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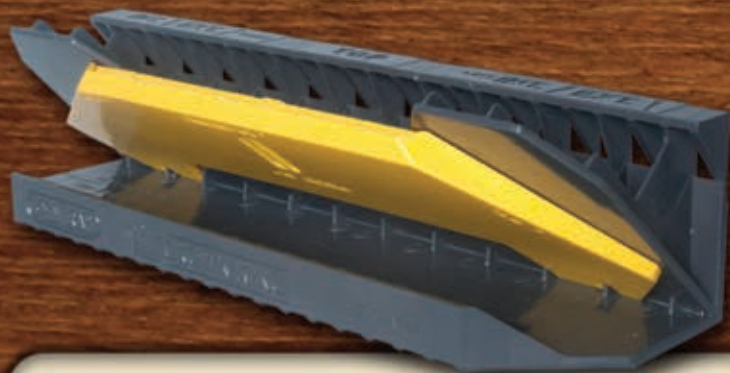
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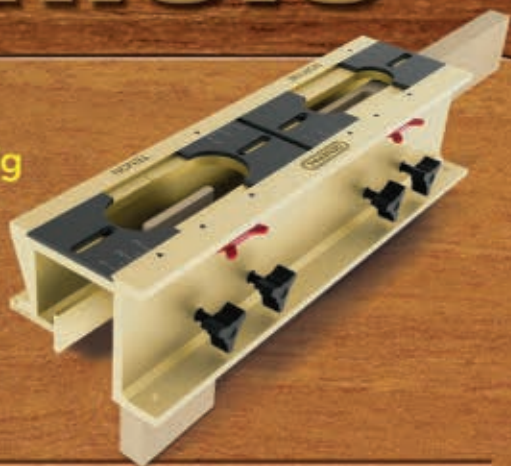
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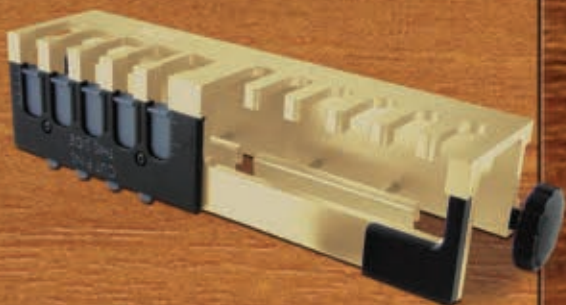
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Q: I'm planning to build a small patio area with landscape pavers. Should I seal the pavers?

A: Sealing your pavers is not absolutely necessary, but it is recommended. A sealed paver surface is much easier to clean, and may even prevent staining. Also, sealing will enhance and maintain brightly colored pavers. Sealing your pavers will help prevent the growth of weeds in between your joints. You can also discourage weeds by ensuring the joints are completely filled with sand to prevent the amount of weed seeds that fall between the pavers.

Q: My daughter and her husband just moved into their first house. They've got some work to do, and I thought a toolbox would make a great Christmas gift. I'd like to furnish it with some tools. Any suggestions on what would make a good start-up kit for a do-it-yourselfer?

A: Start with safety glasses, work gloves, a hammer (16 oz.), ratchet/socket set, assorted screwdrivers or a driver with interchangeable bits (Phillips head, flat, etc.), needle-nose and Channellock pliers, adjustable wrench, torpedo level, tape measure, snips, hex key set, combination square and utility knife. This should get them started, and they can add more specialty tools as required. The list may sound expensive, but a lot of "combo kits" are available that contain most of these tools for a reasonable price. The drawback to the kits is that the case they come in typically doesn't allow for adding tools. Most DIY'ers prefer to customize their kits, so a nice, quality toolbox to accompany the tools should make a great gift. And if you're feeling really generous, everybody needs a good drill/driver and circular saw.

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Q: I have a water stain on my hardwood floor from a leaky plant. Is there a way to remove this?

A: Try using a vibrating palm sander with progressively finer grits. Try 100-grit first, move to 150-grit, and so forth until you achieve the desired smoothness. After removing the dust you'll need to match the stain to the rest of floor. Use a bare piece of wood the same species as the flooring to test your stain. It may help to mix and match stains to get the right look. You want to assess the stain while it is wet, not dry, because the wet stain will better reflect what the final finish will look like after it's been coated with polyurethane.

Q: I would like to cover a block wall of my home to look like an old adobe. Do I need to cover the brick with a mesh? And what kind of plaster would be best? Any suggestions would be appreciated.

A: You're looking for stucco, not plaster. You might not need reinforcing mesh covering all the block, since it is rigid. Either way, you should add base and corner beads and a mesh flange along the wall edges. First patch any cracks, remove protruding brick mortar and brush away surface debris. Use a masonry bonding agent. Apply a scratch coat about 3/8-in. thick over the brick face. Then scratch grooves in the base coat. Apply a finish coat about 1/4-in. thick. **EHT**



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Rock Hard Artwork

Creating Concrete Sculpture



By Matt Weber

T.J. Neil is a concrete craftsman who has taken his work to a new level of artistry. When many people think of concrete, they may envision a dull, lifeless sidewalk slab, but Neil sees the potential for a soaring eagle, a roaring bear, or even a 65-ft. long dinosaur. *Extreme How-To* spoke with Neil about his forays into concrete sculpture, some basic techniques, and where he's headed today.

"The first statue I made was a wishing well for my father," explains Neil. "Someone bought the well right off his lawn, so I thought there might be a few dollars in these concrete sculptures, and maybe I should sell them myself."

A friend of Neil's, who owned

the Aqua Circus in Cape Cod, Florida, convinced him to create a concrete dolphin as a mascot. As he was building the dolphin, a local radio station covered the story and referred to Neil as a "sculptor." The term stuck. The next thing he knew, the dolphin was featured on the front page of the newspaper, which sparked a great deal of interest in his concrete craft.

"These days, the power of the internet has really exposed my work to a lot of new people," says Neil, who owns a website exhibiting his work at www.tjneil.com. "I get worldwide publicity, and that otherwise would be impossible." In fact, Neil has recently authored a book, titled *Making Concrete Sculpture*, in which he shares his

techniques for creating concrete works of art. The book is chock full of in-progress photos of sculptures ranging from fishermen, alligators, whales, sharks, horses, panthers, elephants, dragons and more.

SCULPTING BASICS

According to Neil, anyone can become a concrete sculptor, as long as they're willing to practice, experiment and be creative. The overall design comes straight from the creator's imagination, and a detailed sketch is the blueprint where Neil begins.

Of course, some basic engineering skills do apply. The process begins with an armature of rebar rods covered with galvanized lath wire. This serves as the skeleton of the structure. The wire mesh is secured to the rebar with black tie wire. Before building, Neil cuts hundreds of 8-inch pieces of black tie wire and keeps them in a coffee can. Every 3 inches on the armature, he bends the wires into an S, hooks them through the lath and around the rods, and twists them tightly.

Neil leaves strategic openings in the lath wire so he can add concrete. The base of each structure is poured solid with 8 to 18 inches of concrete, depending on its size. The larger the statue, the heavier the base. The rebar is housed in this concrete base, extending upward to be bent into the appropriate shape for the armature. This solid base is crucial for the strength of the structure, which is especially important if shipping the finished piece.

Much of the upper portions of Neil's statues are hollow, but



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PROJECT NEXT

even the hollow areas have 2 to 3 inches of concrete over the lath wire. However, even in the upper portions, strategic load-bearing areas, such as the shoulder joints

of arms, may be solid concrete for extra structural integrity.

When sculpting, Neil holds the concrete material with a masonry hawk and applies it in successive

coats over the wire with a variety of concrete trowels (point trowel, margin trowel, plastering trowel, etc.). As the coats begin to stiffen, each layer is scratched over the entire surface (Neil uses scrap lath wire to do this). This scratching process roughens the surface so the next coat of concrete has a strong bond with the coat beneath it. Neil also stresses the importance of allowing each coat of concrete, applied about 3/4 inch per coat, to fully cure before the next layer is applied.

"Let each layer cure for seven days," says Neil. "Then put on

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Shown here is an early stage of the concrete eagle's armature.

another coat and let that one cure for seven days, too. Then apply another inch for detail and let that cure. Do this and you will have a very strong concrete structure." Neil notes that concrete can absorb water up to 1-1/2 inches below its surface. This is why the statues require such thick coats of appropriately cured concrete—to protect the armature. If the interior rebar is exposed to moisture it can

rust, and when it rusts, it expands, which can in turn crack the surrounding concrete. This is also why Neil suggests sealing and/or painting the sculptures with the highest quality exterior latex paint you can find.

"When painting, you first need to apply a base coat," suggests Neil. "I put on a coat of plain white or gray to serve as a primer so the next coats will have a strong bond. When painting under the hot sun, you may need to thin the paint a little with water so the paint has time to soak into the concrete before it dries." Neil mixes his paint right on the concrete structure, blending the colors for his preferred hue.

RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

When it comes to the recipe for concrete, Neil suggests using large gravel in the base of the structure to give it strength. Medium gravel is used for the center of the structure. Small pea gravel is used in structural areas such as arms or legs.



T.J. Neil applies concrete to his sculpture, "Freedom's Flight."

For the non-structural areas, such as the finish coats, Neil uses a sand mix. He suggests coarse sand for the base coat, then medium-grade sand, followed with a

fine sand mix for the finish coat. Neil prefers to mix his own concrete from sand, gravel and Portland cement. But for a novice sculptor, he suggests that bags of

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WHAT'S NEXT?

Soon after this interview, the *EHT* hometown became the proud exhibitor of a Neil original. Our magazine is headquartered in Birmingham, Alabama, home to University of Alabama at Birmingham. The local university's mascot is "Blaze" of the UAB Blazers, which is pictured on countless t-shirts and baseballs caps as a fire-breathing dragon. Neil was commissioned to construct the dragon from concrete, which was installed in front of the university arena as a new landmark.

"This dragon is about 10 feet tall and weighs three tons," says Neil. "The dragon breathes fire, so we built a smoke machine inside the statue to make the mouth look like it's smoldering." **EHT**



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MASTER SUITE MASTERPIECE

By Mark Clement and Theresa Coleman

Enhance a bedroom by creating custom built-in closets from stock cabinets.

To convert this un-cared for bedroom into a master suite, we had to junk all the horse-hair plaster, crumbling lath and decrepit knob-and-tube wiring. We then stripped the structural walls of the house back to the block, installed new studs, updated electrical, insulation, HVAC chases, windows and dry-wall. Once back to a blank slate, we could connect all the dots and make it pretty.

As shown in this article, we finished and sanded the drywall, switched and plugged the roughed-in electrical, and ran nice, classic moldings. We also installed a wide-plank pine floor, painted and—the piece d’reistance of the entire project—used stock cabinets to create two custom built-in closets for the previously storage-free space. They graciously contain all the things typically stored in a bedroom, and smartly—not to mention

affordably—solve a serious storage dilemma part-and-parcel to old and/or under-detailed houses. And it all ties together in a super-sweet package, faithful to the look and detail of an old house. Here's how we did it.

DESIGN

This is a room upgrade that relies heavily on the right design for the space—both for function and form—and here, necessity was the mother of beauty.

The 12-by-13-ft. room, which would be a master bedroom when we were done, had no closet. Thanks to old house designers, that is roughly two fewer closets than a modern couple needs. That was the inspiration for the custom built-ins.

The core of the room would be two elegant and very customized storage systems that my co-remodeler Theresa designed, using stock cabinets from Thomasville cabinets. Using just about every page from their extensive catalogue, we pulled together a totally detailed, functional system that stores everything from shoes to gym bags to dirty clothes and everything in between. And it's all behind sweet raised-panel doors that close and hide just about any mess.

To make it all flow, we took a closet from an adjoining room, so one of the two built-in banks would live inside the new space.

To add to the overall look and feel, we spec'ed a nice, three-

piece crown, tall base molding, pine floors and just the right color to tie it all together.

BANKS O' BUILT-INS

The built-ins are three towers, essentially, made with 24-in. deep kitchen cabinets (25 inches with the doors) ganged on top of and next to each other rising to 89-3/4 inches tall.

The left and right towers have drawer bases, an armoire as the center element and a hopper drawer cabinet at the top for tucking away things used less frequently (like your ski cap or small set of bagpipes). The center tower swaps out the drawers for two slide-out trash cans.

Now, I know you need a trash can in a bedroom—but four of them!

"They're the clothes hamper, Mark," Theresa pointed out.

Sheeee-yaaa ... like I needed that explained to me.

Theresa really worked—without overworking—the details. Inside

Find the highest spot in the floor where the cabinets will sit, then register your level line. The longer the level, the easier it is to get an accurate mark.



Find your plumb line next, then, if necessary, install a backer for your filler piece. The filler/backer gives the door enough room to swing and stay open.

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the drawers she used silverware organizers as valets to separate little things like watches, wallets, change, and so forth. Each drawer base has toe-kick drawers which are awesome, again, for lesser used things. And she even re-invented a wine storage rack as vertical shoe storage for flat shoes, scarves, and other things more commonly found in a lady's closet.

INSTALLATION

If you know the carpenter's mantra of Plumb, Level and Square, you'll be well on your way to installing the cabinet boxes right on the money. Careful layout—front-back and left-right—is crucial. These cabinet towers cover a lot of space and being out of plumb or just a hair off a layout line can create gaps or other problems as you install.

Layout. Because we were working in an old house, the floor wasn't just out of level, it made a crumpled-up bath towel thrown



Again, layout, level and plumb are key—especially as you get started building the towers. Check the top of the cabinet to make sure it's level.



Pilot point, washer-head cabinet screws draw the back of the cabinet carcass to the wall, and the wide heads provide good bearing. Snug them, but don't over-tighten.



An impact driver does the pre-drill/countersink. A cordless drill-driver drills the rest of the pilot hole. Another impact drive sends the trim-drive screws home.

in a corner look straight. So the boxes would stand straight and tall, we struck a level line first. Plumb lines come next.

Shimming up. It'll be good news if all you have to do is tuck a few shims here and there to keep yourself riding smooth on your layout lines. If you're doing the old house shuffle, however, be ready with full pieces of 1-by for the cabinet bases to bear on, which is what we needed.

Studs. I like to locate the wall studs and strike a line from floor to ceiling. This means that as I install each element of the cabinet, I can see the line clearly and don't

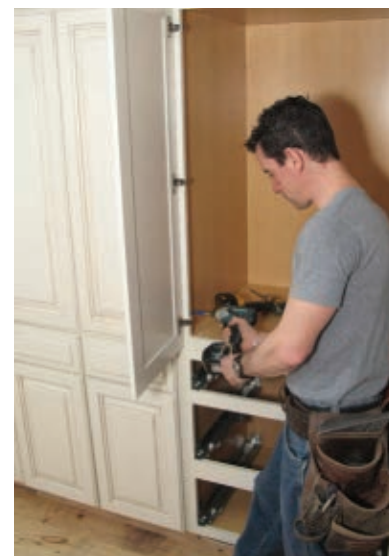
have to re-measure to locate the studs. It's a time saver.

BUILDING THE TOWERS

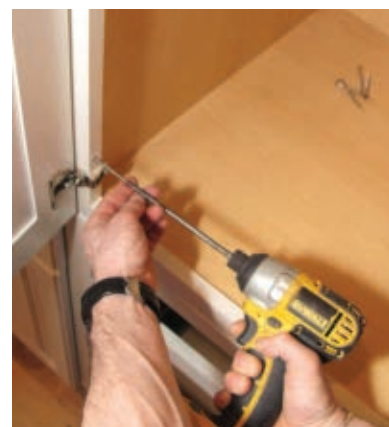
We had to make a choice on this project between running all the base units across the span first, or installing each unit as a tower.

Because, at least on this site, the eye would register plumb before level, we chose getting the units plumb as our over-arching criteria. To make sure we were on course, we installed all the way up.

On the wall-mounted unit, this



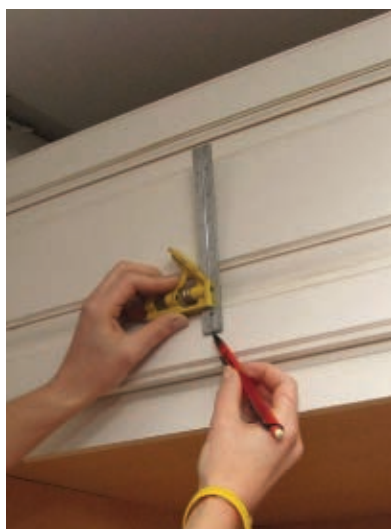
Pre-drill and countersink the face frame. Send the screws home into the face frame—again, snug them without overdriving.



was no big whoop because we ran flat along the wall. But in the bank of cabinets we let into the new closet, we had to be doubly sure we ran the face of the cabinet bank straight between each wall to make sure it lined up and would seamlessly accept the molding valance above.



The wall-mounted cabinet gets a factory-finished, maple plywood end cap. Finish nails hold it tight, but be certain to drive them through the cabinet carcass only—and not into the body of the cabinet. Nails and clothes don't mix.



A 7" combination square is an incredible layout gauge, and I used it plenty when laying out the hardware holes.

TOOLS

The good news is that you don't need every tool in your shop to install these cabinets. You can almost do the whole thing with a circ saw, level and cordless drill. To make time, however, it helps to have multiple tools.

The face frames on the Thomasville cabinets are solid maple. However, when you install cabinets you fasten the face frames together by pre-drilling and sinking trim-drive screws to hold them together, so there's a lot of pre-drilling and driving.

Fastening to the wall is a little easier; just use the Thomasville-provided pilot-point washer-head screws.

To get all this done without switching bits a thousand times, I used two impact drivers and a cordless drill/driver to pre-drill, countersink, then drive screws with some modicum of speed.

HARDWARE

Installing cabinet hardware takes patience to get right—and getting it right is key to

a nicely trimmed package.

My Stanley 7-in. combination square—an invaluable tool to me—and tape measure helped me layout where each hole was located before I drilled them out.

Thomasville provides segmented screws that you can snap off with side cutters or nail nippers to accommodate the hardware you use. Sometimes, however, the screw length just doesn't match—always happens, it seems—so I simply counter-bore the back of the drawer with a paddle bit to recess the screw head.

THE REST OF THE MOLDING

After the cabinets were installed, it was time to go back to trimming the place out. We started, as you're supposed to, with all the vertical moldings—casing in this case—then tied in the base.

With door casing, I find it's easier to lay out the door jamb with a Bench Dog Trim-Loc. I use the bright orange marking gauge to strike my reveal lines along the head jamb and jamb legs. This



Here's an old-timer's trick: To keep a drill bit from wandering on an important cut, pre-dimple the hole with a sharp scratch awl.



This is where there is still room for the tried-and-true screwdriver.

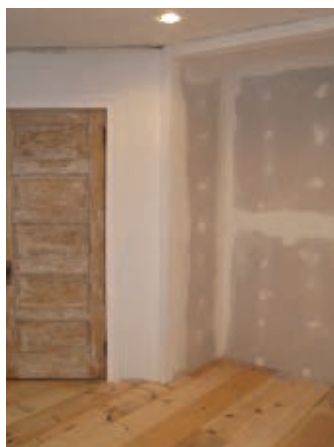


If you're careful you can set hardware screws with a power driver.

creates a crosshairs at the top of the door, which I use to measure my pieces.

I then cut and pre-assemble the casing assembly on a flat surface. Next, I apply the assembly on the door jamb before nailing both into the wall and into the jamb. This keeps the miters nice and tight. Dabbing them with a little Phenoseal before putting them together is a belt-and-suspenders approach.

Base is next. Like the most moldings, I dead-end left and cope right.



Before/after



FLOOR

I tackled the floor sanding on this project myself. I used the U-Sand vertical random orbit sander, which I rented from my local rental shop for the soft white pine floors. It worked great. It was clean, removed stock at a good rate and left a primo finish.

I then finished the floor with four coats of quick-dry, water-based urethane.

Last step for floors was installing the coved shoe molding, which is a small, but appreciable detail. I like it much better than your typical rounded-over shoe mold.

PAINT

A tight paint job is critical for pulling together all the disparate details of a high-impact project like this. We selected Sherwin-Williams' Duration low-VOC, low-odor paint. And because I was the painter on the project, I doubly appreciated the low-odor feature.

To keep the site clean and paint lines straight, we overpainted the moldings first, then cut in the walls and ceiling to make the new master move-in ready.

The door was a real find. The Douglas fir, five-panel door was original to the house (it had been stashed in the attic), and instead of painting it, we de-painted it using an unbelievable paint remover called Back to Nature Multi-Strip Pro. This is a low-tox product, but it ate through layer after layer of paint and varnish.

Once I scraped the muck off the door and it dried, I sanded it smooth with 100-grit paper using my Festool 6-in. random orbit sander. I then took the door into the shop and hit it with a high-gloss urethane. It came out luscious.

Matching the century-old hardware was a snap, though I don't expect it to be that easy in other parts of the country. Home Depot had replacement lock sets that

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were identical to what was on the door originally, although I sanded, primed and painted them. This changed the brass finish to a gloss black, which looks much more substantial.

The last step is for the homeowner to load their cabinets and appreciate their beautiful new master bedroom. **EHT**

Editor's Note: Visit Mark and Therea Clement at www.MyFixItUpLife.com.



We wanted a high-gloss finish on the trim, so we used Sherwin-Williams white high-gloss paint. Low VOC's are only available in flats and semis at this time, which is what we used for the walls and ceiling. And, forget a screwdriver for opening paint cans. Use a 5-in-1 tool as a lever—much easier.

Some areas, like our radius drywall window returns, just aren't roller friendly. We brushed them out.

I jiggged up the door so I could apply paint stripper goop (Back to Nature Multi-Strip Pro) to both sides. I placed a few screws in the bottom trestle, resting them between sawhorses. This enabled me to simply rotate it over when I was finished painting one side.



Part of the reason painting is so messy is that there's nowhere for the paint to go when you wipe your brush before applying. Take a scratch-awl and pop about eight to 10 holes in the rim of the can, and you'll have an entirely new outlook.



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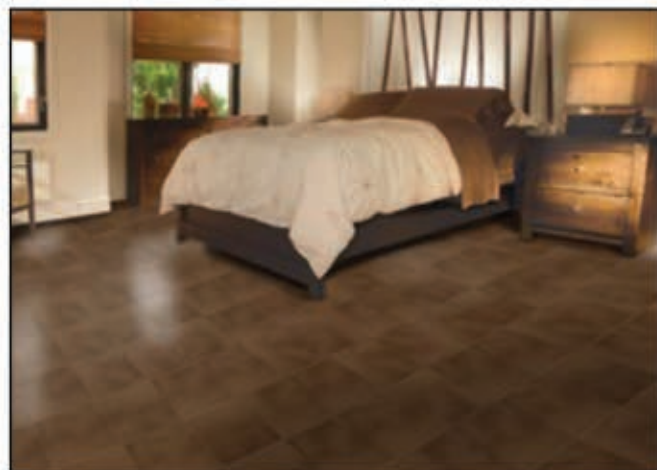
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UNDERSTANDING HOUSE FRAMING

By Monte Burch

When viewing a framed house before the wall coverings are installed, the building often seems complicated and to some, a daunting project. House framing actually consists of several separate “projects” assembled into one to create the finished home. Taken in that context, house or building framing is not all that difficult. With today’s advances in air tools, such as framing nailers, you don’t even have to be an experienced hammer swinger to frame a house. It is a good idea, however, for the inexperienced to begin with a small, simple construction, rather than a two story, complex design. A garage or garden shed is a good example. In most instances you will be constructing from building plans,

and that’s definitely the easiest for the inexperienced. Make sure you follow all specs and elevation drawings.

The most common framing material is wood, but metal framing is becoming more popular. Metal may be desired in some areas and may be a code regulation in other areas as well. Regardless of the type of construction, make sure you check with local building authorities as to regulations pertaining to construction and framing, as well as to obtain any needed permits.

METHODS

Two methods are used in standard wood house or “stick” framing—balloon or platform—and both have advantages and disadvantages. Balloon framing is



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UNDERSTANDING HOUSE FRAMING

sometimes used with two-story buildings. In balloon framing the studs extend as one, from the sill to the top plate of the second story. The second story floor joists are supported by a ribbon board set into the studs. This type of



construction is the most difficult, but does provide unobstructed openings between the floors allowing for easy installation of utilities without notching and cutting openings. Fire stops must, however, be installed at the second story floor level between the studs.

Platform framing can be used for either single or two-story and is the easier and most common method of construction. Fire stops are automatically created with this type of construction. Constructing a single-story is the easiest, a two-story or split level is harder. Platform framing is easier than balloon framing because you can construct and erect the second story walls on the second story floors.

Either construction can be done on a concrete slab or on a foundation. The slab acts as a floor; a foundation requires a floor to first be constructed. Then the walls are framed on the floor (or slab) and raised in place.

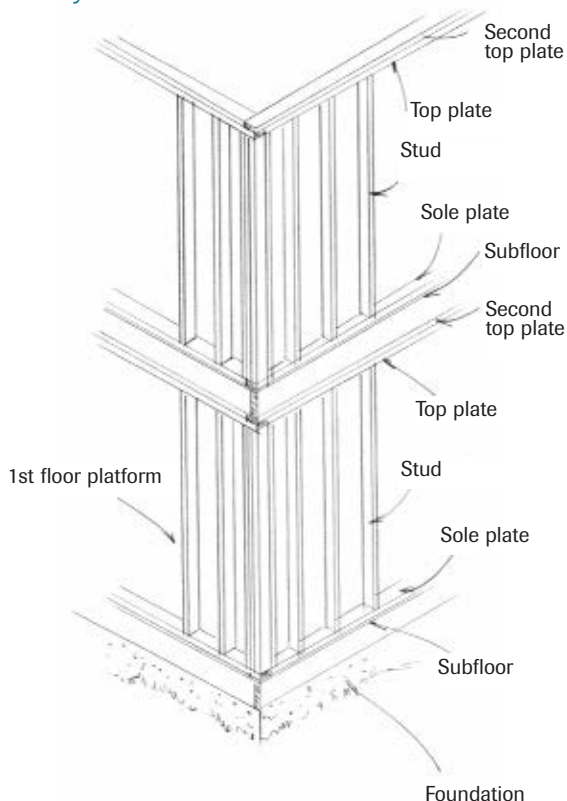
FROM THE FLOOR UP

If constructing on a foundation, the first step is to construct a floor on the foundation. Sill plates are anchored to the foundation, then the floor joists are fastened to the sill plates and their ends boxed in with joist headers. The headers and outside joists should fit flush with the outside edges of the foundation. Metal hangers make installing the joists easier than toe-nailing them in place.

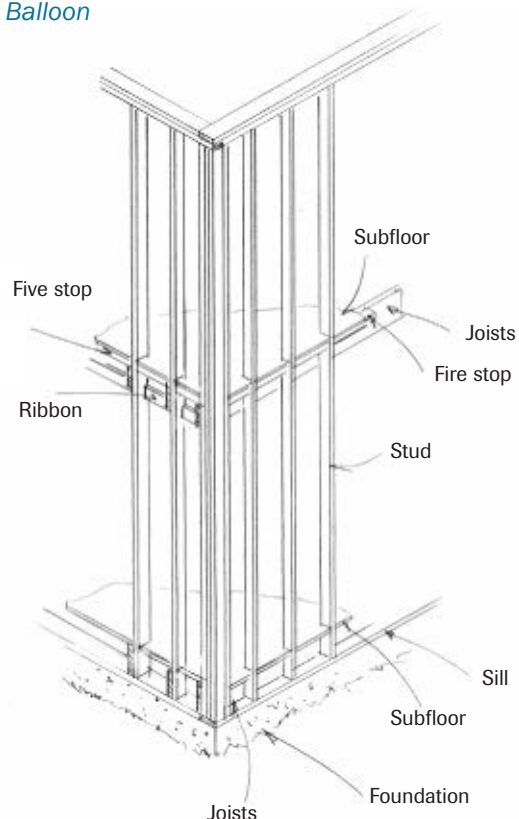
A building is basically framed in sections and the sections joined together.

Two types of construction are used, balloon and platform, with platform being the most common.

2-Story Platform



Balloon



In many instances of larger buildings, or those with joist spans over 16 feet, a girder is installed to provide support for the floor at these locations. Today's girders are commonly made of engineered wood. The girder should be supported by piers or foundation and footings. With the floor framed in, decking, or a subfloor, is added. Decking is typically oriented-strand board (OSB), or 3/4-in. plywood sheathing. In the past solid wood 1x boards were applied on the diagonal.

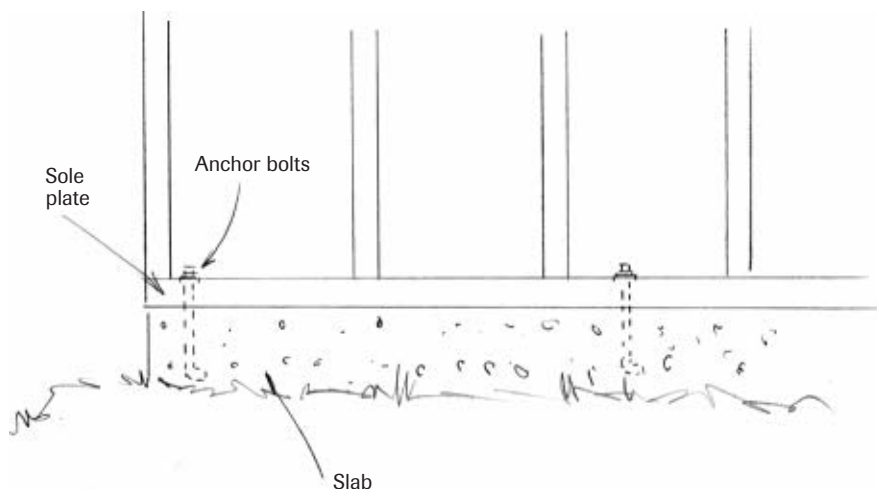
WALL CONSTRUCTION

After the deck or floor has been constructed, you're ready to construct and erect the walls. The walls consist of sole plates nailed to the subflooring, or anchored with anchor bolts to the concrete slab. Studs are nailed to the sole plates and top plates are nailed to the studs.



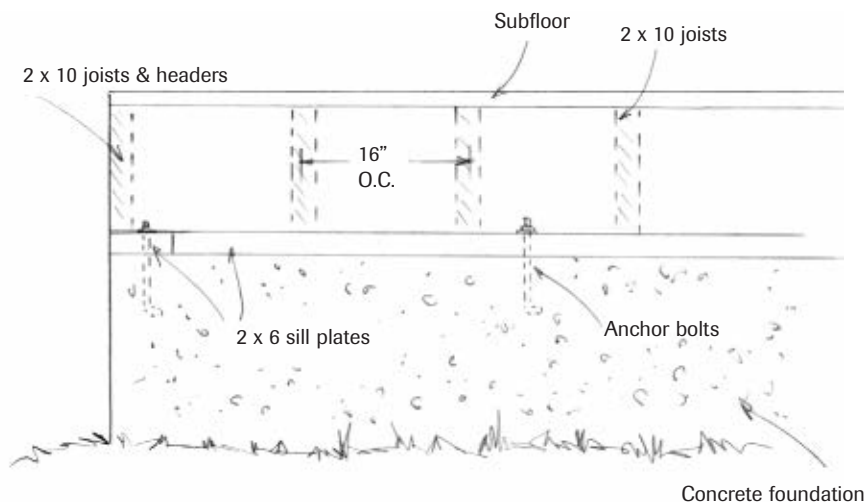
First step is to lay the sole plate for slab construction, or sill plate for a foundation/floor, against the anchor bolts, mark their location and bore the holes.

The walls are then constructed on the slab or subfloor.

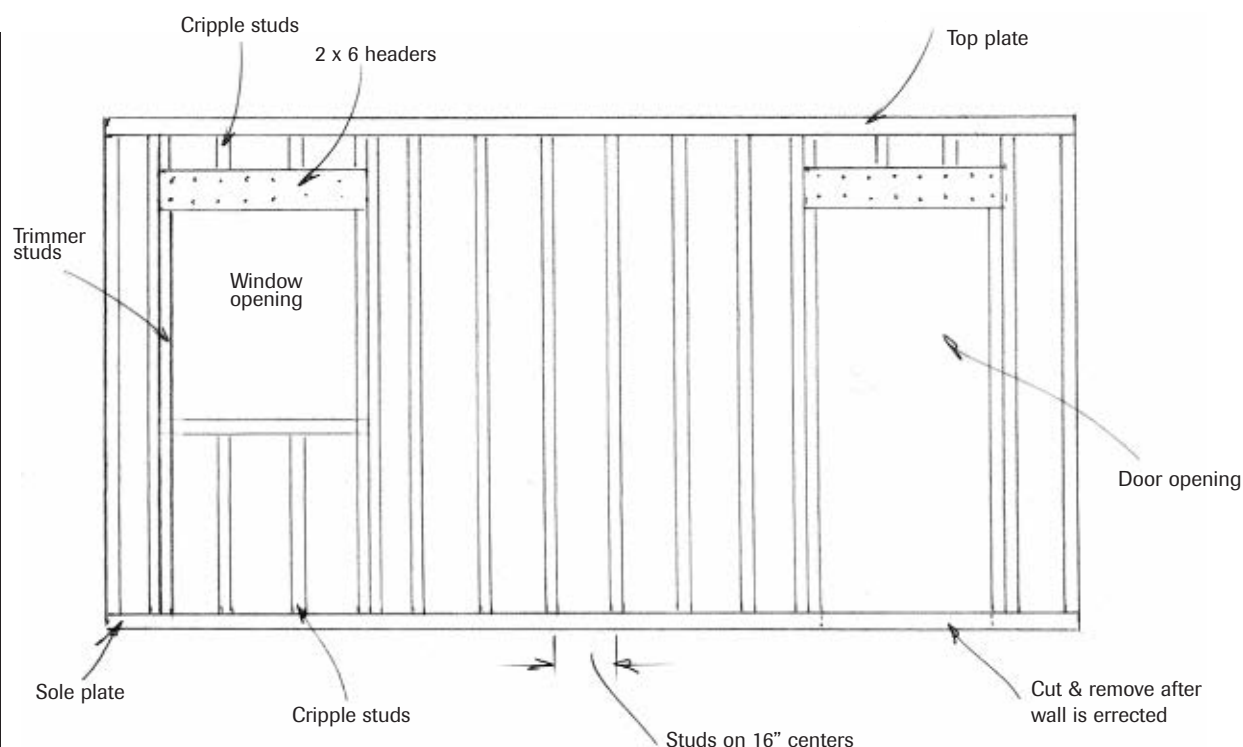


Wall construction on a concrete slab is anchored to the slab with anchor bolts through the wall sole plate.

The most common construction is on a foundation. In this case the floor is first framed, anchored to the foundation, and covered with a subfloor.



UNDERSTANDING HOUSE FRAMING



Walls are actually constructed as one individual piece, or as sections in the case of long walls. Shown is a typical wall with a door and window opening framed in.

Actually, the walls are assembled in one piece, or in the case of long walls, in sections joined together to create the length needed. If building on a slab, the first step is to lay the sole plate on the slab and mark the locations of the anchor bolts. Bore these holes.

Regardless of whether you are building on a slab or foundation, the next step is to lay the sole plate and top plate side by side, and determine any door and window locations, as per the plans or your building design. You must know the rough-opening sizes of any doors and windows. Using a carpenter's square, mark these rough opening locations on both. The tongue of the square is 1-1/2-inches wide, the exact width of kiln-dried 2x framing materials. Then mark the stud locations, again on both sole and top plate at the same time. This measurement may be on 16- or 24-in. centers,



Lay out the door and window openings on both the sole and top plate, as well as stud locations, at the same time, using a tape measure and carpenter's square.

A layout stick was often used by the old-timers to lay out stud locations.

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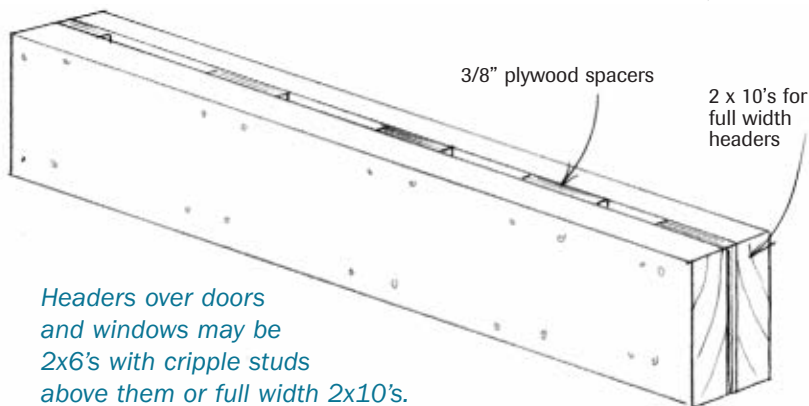
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UNDERSTANDING HOUSE FRAMING



Headers over doors and windows may be 2x6's with cripple studs above them or full width 2x10's. Regardless, 3/8" plywood spacers are used to create a header width to match the stud width.



Bracing of some sort is commonly used. The type and amount depends on code rules and building design. One method is to inlet 1 x 4 wind or hurricane bracing into the studs. Measure from corner to corner of the constructed wall, then measure opposite corners and make sure the wall is square.



Lay the bracing in place and mark on the wall studs. Then saw each side of the cut-out.



Complete the cut-out with a chisel.

depending on building design or local codes.

Once all measurements have been marked on both sole and top plate, lay them on edge on the subfloor or concrete slab, the proper distance apart of the stud lengths. If you use precut studs you can save money and time. Fasten the studs between the plates, positioning their ends in the previously marked locations.

Once the studs are in place, frame in the door and window openings, and then add the headers. Headers may be constructed full width by using 2x10's, or they may be created by using 2x6's filling in above them with cripple studs. Traditional headers are created by nailing 3/8-in. plywood spacers between the header boards to create the same thickness in the header as the 3-1/2-in. width of the studs. The headers are supported by trimmer studs to create doubled studs in the openings. Cripple studs are fastened between the trimmers beneath the door and window openings, and spaced to match the other studs on the same 16- or 24-in. centers.

A framing air nailer can save time if you have power to the site. If there is no power you can use a cordless model such as the Paslode. Several years ago my daughter helped frame a building and she had never "swung a hammer." Using an air framing nailer, she had no problems, and we completed the building in a short time.

SQUARING THE FRAME

In some instances walls are constructed without additional bracing, using plywood or OSB sheathing at the corners to brace and square the wall section. And

in some cases the sheathing is applied to the wall frame before erecting the wall. In either case the wall section is first squared by measuring diagonally from corner to corner, then from opposite corner to corner and shifting the wall section to create an equal measurement and a squared wall. A large wooden 90-degree triangle can also be used. A temporary brace is then installed to hold the wall square.

In many instances hurricane bracing is added to the walls. This consists of purchased metal strips or 1x4's set diagonally across the wall and cut into the outside edges of the 2x4's. With sole plate and top plate nailed into the studs, again use a tape measure to measure diagonally from corner to corner and square up the wall. Temporarily tack the hurricane bracing in place and mark the cut locations. Use a saw to cut the notches, and then remove material between the saw marks with a chisel. Anchor the bracing in place with two 8d nails at each stud, and then cut the ends of the bracing off flush with the plate edges. (Make sure you check with local codes on bracing regulations in your area.)

RAISING THE WALLS

Erecting a wall is fairly easy, but even small walls are best erected by at least two people. Erecting on a subfloor is easier than on a slab. Simply slide the wall close to the edge at its location and tilt it up. I like to use temporary 2x4 stop blocks fastened to the outside edges of the joists and headers to keep the wall from sliding off as you lift it up. If installing the wall on a concrete slab, slide it up to the anchor bolts, then you will have to lift the wall up and position it down on the anchor bolts. Again,

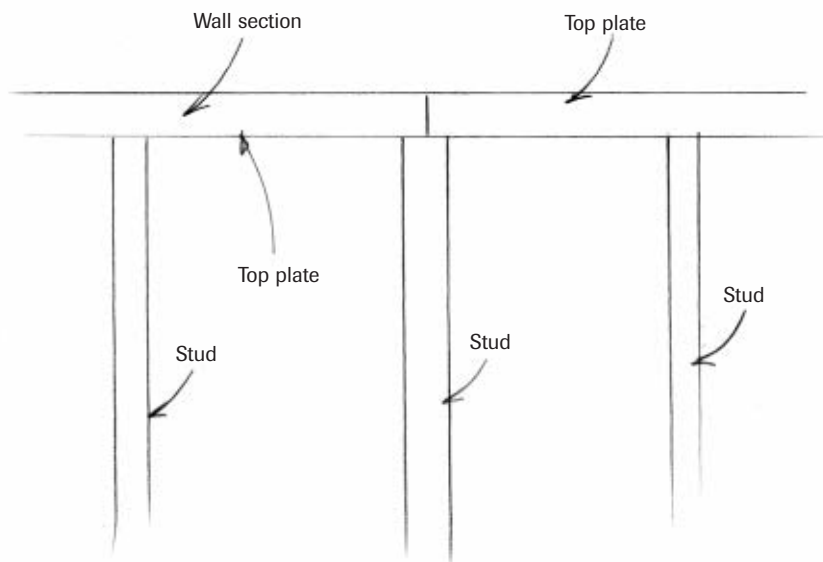


With the wall constructed, tilt it up in place. This takes two people on even a small wall.

Drive 2 x 4 stakes into the ground and brace the wall in place, making sure it is braced plumb. Construct the opposite side wall, erect and brace it in place.



UNDERSTANDING HOUSE FRAMING



If long walls are to be constructed in sections, make the joint on a stud.

this is at least a two-person chore, even for a short wall.

With the wall up in position, drive 2x4 stakes in the ground and provide temporary supports anchored to the wall studs and stakes. Duplex nails used for constructing foundations are good for this step, as they can more easily be pulled later. Make sure the wall is plumb and correctly in position before anchoring the bracing. If placed on a slab, fasten the sole plate in place with washers and nuts over the sole plate and on the anchor bolts. If on a foundation/floor, nail the sole plate down on the subfloor and into the floor joists and headers. If the wall is to be built in sections, build the next section, erect it, brace in place and fasten to the previously erected wall. Note the wall joints are always on a stud.

Construct, erect and brace the

opposite wall in place in the same manner. Then construct the wall that fits between the two standing walls. This wall is measured to fit between the previously erected walls, measuring at the bottom. Construct and erect the opposite-end wall in the same manner. On these walls, start with studs on each end, and then measure for the "on-center" studs, adding the 2x4 or 2x6 measurement of the studs on the previously erected walls. As with the other walls, openings are framed in the same manner and bracing applied. In any case these walls are erected between the two adjoining walls, plumbed and then anchored to the outside studs on the two adjoining walls. Brace the center section to keep it from bowing out or inward.



Construct the end walls to fit between the side walls, erect and brace them.

After making sure all corners are plumb, fasten the end-wall end studs to the side-wall end studs.





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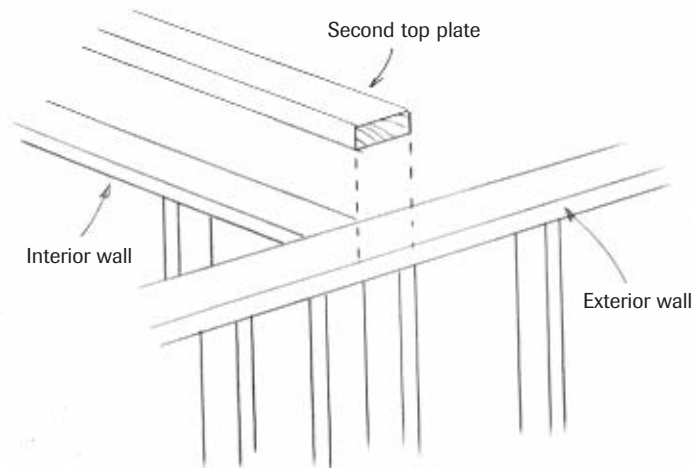
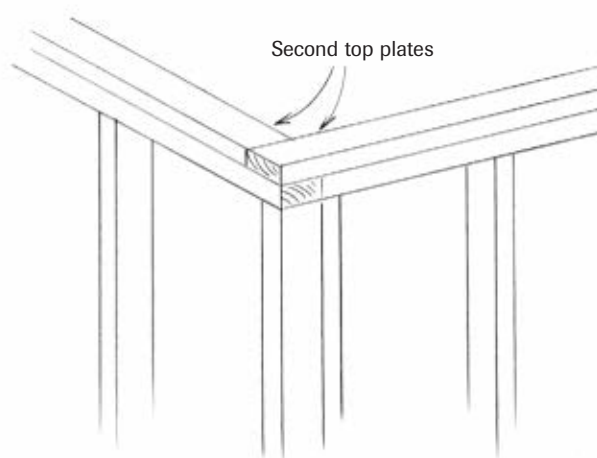
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UNDERSTANDING HOUSE FRAMING

Further anchor all joints with a second top plate.



If the building is not rectangular or square, but has extensions, construct these walls, joining at the corners, again basically creating two "sides" and then erecting the ends to join the opposite walls together. The tops of the walls at corners and wall section joints are joined by nailing a second top

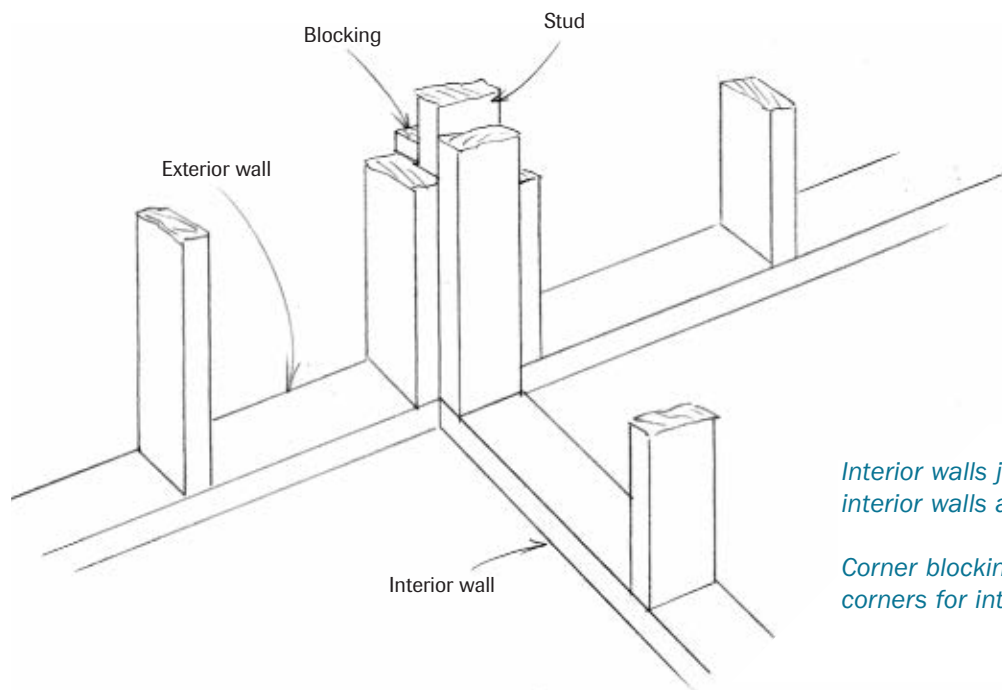
plate down over the top plate, crossing over all joints to tie them securely together. This second top plate creates the final wall height of a standard 8-ft. wall.

Using a handsaw, cut and remove the section of sole plate at the bottom of each door opening. Corner blocking is added at

corners to provide a square corner for installation of interior wall coverings. This may be done in several ways, as shown in the diagrams. Interior walls are framed, erected and anchored in place in the same way, again using a second top plate to tie them together and to the exterior walls. Corner



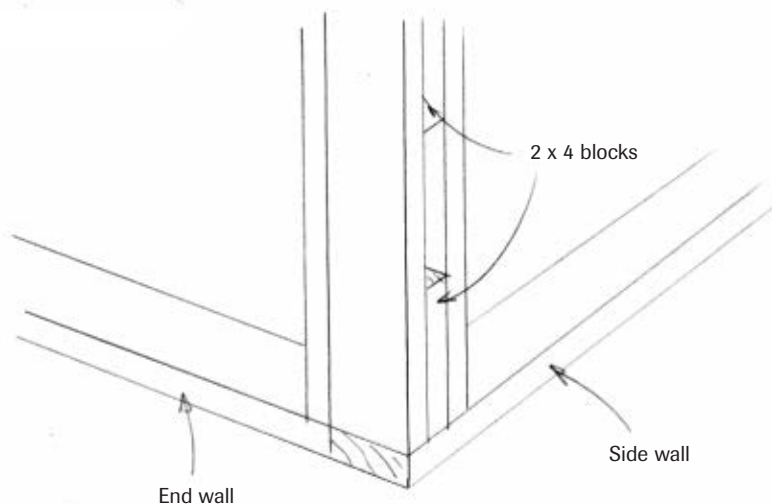
Cut and remove the sole plate between door openings.



Interior walls joining exterior or other interior walls also need corner blocking.

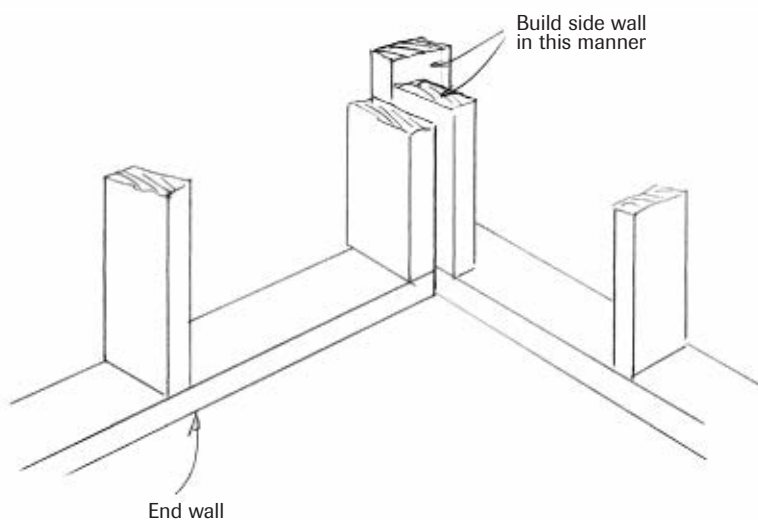
Corner blocking is needed to create corners for interior wall coverings.

blocking is needed at each interior wall corner to provide for fastening interior wall coverings. After erection of the walls, you're ready to install ceiling joists on top of the walls. If constructing a second story platform-style, you simply repeat the entire process. Again constructing a floor on top of the walls, then constructing and erecting the second-story walls.

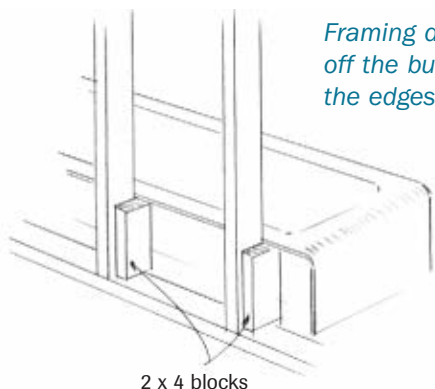


FRAMING DETAILS

Framing details added during wall construction will make it easier to finish off a building. For instance you can add wall backing to any tub and faucet inlet areas, as well as wall-hung appliance locations. This will make it easier to install all of these and is easier to do during wall construction than after the walls have been erected. You can also add blocking to help support tubs. Some builders fasten in additional short blocking at each corner near the floor to provide better support for nailing baseboards in

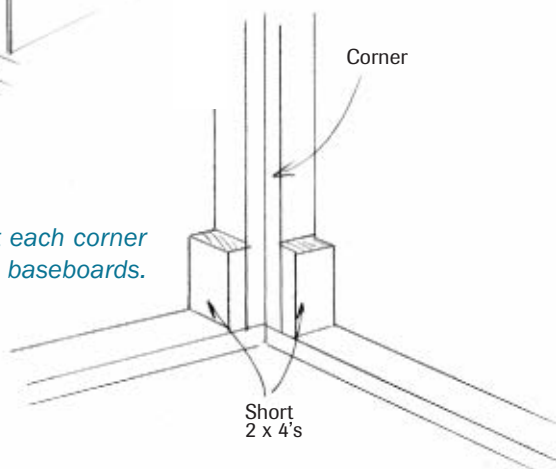


UNDERSTANDING HOUSE FRAMING



Framing details can make it easier to finish off the building. Tub supports can support the edges of tubs.

Short corner blocks at each corner make it easier to install baseboards.



place. This allows you to nail the baseboards further back from their ends and prevent splitting out the ends. Bridging can be installed in the floor between joints during construction to create a better quality and “less squeaky” floor.

Framing a building doesn’t have to be daunting if you take it one step at a time, follow plans and regulations and start simple. **EHT**

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HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

This holiday season, give a gift that keeps on giving—one that can be used on many home projects yet to come. Stuff your stockings with paint brushes, pliers and orbital sanders. Don't disappoint your handy husband with another piano key necktie, when he'd rather have new Forstner bits. Don't give your DIY wife a new frying pan unless you're wearing a helmet. She'd rather have a Powerfile. The *EHT* staff offers a handful of gift ideas for the do-it-yourselfer in your life. From clamps and cargo racks to socket sets and shop vacs, you're sure to find a good fit.

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WOOSTER CHINEX FTP SHORTCUT BRUSH

Paint and reuse, paint and reuse ... The Wooster Chinex FTP Shortcut brush will feel right at home in Dad's toolbox. Chinex is known as one of the most durable and easy-to-clean paintbrush filaments, lasting seven times longer than natural bristle. It pushes paint farther on the surface for better coverage, and the soft tips effortlessly create a smooth, professional finish. Wooster's Shortcut style pairs a full-size brush head with a compact Shergrip handle that makes painting easier on the wall-to-ceiling line, window frames, moldings, furniture and more. Shergrip is a soft elastomeric material with a rubber-like feel. It conforms to the touch, offering increased comfort and control. Because of this, Shortcut brushes

are a favorite of painters who suffer from arthritis or carpal tunnel syndrome. Versatility and professional finish quality make the Wooster Chinex FTP Shortcut the perfect all-in-one paintbrush for Dad this holiday season. Visit www.woosterbrush.com.



SIDEJOB CARGO RACK

For the construction pro in your life, the SideJob rack is an innovative way to haul building materials on the side of a work vehicle, without taking up valuable interior space. Installation is fast and easy and requires no tools. The user places the SideJob Rack over their ladder rack posts, hooks the cam strap (provided) to a secure location under the vehicle, and



tightens it down. The rack is then ready to load with materials and secures with ratchet straps. The vehicle side becomes a functional workspace that carries up to 8 sheets of 1/2-in. drywall, 9 sheets of 1/2-in. plywood or 32 2x4's (per rack). Visit sidejobracks.com.

TG TOOLS KIK FORSTNER BITS

Forstner bits are the best choice for drilling precise, flat-bottomed holes in wood. The radial cutting edges shear wood fibers

at the edge and bottom of the hole, creating a smooth bore with an exact diameter. The Kik Forstner bits from TG Tools actually have nine cutting edges, which permit cutting curved paths, channels, routing and milling in wood and plastics. They can cut on the edge of a block of wood to create channels, and can also be used to create overlapping holes. The Kik bits also come in a nice, dovetailed wooden box to protect the cutting edges. Visit mytgtools.com/kik.





SENCO PC1010N

Senco has made the latest version of its PC1010 trim compressor more powerful and easier to use, without sacrificing its ultra-quiet operation and light-weight, compact design. Upgrades to the unit include an increased operating pressure of 135 max PSI, (compared to the original unit's 125 max PSI), and the addition of an integrated control panel and roll cage to protect vital operating components. Measuring 14 in. long, 12-1/4-in. high, and weighing just 21 lbs., the PC1010N is easy to transport and store. At 68 dBA, it is extremely quiet, making it ideal for renovation and home-improvement projects, hobbies and crafts. The 0.5-horsepower running induction motor produces 0.7 SCFM at 90 PSI, providing ample air power to run finish nailers, staplers and micro pinners without the motor and pump constantly kicking on to refill the tank. With highly visible gauges, easier coupler access, non-skid rubber feet and a comfortable grip handle, the PC1010N is an excellent gift for the hobby woodworker or professional carpenter. Visit www.senco.com.

WET+DRY DUSTLESSVAC

This Christmas, get Dad the only wet/dry vac that allows you to go from wet to dry without switching filters. The Wet+Dry DustlessVac is a great way to clean up DIY projects and to keep the job free of dust clouds and mess. The patented filter system provides three layers of filtration designed to capture extra fine dust. The powerful 23,000-RPM, 11.5-amp electric motor operates quietly and delivers 126.39-CFM performance with a 16-gallon capacity. Save \$50 off MSRP + free shipping through December 31st at homedepot.com. Visit www.dustlesstools.com/wetdry.



POWRAMID POWER CENTER AND SURGE PROTECTOR

Typical surge protectors continue to supply power even after they no longer are providing surge protection, exposing connected devices to potential damage from a power surge. With its Power Stop technology, the Powramid automatically stops conducting power once the absorption has reached capacity. The Powramid provides advanced 1080 Joules of surge protection and features patented X3 MOV technology for maximum



safety to all connected devices. Its six adapter-friendly outlets are positioned to allow unobstructed use of even large transformer power plugs. The Powramid Surge Protector is available in black or white and features a 4-ft. grounded power cord. Visit www.accellcables.com.

RHINO PACK-N-STACK FIREWOOD BRACKETS

Chopping wood for the winter? The Rhino Pack-n-Stack Firewood Rack Brackets are easy to assemble and include four brackets and all hardware. Just add any length of 2x4 lumber to construct a sturdy, beautiful firewood rack. Available from Charmaster, the racks are easy to stack, cover and clean. They feature heavy-duty steel construction with brackets that



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weigh 30 lbs. and come with a 20-year warranty. The Pack-n-Stack Brackets work great with 15- to 30-in. long firewood. Learn more at www.charmaster.com.

MIRKA CEROS ORBITAL SANDER

Here's a great gift idea for serious woodworkers. The Mirka Ceros electric orbital sander is a robust tool that has an excellent power-to-weight ratio with a

low-profile design for enhanced control. The seven variable speeds range from 4,000 to 10,000 RPM. Available from Woodworker's Hardware, this system designed for 5-in. discs comes with everything you need for years of efficient, quiet and user-friendly sanding. Visit www.wwhardware.com.

WAGNER INTRODUCES THE FLEXIO 590 SPRAYER

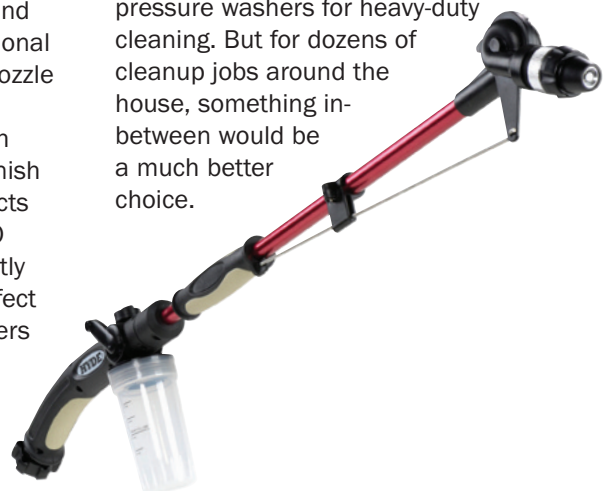
The FLEXiO 590 Sprayer is an indoor/outdoor hand-held sprayer for all projects. It combines the iSpray nozzle, detail finish nozzle and the X-Boost turbine to provide the most flexible and powerful painting solution offered. The X-Boost turbine delivers 3X more power (at 65,000 RPM's) to spray most coatings with maximum control, full coverage and low over-spray. Not only is it more powerful, it is also 50 percent quieter and 20 percent lighter than traditional airless sprayers. The iSpray nozzle sprays un-thinned residential paints for broad surfaces both indoors and out. The detail finish nozzle is ideal for small projects and fine finishing. The FLEXiO 590 Sprayer produces a slightly stippled, roller-like finish, perfect for interior walls. Edges, corners



and broad interior surfaces can now be sprayed faster for better coverage, and with some basic masking, you're spared the tedious efforts of a brush, saving time for other projects. Learn more at www.wagnerflexio.com.

PIVOTJET PRO

Virtually every home has a hose, and millions more have pressure washers for heavy-duty cleaning. But for dozens of cleanup jobs around the house, something in-between would be a much better choice.



That's where the Hyde PivotJet Pro comes in. The PivotJet Pro is an innovative spray wand that attaches directly to your garden hose to handle virtually any type of outdoor cleaning job. Not only does it add extra reach and an adjustable spray pattern, it also features a patented nozzle that pivots up to 135 degrees and a built-in soap reservoir. Visit www.hydetools.com.



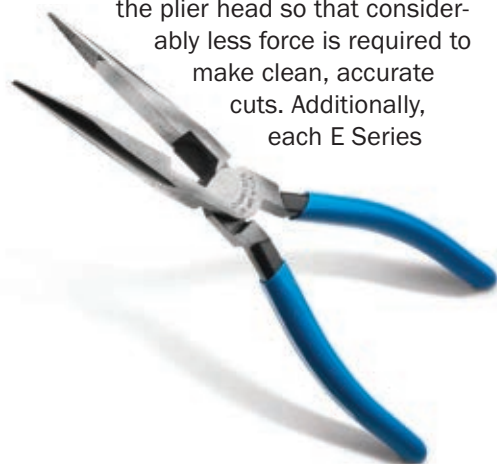
HYDE 14-IN-1 MUTLI-TOOL

The 14-in-1 Multi-Tool from Hyde is the ultimate junk drawer tool. It scrapes paint, spreads compound, cleans rollers, removes putty, opens cracks, sets nails, scrapes contours, scrapes convex surfaces, opens cans and bottles and pulls nails. It also includes four different screw-driver bits that are securely stored in a pull-out drawer in the handle, and inserts into the handle end for quick, easy use. Complete with 3-in. stiff scraping blade, this is a very versatile tool for a holiday gift. Visit www.hydetools.com.



CHANNELLOCK E SERIES PLIERS

The Channellock E Series is a new line of combination, long-nose and diagonal cutting pliers with an entirely new, sleeker design than the manufacturer's traditional pliers. Each of the 18 new pliers in the E Series line is manufactured with Xtreme Leverage Technology (XLT). Exclusive to Channellock, XLT positions the plier rivet closer to the plier head so that considerably less force is required to make clean, accurate cuts. Additionally, each E Series



plier features knife-and-anvil cutting edges to ensure proper cutting edge alignment and clean cuts; cross-hatched jaws for improved grip; laser heat-treated cutting edges for extended durability; and a choice of Channellock Blue comfort grips or Code Blue grips for secure and comfortable gripping power. Visit www.channellock.com.

MAKITA IMPACT GOLD SOCKET SET & ADAPTER

Makita's new 3/8-in. square-drive socket set can equip your impact driver to function like an impact wrench. The sockets are machined from heat-treated alloy steel for heavy-duty torque, including fastening applications by contractors and automotive technicians, with a black oxide finish



for longer socket life. The 9-piece set includes an Impact Gold 3/8-in. socket adapter, which is machined from high-quality steel engineered for use with impact drivers, and tilts up to 15 degrees for work in tight areas. Whereas contractors usually rely on two-piece U-Joint sets, the Impact Gold offers a single adapter for sockets that delivers a solution

for fastening metal frames, automotive components and more. Visit www.makitatools.com.

O'KEEFFE'S WORKING HANDS HAND CREAM

Cold weather can be tough on skin, particularly hands. A decrease in humidity paired with harsh temperatures can make skin dry and cracked. These conditions may not make you feel like celebrating. We all know someone who suffers from the painful skin conditions that cold



weather can bring, but there's a solution that really works and it makes a great stocking stuffer. O'Keeffe's Working Hands Hand Cream is an odorless, non-greasy, hypoallergenic formula guaranteed to relieve cracks and splits. The formula contains a high concentration of glycerin, which draws moisture into skin and allows it to restore itself. Users will see the results in days. Give the gift of O'Keeffe's and you'll be giving the gift of relief. Visit www.okeeffescompany.com.

RACOR BIKE LIFT

The Racor Bike Lift, Model PBH-1R, is the perfect way to store a bicycle overhead and free up extra garage space. The Bike Lift uses a rope and pulley system that is mounted to the ceiling. Raise and lower a 50-pound bike up to 12 feet by

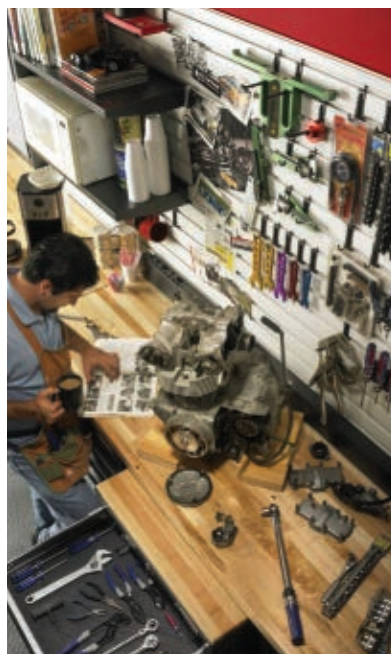


simply latching the hooks to the seat and handlebars and pulling the rope. When you're ready to ride, unlock the rope and lower the bike, no ladders needed. The Bike Lift pulleys do most of the work, making a 50-pound bike feel like it's only about 12 pounds: a 4:1 mechanical advantage. A unique locking mechanism holds the rope securely in place to prevent accidental release. Some assembly is required; it installs into ceiling joists. Suggested retail price is \$25. Visit www.racorstoragesolutions.com.

GLADIATOR BAMBOO WORKBENCH

Every home deserves a respectable workspace. The Gladiator bamboo top adjustable-height workbench makes a stylish statement while providing a durable, flexible work surface for woodworking, gardening or everyday use. Besides being one of nature's hardest materials, bamboo also is a sustainable, fast-growing resource. It makes for a solid and elegant design with a bamboo surface that's smooth and easy to clean. (For

the less "extreme" dad, it's also available with a maple top.) Fifteen adjustable heights make for a dramatically versatile and flexible work surface. Available in 4-, 6- and 8-ft. widths with weight capacities up to 3,000 lbs., the workbench can handle almost any project. Find it at Lowe's, Sears and www.GladiatorGarageworks.com for \$499-\$599.



X-ACTO'S DIY KNIFE SET

A great gift idea for hobbyists and do-it-yourselfers. The X-ACTO DIY set includes several of the tools that are needed for most do-it-yourself projects around the home. Stored in a handsome hardwood chest, the DIY tool kit includes: #2 knife with #2 blade; floor covering knife with blade; utility saw blade; wallpaper blades; large scraping blades; acrylic blade and #26 blade. Visit www.xacto.com.



CANGUN1

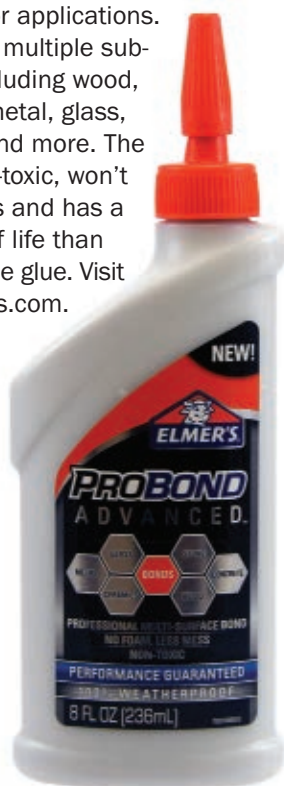
SafeWorld Int'l. offers the CanGun1 premium spray can tool that features the world's first FullGrip trigger with a 2.5:1 leverage advantage. The CanGun1 makes spraying the contents of virtually all standard spray cans of paint, lubricant, adhesives, etc. considerably easier, while providing professional results every time. The patented pistol-grip accessory easily snaps onto standard aerosol spray cans, transforming them into professional-style spray guns with unprecedented control for hours of effortless, pain-free spraying. CanGun1's exclusive ergonomist-tested and arthritis-friendly design also makes it suitable for use while wearing



gloves. The reusable CanGun1 is made in the USA with 80-percent recycled non-toxic plastic and zero-waste, space-optimized, recyclable packaging. Visit www.cangun1.com.

ELMER'S PROBOND ADVANCED

Elmer's new ProBond Advanced is Elmer's strongest and safest multi-surface glue yet. There is none of the foamy mess associated with polyurethane glues, and it cleans easily with water. ProBond Advanced is 100-percent weatherproof for indoor and outdoor applications. It works on multiple substrates, including wood, concrete, metal, glass, ceramics and more. The glue is non-toxic, won't stain hands and has a longer shelf life than polyurethane glue. Visit www.elmers.com.



RYOBI RY08420 2-CYCLE BACKPACK BLOWER

This 2-cycle Backpack Blower is Ryobi's most powerful blower ever. With an extra-large 42 cc engine, it is designed to handle the toughest cleaning jobs. The unique engine mounting is engineered to deliver maximum air flow at all times, and the adjustable, contoured harness provides ultimate comfort. The blower tube



construction includes a variable speed trigger and cruise control for easy command, and the angled nozzle points naturally downward—reducing effort and maximizing clearing power. This backpack blower is sturdy, but light, at just 18 lbs. Ryobi backs its products with a three-year warranty. Visit www.ryobi.com.

OVERHEAD DOOR EMERGENCY BATTERY BACK-UP

Overhead Door Corporation is adding assurance and reliability with the Battery Back-up, a product that provides homeowners with reliable garage door operation during severe weather, thunderstorms and blackouts. Overhead Door's Battery Back-up, powered by Interstate Batteries, provides reliable garage door operation in the event of electricity outages. It is compatible with Overhead Door's next generation of garage door openers, the Destiny and Odyssey. The Battery

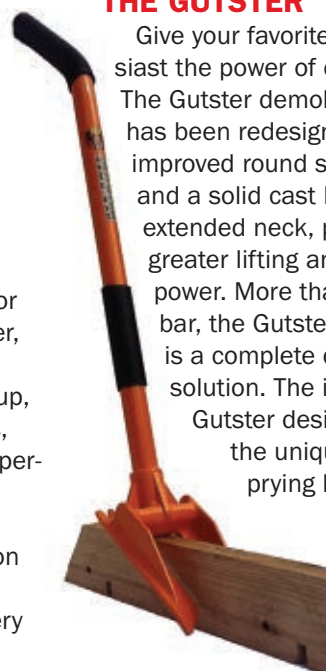


Back-up accessory enables an opener to operate the garage door at 3.5 inches per second, and, in the event of an extended loss of electricity, the unit will run up to 50 cycles in a 24-hour period after initial power outage. With several mounting options available, this accessory is designed to be unobtrusive. It's charged and powered via a connector cable running between the opener and the unit, which means there is no need for it to be plugged into an outlet. The Battery Back-up can be easily installed by the homeowner. The unit is equipped with an 8-amp, sealed lead-acid Interstate battery (SLA) that reaches full charge within 48 hours. Front-facing LEDs indicate charge status. Visit www.overheaddoor.com.

THE GUTSTER

Give your favorite home enthusiast the power of destruction. The Gutster demolition bar has been redesigned with an improved round steel handle and a solid cast head with extended neck, providing greater lifting and breaking power. More than a wrecking bar, the Gutster Demo-Bar is a complete demolition solution. The innovative

Gutster design starts at the uniquely designed prying head. Split

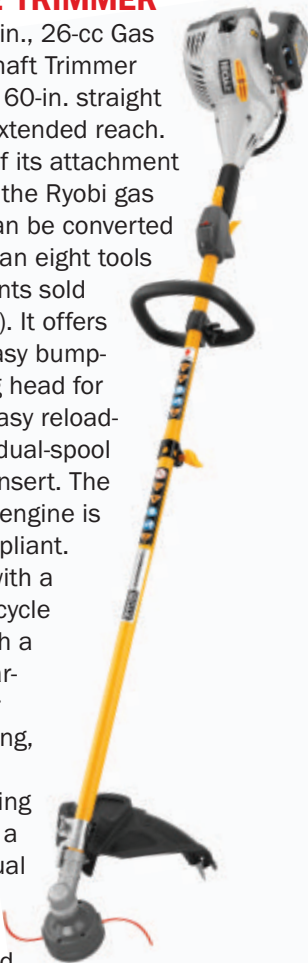




forks provide greater stability for heavier loads. The spacing straddles joints and studs for maximum leverage. Sharp points pierce the toughest materials effortlessly. Angled lift plates help ease the bar under materials to allow for faster prying. Conveniently built into the back of the head is a multi-nail puller. The angled bar is engineered to provide the most prying power with the least amount of stress and strain. Choose from three sizes with 40-, 48-, and 60-in. handles. Visit www.thegutster.com.

RYOBI STRAIGHT SHAFT 2-CYCLE TRIMMER

This 18-in., 26-cc Gas Straight-Shaft Trimmer features a 60-in. straight shaft for extended reach. Because of its attachment capability, the Ryobi gas trimmer can be converted to more than eight tools (attachments sold separately). It offers the ReelEasy bump-feed string head for fast and easy reloading and a dual-spool fixed line insert. The 26-cc gas engine is CARB compliant. It comes with a reliable 2-cycle engine with a Zipstart carburetor for easy starting, and offers 18-in. cutting width with a .095-in. dual line. The ExpandIt power head is universally compatible with outdoor tool attachments across multiple brands. Visit www.ryobi.com.



GORILLA CLEAR REPAIR TAPE

Family gatherings and holiday festivities often lead to tricky repairs around the house. Avoid the stress that the season can bring and give Gorilla Clear Repair Tape, the ideal gift for almost any repair. Featuring the strength of Gorilla Tape in a weatherproof, airtight, crystal clear tape, Gorilla Clear Repair Tape is the perfect stocking-sized gift. Fix, patch, seal, hold and protect almost any surface, with a crystal clear appearance for a perfect fix every time. Gorilla Clear Repair Tape is versatile for projects both indoors and out, and won't yellow outdoors. From hanging holiday lights to fixing decorations, Gorilla has you covered. No other tape offers the clarity, strength and durability of Gorilla Clear Repair Tape. Visit www.gorillatough.com.

TOOL KADDIES

The rolling Kaddies toolboxes are manufactured in the USA with durable double-wall polyethylene construction that will never rust, flake, peel, chip or corrode like metal boxes. Tool Kaddies can be loaded with job-specific tools, parts or supplies, and rolled right to the job, thus eliminating

unnecessary trips back to the garage, truck or tool crib. Available completely assembled in a variety of colors, each Kaddie is lockable for security and very water-resistant. They're also easy to modify for the user's needs. Visit www.kaddies.com.



THE PERFECT PASS TROWEL

The Perfect Pass Trowel, developed by Epiphany Laboratories and marketed through Warner Tool Products, is a new tool that promises to eliminate the mess and guesswork in drywall finishing. Jay Meyerl, the inventor of the Perfect Pass Trowel, created the patented design as a solution to one of his own long-time woes as a building contractor. The innovative, notched design of the trowel makes it simple for anyone, from amateur to expert, to get perfect and consistent drywall finishing results in 3 simple steps. Finally, drywall finishing is as easy as 1-2-3, and without the need for sanding or the accompanying mess. The tool is available at over 2000 retail locations in the US, including Lowes locations throughout North America. Visit www.warnertool.com.



BIG GREEN EGG

The Big Green Egg is one of the most versatile outdoor cooking products on the market. No smoker performs more efficiently than a Big Green Egg. Add sumptuous flavors with aromatic chips and wood chunks. For grilling, it sears steaks, burgers and seafood with a flavor-packed crust unmatched by other grills. High temperature “steak house” grilling is quick and delicious. For “low and slow” cooking the insulating ceramics of the Egg allow for precise temperature control even at low heat. The Egg will bake bread, casseroles, pizzas and pies better than your kitchen oven. When roasting, the Egg retains heat and moisture so that foods don’t dry out. Poultry, beef and vegetables are naturally tastier because the juices and flavors stay locked inside. Visit www.biggreenegg.com.

STAR DRIVE WOOD SCREW ASSORTMENT KITS

Perfect for woodworkers, contractors and weekend warriors, these economical and compact assortment kits from Screw Products, Inc. are the perfect accessory for your home, garage or workshop (they also make



wonderful gifts!). Fully loaded, these take-anywhere kits are easy to carry, slim enough to fit just about any place, and are available in several varieties for different purposes. The kits feature an assortment of Star Drive Screws in a specially priced package and include an adjustable organizer, quick-release magnetic bit holder, and “free” drive bits. Fasteners are available in Composite Deck Screw, Trim & Finish Head, Bronze Star Exterior, Construction Lag/Cabinet Screw, Gold Star Interior, Cabinet / Finish, Stainless Steel and Trim Head versions. Order online at screwsolutions.com and enter coupon code **ehbits** for a free Bit Set & Holder. **EHT**





SOLID

By Larry Walton



Installing Granite Countertops

Not many years ago we were marveling at marble vanity and granite kitchen countertops in those put-on-the-booties tour houses. Today the availability of quarried, dimensional stone has brought new meaning to hard surfaces in many more homes.

Although granite is tougher than marble, which is not common in American kitchens, it occurs naturally and ranges in hardness. Most

can still be scratched by knives and other kitchen utensils. Also, granite is porous and must be sealed to minimize staining and to keep it from becoming a bacteria-growing science experiment.

The big custom counter fabricators have stockpiles of quarried rock slabs, which they fashion with laser templates and computer-guided milling machines. Obviously you can't



A small sample of the counter material helps when making decisions about overhangs and transitions.

just whip out your woodworking tools and cut a chunk of rock for your next countertop, but there are some options available.

"You can buy \$20,000 in tools to be set up like a caveman," according to one of my friends in the business. But he doesn't like to talk about the pre-cut and edged counters available, which is probably what you would install in your home.

I received a \$6,200 bid for a custom installed countertop in our kitchen using mid-range stone. I can buy enough pre-bullnosed rock here in town for about \$2,500, which leaves about \$3,700 for tools and labor. However, the finished product depends a lot on kitchen design. Seam locations and limitations on shapes and sizes may dictate whether or not the counters should be custom-fabricated and installed.

In general, dimensional stone gets quarried to either a 2- or 3-centimeter thickness. Three-centimeter tends to be

more expensive but it has better structural strength, and the edge can be shaped without additional help to give it depth.

The 2-cm stone is the thickness that is more economical and tends to be readily available for the non-professional installer with pre-finished edges. The edges on 2-cm counters receive a build-down

treatment to give them the look of added bulk. Sometimes the edge is mitered, which gives it a square look and hides the seam well. More often, however, a strip of granite is cut and glued to the underside of the edge, and then a heavy-duty router cuts it into a bull-nose shape. The edge seam may be visible to the critical eye.

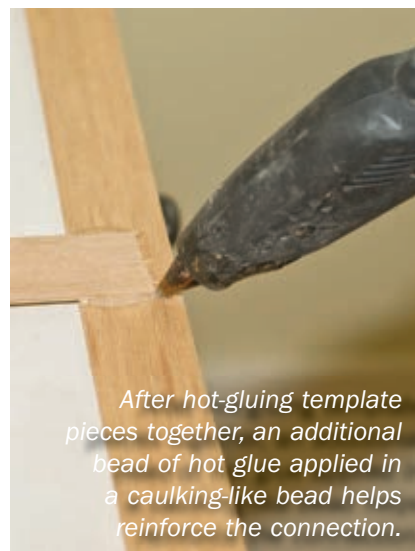
These pre-fab counters also have a single-thickness, polished edge on the back side, which can be cut along the length of the counter and used as a matching backsplash.

The 2-cm counters need to be supported with plywood sub-decks for added structural strength. Overhangs are usually supported with corbels or cantilevered steel rods.

Cabinets should be very flat, level, well anchored and sturdy. It should be obvious to the most



Carefully label the location of templates.



After hot-gluing template pieces together, an additional bead of hot glue applied in a caulking-like bead helps reinforce the connection.

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A template method known as “sticks” traces the perimeter of the cabinet with thin plywood strips.

Score the thin plywood with a utility knife and snap it off.



A grinder head smooths and shapes the cut made by a cutting wheel.

Specialty tools like this stone router are among the least expensive of the tools found at a stone fabrication shop.



casual observer that big pieces of rock are heavy.

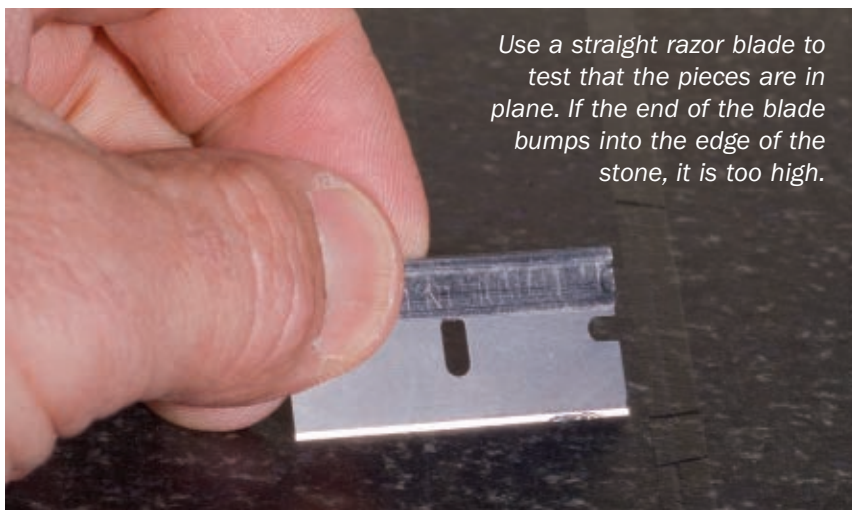
Regardless of the grade of granite you buy for your project, it's still pretty expensive material. That's why many installers make templates of wood strips or heavy paper to eliminate measuring mistakes. Wood templates have the advantage of holding up well in a wet-saw environment, but you can use roofing felt pieced together with duct tape as well.

Make sure you label your templates to indicate which is the

front and the back edge, and where adjacent features in the kitchen are located.

Sinks mounted under the counter are traditional for stone counters, but shaping and polishing the edge of the sink opening is a challenging task. You may wish to install a surface-mount sink instead.

Making seams in granite countertops is another big challenge. A two-part epoxy acts as both an adhesive and filler. Whenever possible, seams should be made over well supported



Use a straight razor blade to test that the pieces are in plane. If the end of the blade bumps into the edge of the stone, it is too high.

Installing Granite Countertops

A two-part epoxy with counter-matching colorant can be mixed on a scrap of cardboard.

With the countertop slabs in position, the epoxy is mixed and spread along the adjoining edges.



sections of cabinets. Cuts should be straight. It's a good idea to score the edges below the surface, so the epoxy can extend into the notches for increased sheer strength.

Do not make your seams with the idea of grinding and shaping them flat later. It is extremely difficult to match the factory polish of your stone. Attempts to grind and buff the surface usually result in a noticeable change in sheen, giving the seam areas a dull appearance.

Dry-fit the pieces before mixing the color-matched epoxy, paying particular attention to shimming the pieces so they are flat on plane with each other. Place a strip of masking about 1/2-in. away from each edge of the seam.

Remove or tip the pieces enough to place construction adhesive between the cabinet and countertop, and reposition the pieces leaving a 1-in. gap at the seam.

Mix the epoxy, spread epoxy onto the edges along the seam

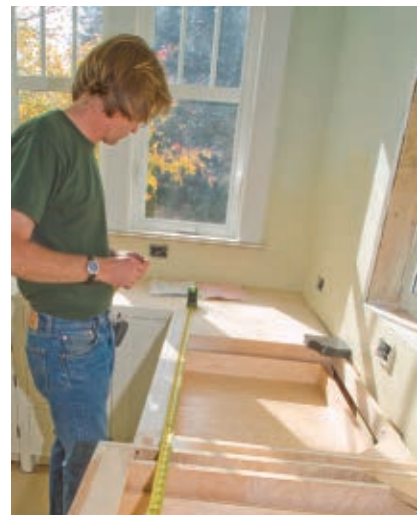


After the pieces are joined, excess epoxy is removed to the level of the tape.

Take your time determining the best locations for seams.

NAME THAT ROCK

Dead geologists must be rolling over beneath their grave stones at what the quarried countertop industry calls "granite". So don't be shocked if a geologist at your next house party tells you that your counter is actually monzonite (or syenite, or gabbro, or anorthosite, or gneiss). Just tell him that he wasn't actually invited, but he's welcome to set his beer on the feldspar-bearing rock, while he dishes up some more free food.



and press the pieces together. Scrape excess epoxy off the top using the masking tape as a form to maintain proper epoxy depth.

Remove the tape. Clamp and shim the pieces as needed to get them flat. Use a straight razor blade to test that the pieces are on plane. If the edge of the blade bumps into the edge of the stone, it is too high.

After the epoxy has set up, shave the excess epoxy off the surface with the razor blade. Apply a recommended sealer to the surface. Fit and place the backsplash as designed. **EHT**



An angle grinder and diamond cut-off wheel are the primary tools of the stone counter do-it-yourselfer.

A contour diamond blade is used to cut out curves like this sink opening.



An automated edge shaping machine cuts and polishes a bull nose.

Dry cutting granite produces a lot of fine dust. Take precautions to protect your lungs and your property.



Wood-strip templates hold their shape in the wet conditions of a large stone saw.

A grinding stone is used to smooth and shape a sink opening.



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WOODCRAFT®

Tool Transport

The right truck cap setup offers protection, convenience and style.



By Larry Walton

It's no accident that today's heavy-duty pickup trucks have nicer interiors and greater cargo hauling capacity than ever. Even the auto manufacturers are paying attention to the guys like my brother, Chad, who use their trucks for both work and play.

Chad needs to haul tools with his truck but he wanted to get away from the daily grind of hooking up and towing our tool trailer. As a long-time contractor, he has been through several tool hauling set-ups over the years (pickups with canopies, trailers, work vans) so he knew he wanted a truck cap on his pickup.

Like a lot of other business owners, his work truck is also his daily driver, his grocery getter and his vacation transportation. That's

why any truck cap would have to match his lifted F-350's look. Styling was as important as tool security, and overall looks ranked at least as high as loading and unloading ease. When it came to choosing the right truck cap, he was not ready to take function over form.

Another requirement for the truck cap was that it not be obviously commercial in appearance. This was not just for style points,

but it was also to keep would-be tool thieves from guessing what was inside. Stealth storage was a top priority.

That's why he was very happy to find that A.R.E. had a cap for his truck in their CX Series. Not only was it cab high, form fitting and color-matched to his truck, it was also available with side toolboxes, which is a very practical design for construction workers and hobbyists alike.

MATERIALS:

- 2x4
- 2x8
- 1x2
- 3/4" tongue-and-groove decking
- Circular saw
- Jigsaw
- Driver drill
- Drywall screws

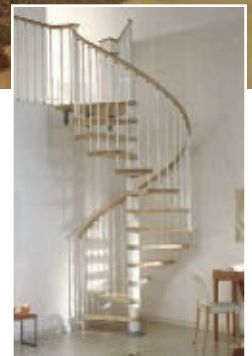
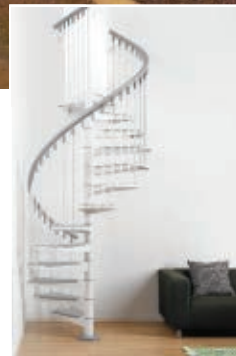
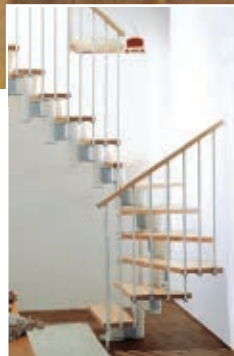


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Rather than windows in the side doors, A.R.E.'s side toolbox option is designed with aluminum recessed panels where the glass usually lives. The panel inserts both deter prying eyes and secure tools, fishing gear, or whatever it is you want to haul.

Often truck cap side doors are practically useless, especially for lifted trucks. That's because it's tough enough to reach over the sidewalls of the bed, let alone being able to grab something heavy out of the bed and hoist it back over the bed walls. Also, it doesn't take much experience or imagination to know what havoc tool belts and jean rivets can wreak on the paint job.

The side tool boxes, however, make it easy to access usable storage space. The floors of the tool boxes are slightly below the opening, making this a great space to keep any number of tools or toys readily reachable when the doors are open.

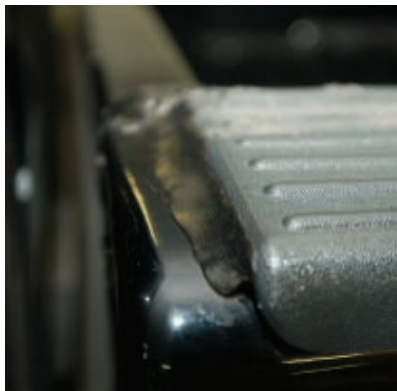
When we ordered the truck cap from A.R.E., they asked for truck make, model, year, cab and bed configuration and the exact paint code from the sticker in the door jamb of the truck.

Harley Christoffersen of Canopies Plus, our local A.R.E. dealer, called us when the truck cap was in his shop to set up an installation appointment. The dealer installed the unit, making sure the weather seals and lights were working properly.

Eventually Chad wants to install a cargo tray such as the Gorilla Slide (www.highwayproducts.com), but while he's waiting for funds to be available we decided to install a simple wall-to-wall shelf with sliders that we've used in the past. The idea is to maximize cargo capacity and to minimize effort getting at tools on the job site and toys in the field. **EHT**



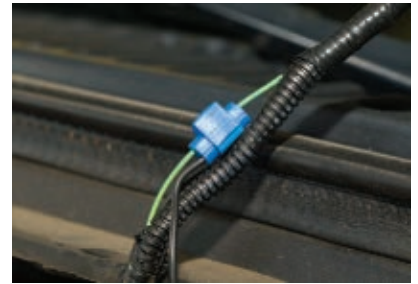
Harley Christoffersen of Canopies Plus, an A.R.E. dealer in Eugene, Oregon, preps the bed rails for the weather seals.



Christoffersen used 3M Window-Weld to build a little transition ramp at the end of the bed rail protectors on the F-350. He knows from experience that this step-down has too many right angles for the weather strip to conform and seal without some help.



One of the secrets to a successful truck cap installation is getting a wiring harness for your application.



The wire for the hood lamp is a good place to tap into for the truck cap dome light.



You probably don't have a fork lift with extended, padded forks, but a friend on each corner will do.



Eleven year old Garrett Christoffersen, an experienced canopy man, installs the clamps that attach the truck cap to the bed rails.



A simple square cut on a 2x4 is all that's needed to make the cross members for the horizontal deck.



Two-by-4 cross supports fit into pockets in the bed walls.



A 2x8 on edge was almost the right height to make a center partition/support running the length of the bed. We used cedar shims to fill the void before fastening the parts with 3" drywall screws.



We slid a sheet of 3/4" tongue-and-groove decking into position on top of the cross supports.



The shelf had to be fit to the irregular contours of the pickup bed walls. A combination square can be used to transfer marks.



We measured the widest gap and cut a block of wood to match the gap.



We then used the block as a gauge to scribe the shelf to fit the bed walls.



A jigsaw does a good job of cutting the scribe lines on the shelf. After adjusting the shelf with some back cuts, we used it to trace a layout for the other side of the pickup bed.

You can adjust the foot of the jigsaw to make these cuts at an angle or if you are impatient like my brother, you can just tip the jigsaw at an angle to match the curve of the bed walls.



With both pieces in place against the bed walls, we tipped them up at the seam so the tongue and groove could lock together.



Drywall screws secure the shelf to the cross members.



We made a slider for the top shelf by cutting a piece of 1/2" wafer board to fit between the built-in tool boxes. We added 1x2 rails to the outside perimeters and fastened them with dry-wall screws from the bottom side.

With the slider in place, we screwed down some 1x2 rail guides to keep it centered on our bed-sized shelf.

The side doors with built-in

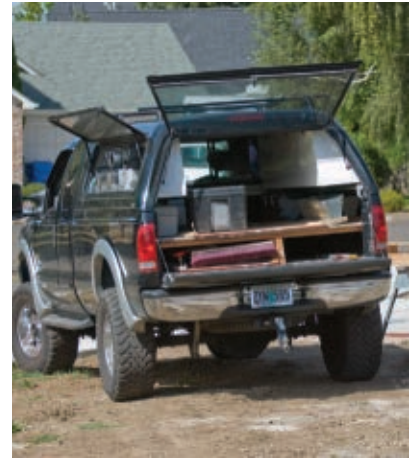
cargo boxes make a great place to haul frequently used items so they are easily accessible.

Sliders above and below the shelf make it easy to pull tools from the bed without climbing inside.



A well organized truck cap setup makes life easier on the jobsite.

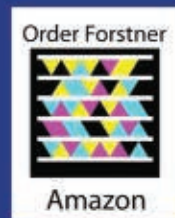
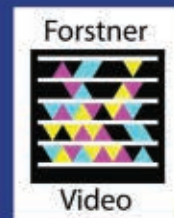
It takes little effort to transform the tool hauler into a weekend warrior for a quick trip to the Oregon dunes.



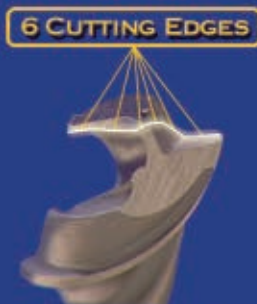
Aluminum panel inserts on the side doors look like tinted glass on this black truck.



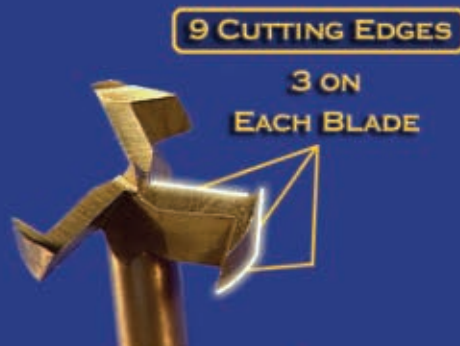
Side access tool boxes make a great place to stow gear.



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