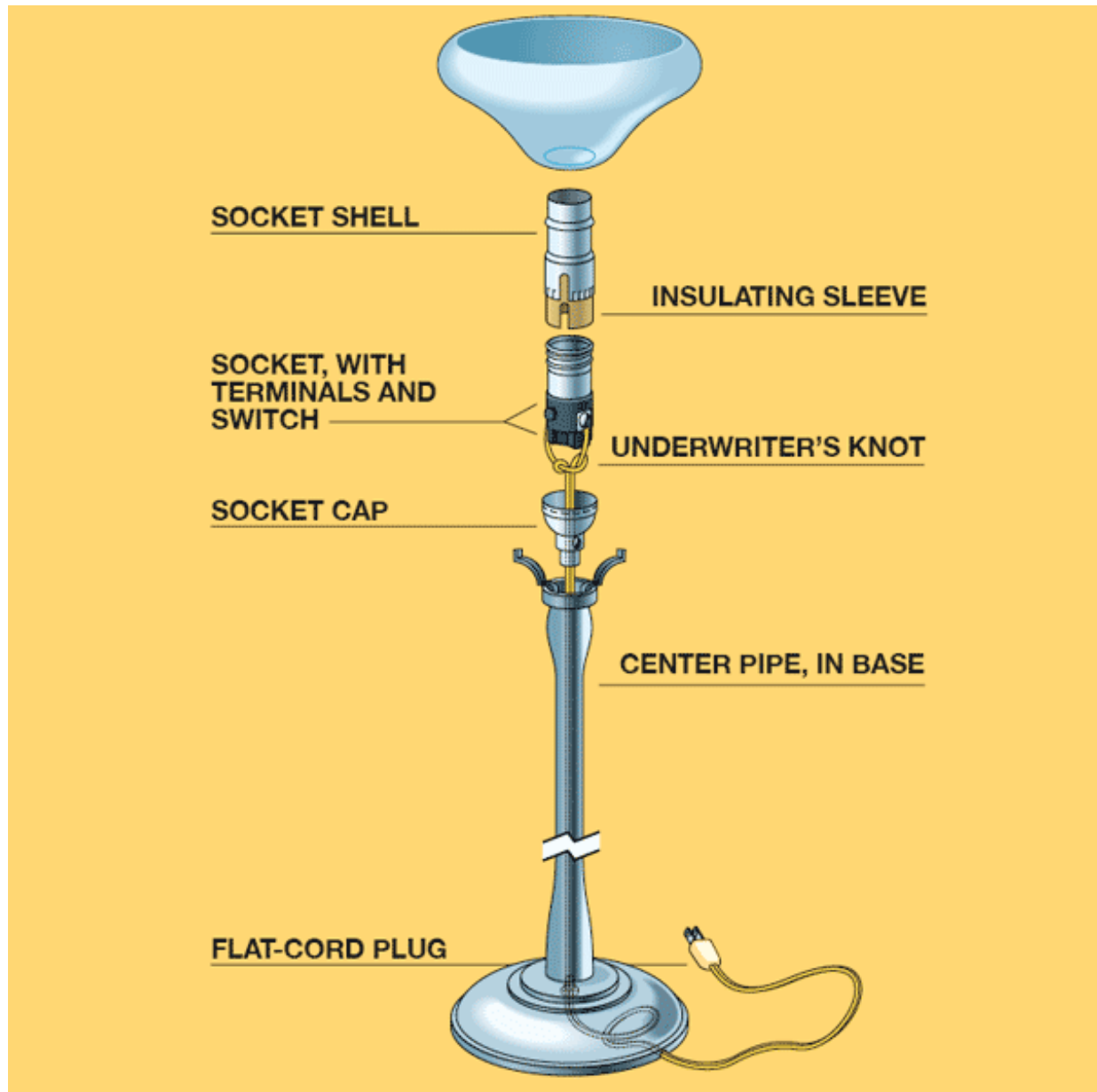
- Wrench

When you purchase an antique torchere, such as the one dissected here, or any vintage floor lamp that has not been restored, inspect it thoroughly to be sure every part is in working order. After time and extended use—or disuse—the sheathing (called a jacket) that covers and protects the wires inside the electrical cord may be cracked or frayed, or completely exposed. The prongs on the plug may have corroded, and the switch may not operate correctly.

Step 1

## Overview Diagram for Rewiring a Lamp

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*Illustration by Steve Stankiewicz*

Always unplug a lamp before attempting any repairs.

Once it is unplugged, take the lamp to a hardware store to determine what type of cord and plug will suit it best. Electrical cord may be flat or round. A flat cord will take a clamp-style flat-cord plug; a round cord will require a two-prong round-cord plug.

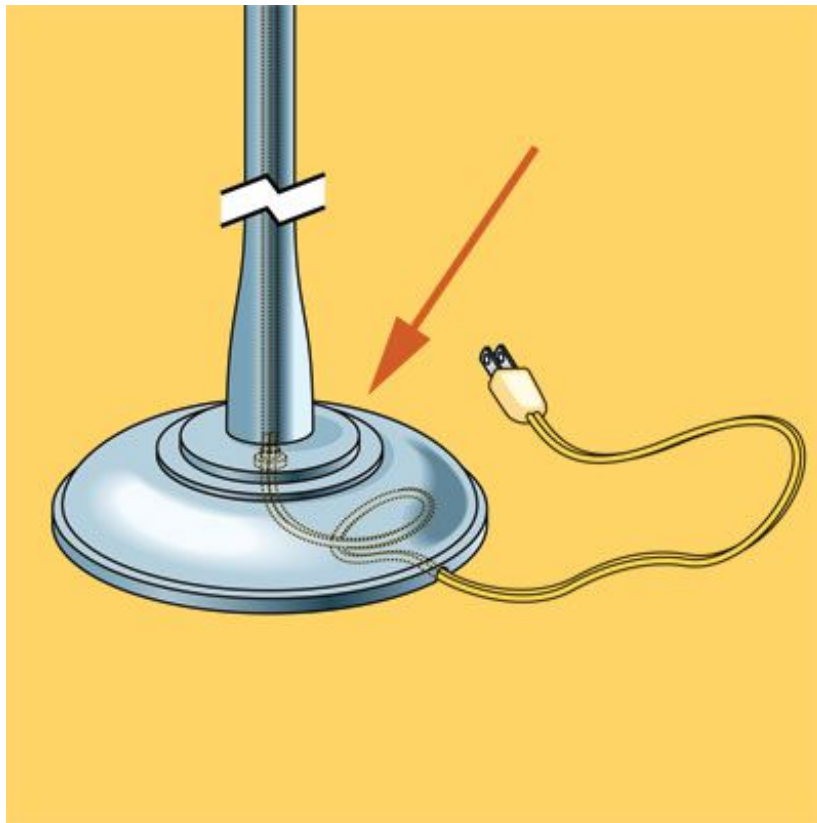
A socket is composed of several parts: an outer metal shell; an insulating sleeve; the threaded socket with its switch and two screw terminals (one silver, one brass) to which the two wires inside the cord attach; and an insulated cap, which protects the terminals.

A two-prong, round-body plug is composed of several parts, too: the plug body, the shell, and the cord clamp. A clamp-style flat-cord plug comes in two pieces, a core with prongs attached, and a shell.

Step 2

## Remove the Base

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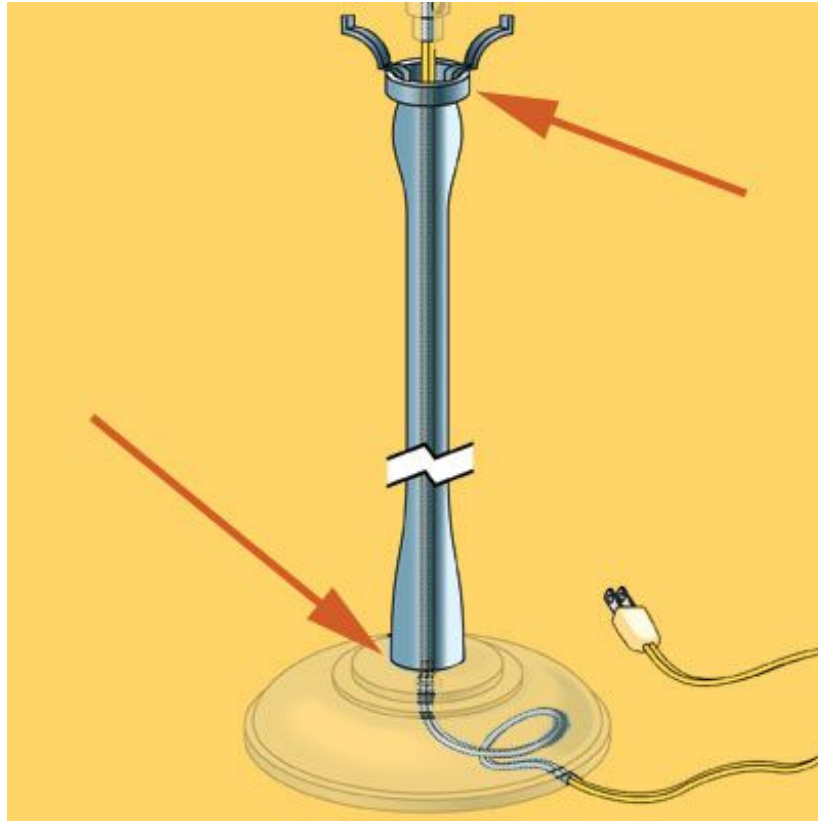
*Illustration by Steve Stankiewicz*

Pry cover off the bottom of the lamp to reveal the nut holding the pipe through which the cord passes from the socket to the plug. Pull the pipe partway out the top of the lamp, in order to unscrew and remove old socket.

Step 3

## Thread the New Cord

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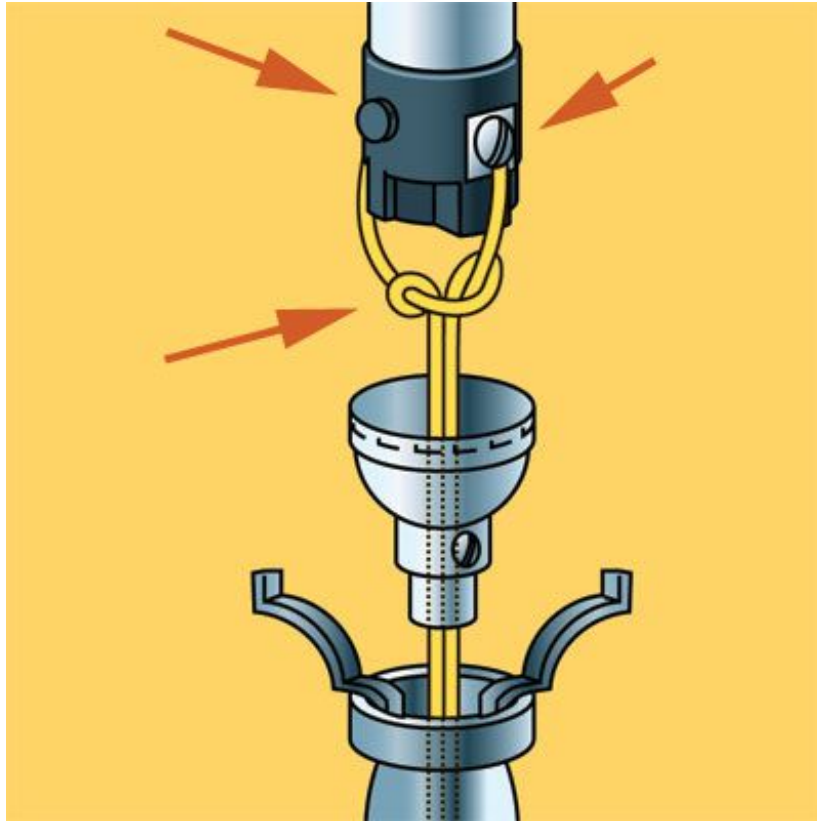
*Illustration by Steve Stankiewicz*

Cut off old plug; attach new cord to old cord and pull all the way up through pipe; snip off old cord and discard.

Step 4

## **Make the Wire Connections**

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*Illustration by Steve Stankiewicz*

Split top 2 inches of cord jacket off new cord; strip 1/2-inch of insulation off wire ends; form exposed wire ends into loops. One wire end is "hot"; the other, which is ridged, is considered "neutral."

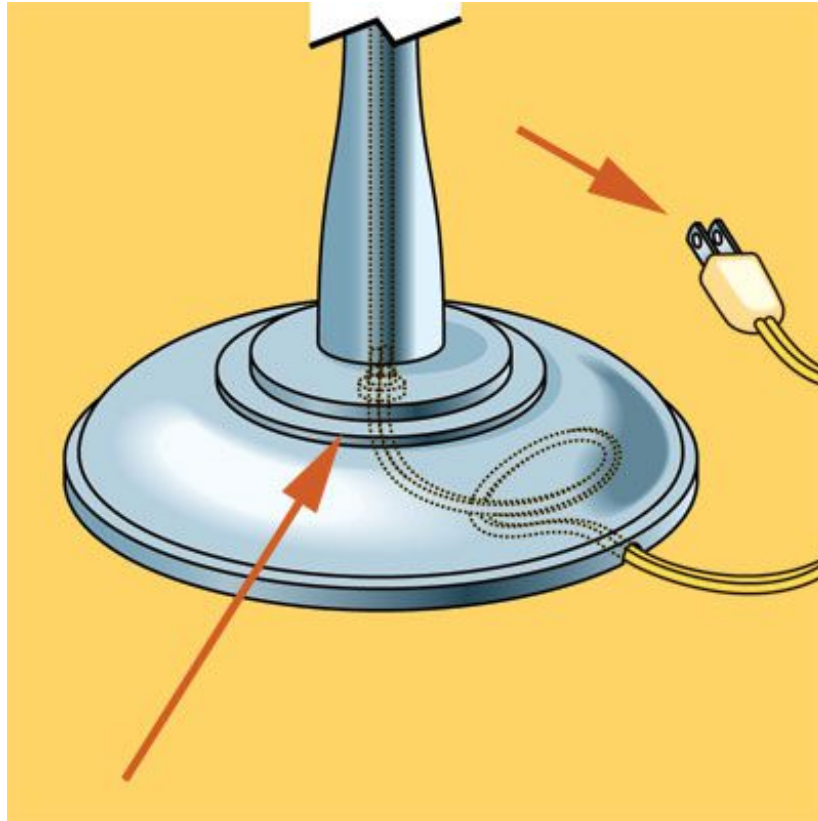
Screw in new socket; tie Underwriter's knot between socket and cap; hook hot wire around brass terminal and neutral one around silver terminal; tighten screws; slip insulating sleeve and outer metal shell over socket and switch.

Step 5

### **Reattach the Base and Connect the Plug**

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*Illustration by Steve Stankiewicz*

Tighten nut around pipe at base; re-attach base. (Cover with a new piece of felt, if desired, to prevent lamp from scratching floor.)

To wire a two-prong round-cord plug, pry out body; feed cord into shell; strip  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch of insulation off wire ends after splitting bottom  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches of cord, as per Step 4. Tie wires into Underwriter's knot; twist wire ends clockwise and connect to plug screws; snap plug body into shell; tighten clamp.

For a clamp-style flat-cord plug (like the one pictured here), pinch prongs to release plug core; spread prongs. Feed blunt end of flat wire through hole in bottom of shell, inserting it so that the ridged, neutral wire connects to the wider prong; squeeze prongs together; re-insert core in shell.