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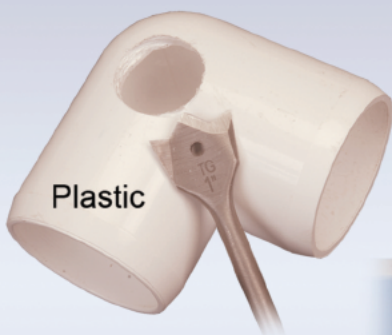
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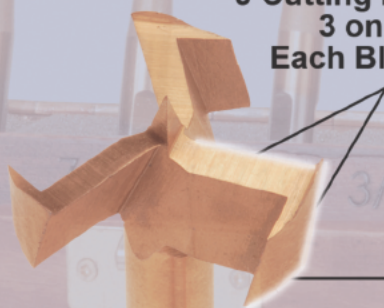
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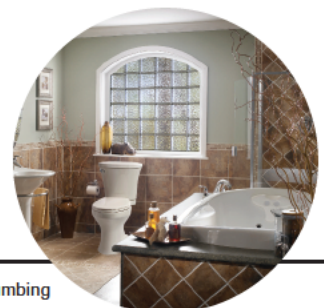
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Changes in temperature and humidity can do funny things to a home.

For instance, last winter I replaced the access door to our attic. It had been made of painted drywall, and after years of use the old panel was crumbling along the edges. I made a new panel from plywood, added a layer of insulation, painted it to match the ceiling and screwed on a handle. It fit snugly into the opening, and all was well.

Skip ahead a few months into the heat of summer. I need to retrieve a couple of suitcases from the attic. I haul out the step-ladder, climb up to my new door and give it a push. The thing doesn't budge. I can't get into the attic.

I realize my mistake immediately.

Heat and humidity have foiled me again.

The door was made of wood. The frame that surrounded it was made of 2x lumber. By cutting the door to fit so snugly during winter, in the hope of stopping air leaks, I'd trapped the thing in the opening when all that wood swelled in size inside the attic, which had become so hot and stuffy during summer.

My solution wasn't pretty. It involved a lot pushing, sweating, a rubber mallet and maybe a few swear words to work the thing free. The edges of the panel were also busted up once I finally got it out. Luckily, I was able to cut away the damage on the table saw, since I needed to trim down its size anyway.

When I reinstalled the door, I lined the edges with foam-type weather-stripping that has a lot more give against the surrounding wood when it expands and contracts.

We're now entering autumn, and the weather is cooling off. As this happens, the materials in a home dry out and contract, opening joints and seams that may have swelled closed during summer. This contraction can loosen caulk beads and create air gaps that bleed away conditioned air and ultimately increase your power bill.

That's why autumn is a great time to inspect the home and seal all those leaky joints and gaps with caulking, weather-stripping and insulation. Close them off now, before winter sets in and the icy outside air infiltrates your home and makes everybody chilly.

You'll be glad you did.



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Q: I've always jumped a car battery by connecting jumper cables directly from the positive and negative terminals on the good battery to the corresponding terminals on the other. However, I've recently been told not to directly connect the negative cable to the weak battery. Why not?

A: Technically, if you connect the negative cable to the negative terminal of the weak battery, the battery terminal could spark and ignite hydrogen gas surrounding the battery. For the sake of user safety, books and magazines such as *Extreme How-To* suggest you clamp the negative cable to the negative terminal of the good battery, and then clamp the other end of the negative cable to metal part of the automobile engine, such as the block, a bracket or bolt-head.

Q: How do I install an outlet box in a finished wall?

A: When running wire through finished walls and you can't access a stud on which to mount the box, install a Remodel box (also called an old-work or cut-in box). Remodel boxes are plastic outlet boxes that clamp to the drywall or plaster instead of attaching to the wall framing. When inserted into the access hole, the box has "wings" that extend outward and bracket the back of the wallboard as you drive the mounting screws, creating a toggle-bolt effect that holds the box in place.



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Q: Do you have a spot-removal suggestion to use on carpet?

A: A good standby is to mix 1/4 teaspoon of clear, non-bleach, non-lanolin, non-optical brightening dishwashing liquid per one cup of warm water. Apply to the spot but do not saturate. Leave the detergent

on the stain for 8 to 10 minutes. Blot the liquid (don't scrub!) with a dry, white, absorbent cloth or white (not printed) paper towels. It may be necessary to rinse with warm water several times to completely remove residues. Avoid using an automatic dishwashing detergent because many contain bleaching agents that could ruin the carpet color and damage fibers. Also, avoid using laundry detergent, which may contain optical brighteners (fluorescent dyes) that could dye the fiber.

Q: What is kickout flashing?

A: On a roof, kickout flashing is installed where a lower roofline intersects a vertical wall. This angled piece of flashing "kicks out" the water runoff directly into the gutter and away from the adjacent wall to prevent mold and wood rot. The flashing piece is less than a foot square piece of metal or plastic. If fabricated on site, the seams should be welded, but prefabricated kickout flashing is available for purchase. Installation of kickout flashing is considered a best practice in roof construction and is a requirement in some building codes. **EHT**

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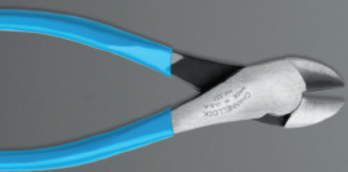
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By Tom Matthews

SAWSTOP JOBSITE SAW

The new SawStop Jobsite Saw is the first portable jobsite saw with flesh-detecting safety technology. A small electrical signal in the saw blade changes when it contacts human skin, and the change activates an aluminum brake that stops the blade in five milliseconds, forcing it under the table and shutting the power off to ensure user safety. But the features don't end there. The Jobsite Saw requires just one turn to raise the blade, as opposed as many as 25 turns required by other saws. Also, the QuickTilt feature allows the user to easily tilt the blade

to the desired angle in one-degree increments and then to fine-tune it using the infinitely adjustable Micro Adjust. Visit www.sawstop.com.

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The Porter-Cable PCE6430 1/4-in. trim router is a champ in the comfort department. Its narrow, lightweight housing lets you easily wield it with one hand, while the widened profile at the top prevents it from slipping downwards, encouraging a relaxed grip and less fatigue. The single-speed 31,000 RPM, 4.5-amp motor

router that you'll reach for over larger routers again and again. Visit www.portercable.com

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2



HOLD RED BUTTON IN UNLOCKED POSITION AND INSERT GRAPHITE IN LOADING HOLE ON TOP.

1



BEFORE LOADING NEW PIECE OF GRAPHITE, CHECK AND MAKE SURE RED BUTTON IS IN UNLOCKED POSITION. TAP QUICKDRAW UPSIDE DOWN A FEW TIMES TO CLEAR CHAMBER.

3



TO COMPLETE LOADING, RE-ENGAGE GRAPHITE BY SLIDING RED BUTTON DOWN INTO LOCKED POSITION.



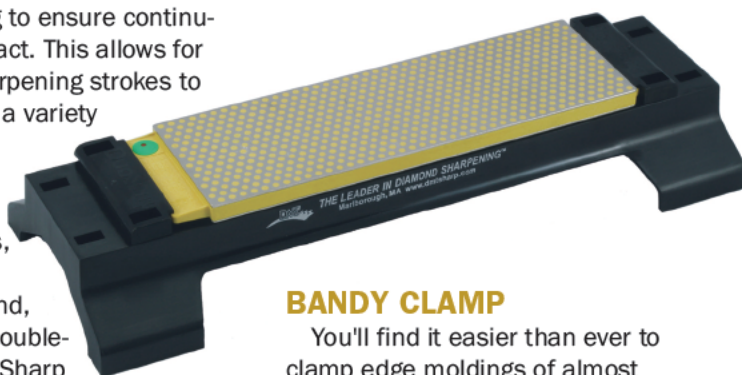
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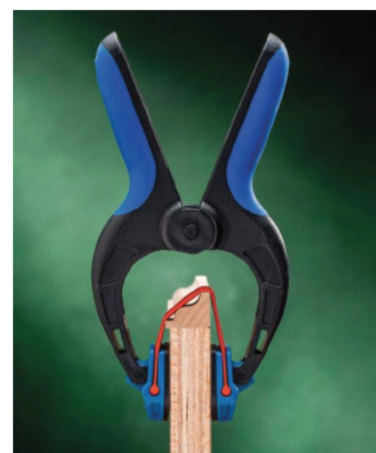
essential to tool maintenance. The DuoSharp Diamond Bench Stone turns a typically messy, costly and time-consuming chore into an effortless, satisfying routine. With its precision flatness, the DuoSharp is guaranteed to provide fast, clean and consistent results every time. Its iconic, polka-dot patterned surface self-cleans during sharpening to ensure continuous edge contact. This allows for long, even sharpening strokes to accommodate a variety of edges—from gouges and carving tools to utility knives, plane blades and beyond. And, because it is double-sided, the DuoSharp makes sharpening even more

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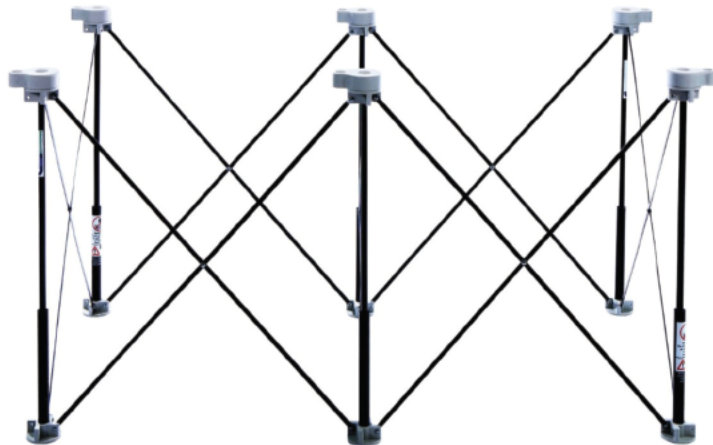
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moldings, even from soft materials like white pine. What's more, the clamp works great for keeping power cables, extension cords and pneumatic lines out of your way as you work. Visit www.rockler.com.

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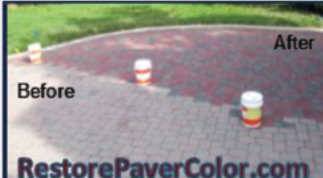


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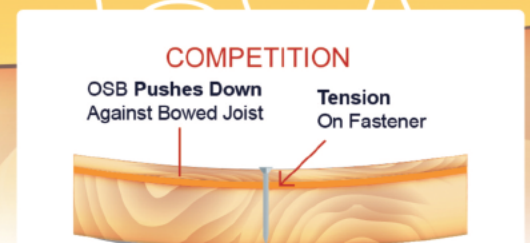
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- You should always make sure that a qualified engineer has designed your footing forms and that they have been tested by an accredited organization.
- Select a footing form that can carry the weight of your new construction and has met the proper building codes.
- Select a footing form made of environmentally friendly, sturdy materials.
- Ensure you are placing the footing form on solid ground. The more solid the ground the less likely movement will occur.
- Install your footings 4-6 inches below the frost line to avoid potential movement. If you are in an area without frost, then the form should be back filled 2 feet to hold it in place when it is being filled with concrete.
- Should rebar be required pour concrete into the system first. Insert three or four number 4 or 5 rebar rods into the tube. To determine the length of rebar, measure the distance from the top of the tube to the air holes located on the Bigfoot Systems® Footing Form before you place the system in the excavation and backfill.
- Purchase the amount of concrete stated on the form label. You will use all of it.
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- For a marine application, such as constructing a wharf, pour the concrete into the footing and tube on shore and have an excavator set them in place in the water. The other option will entail using a diver and pumper truck.
- Footing forms should always be used when installing footings as they provide added stability, strength and safety to your new construction.
- Don't risk having to redo the job, do it right the first time!

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The new Precision Multi-Species Wood Moisture Meter (MMD8P) from General Tools & Instruments offers advanced features to benefit professional and DIY carpenters, cabinet and furniture makers, remodelers and woodworkers. The MMD8P is ideal for measuring the moisture content of 48 species of wood and offers temperature compensation. It's designed for use in lumber selection and purchasing as well as in the shop before sealing, treating or joining, and before



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painting or wallpapering. Plus, it's the first moisture meter on the market with an OLED (Organic Light Emitting Diodes) display, which provides extraordinary contrast and clarity, especially in outdoor lighting conditions. Unlike other meters that can measure the moisture content of specific wood species, the MMD8P actually displays the species name of the wood being measured, making it far more convenient than models that display only a code number requiring reference to a manual. The MMD8P also enables users to compensate moisture measurements for the effect of ambient temperature (e.g., taking lumber from outdoors to indoors, from kiln to outdoors), which greatly improves the accuracy of readings. The MMD8P can measure and

display ambient temperature and relative humidity (RH) alongside the moisture level measurement. What's more, it allows for storing and recalling up to 100 measurement records. Visit generaltools.com.



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The all-new Kreg Precision Router Table System (item #PRS1045) combines the popular features of its predecessor with an innovative batch of new features

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and improved capabilities. The new table features an all-new self-squaring fence system, an updated table, as well as an easy-to-use steel stand that offers even more customizability. At the heart of the table is Kreg's new Precision Router Table Fence (item #PRS1015). The fence features an innovative T-square style design that always stays parallel to the miter/T-slot and adjusts easily without deflection using just one hand. Dual locks keep the fence in position once set, while an included micro-adjust wheel simplifies making precise setups. The table top provides a spacious 24-by-32-in. work area. A durable Easy-Slide laminate surface allows workpieces to glide easily, and reinforcing struts ensure a flat table surface. An updated design makes

fence removal easy for freehand routing. Visit www.kregtool.com.

BLUE BEAR BLADE AND BIT CLEANER

Woodworkers know that maintaining their tools is an important part of their craft. Over time resins build up on saw blades and bits that hinder cutting performance. Blue Bear Blade and Bit cleaner offers a perfect cleaning solution made in the U.S.A from American soybeans and citrus oils. This non-toxic product works wonders on dirty blades and bits. Simply submerge the blade or drill bit into the cleaner and let it work. The longer you let the blade sit in the cleaner, the easier it will be to clean. Simply use a soft wire brush or rag to remove the pitch for a clean blade. Since there is

no water in the formulation there is very little evaporation, and you can let your blades soak as long as you need without worrying about rust. Visit franmar.com. **EHT**



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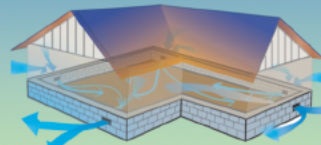
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DIY Cabinet Painting

Give your kitchen a brand new look.



By Danny Lipford

I often get questions from homeowners about painting cabinets. This is one of the most economical ways to update a kitchen or bathroom. Tackling this project is hard work, but definitely a task that a do-it-yourselfer can tackle with proper planning and commitment.

Here are the materials you'll need for cabinet painting:

- Degreaser
- Shop towels
- 220 grit sandpaper
- Pad sander
- Screwdriver
- Putty knife

- Auto body filler
- Oil or alkyd-based primer
- Oil or durable latex paint
- Quality paintbrushes

After you've gathered your supplies, remove the contents of all of the cabinets to provide a clear working space.

Use a degreaser to remove any grease or deposits on the cabinetry, then remove the cabinet doors.

The next step is to sand the cabinet boxes and doors using a 220-grit paper. The purpose of sanding is to remove any gloss so that the

primer will adhere well to the cabinet surface. You can do this by hand, but an electric pad sander will help the job go much faster.

When the sanding is completed, use a damp rag or towel to remove any dust.

The next step is to prime all surfaces of the cabinetry—boxes and doors. To achieve the most professional looking results, use an oil or alkyd-based primer. These types of primers seal in any stains that remain in the wood and create a surface that the topcoat of paint will bond to securely.

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DO IT YOURSELF



When removing cabinet doors, unscrew the lower hinge first and upper hinge second.

If you have several doors of different sizes, label the doors to make them easy to identify for replacement.



If you plan to upgrade hardware, pay special attention to the hole-spread measurement for knobs, handles and hinges. If you can match the measurements with new hardware it makes the job much easier. But if the new hardware isn't a match, you'll need to fill the holes using a two-part automotive body filler when the primer is dry. This product dries much harder than typical wood filler. Press the filler

Thoroughly clean the cabinet box (also called carcass) with a degreaser.



Sand the surface to roughen it for better adhesion of primer and paint.



into the holes with a putty knife and take care to wipe off any excess. The filler dries quickly and once it does, sand it down with the surrounding surface.

Lightly sand the primed cabinetry to give the surface "teeth". This sanding will allow the topcoat of paint to adhere well. Use another damp rag or towel to remove dust.

The final step is to give the cabinets two coats of quality oil-based or durable latex enamel paint. When



If selecting new hardware, either choose replacements that fit the existing screw holes or else fill the screw holes before painting.



Some pros prefer to use auto-body filler to patch dents and dings and fill screw holes.

Work the filler into the holes with a putty knife, allow to dry and then sand smooth.



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painting it is key to keep a constant wet edge to minimize strokes and brush marks.

Once the paint is dry, add the hardware and you're ready to reinstall the cabinet doors and enjoy your fresh, updated room. **EHT**

Today's Homeowner

Danny Lipford is a leading home-improvement expert, friend of *Extreme How-To* and fellow Alabama resident. He hosts an Emmy-nominated, nationally syndicated TV show, *Today's Homeowner with Danny Lipford*, which is now in its 17th season on over 200 stations nationwide. In 2009, he became the host of the nationally syndicated *Today's Homeowner with Danny Lipford* radio show. And, on top of all

these activities, Danny has contributed this cool painting project to the latest issue of *EHT*. Keep up with all of Danny Lipford's home-improvement tips and techniques at www.todayshomeowner.com.



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THE LATEST TRENDS IN BATHROOMS

By Rob Robillard

Contemporary Styles and Comfort Amenities

According to the National Kitchen & Bath Association's (NKBA) 2015 Kitchen & Bath Design Trends report, contemporary designs top the list. Top designers also note that nearly all bathroom amenities are also on the rise. This includes features like steam showers, frameless shower enclosures, sound systems, unique tiles, low flow toilets/fixtures and electric heated floors. When it comes to color, white still tops the list but, grey is making strides while beige is becoming passé.

SHOWERS & BATHS

The largest and more dramatic component of a bathroom is the shower, and we're not talking about the old single tub/shower solution, because homeowners have determined that this is officially "out." Now, showers are taking over but, not at the expense of a tub. Freestanding tubs are still finding a place in the bathroom.

THE LATEST TRENDS IN BATHROOMS



Modern bathroom trends include pedestal sinks, low-flow toilets, floating vanities and open shelving.

for bare feet. Heated floors are the fourth most popular bathroom trend, next to floating vanities and open shelving, according to NKBA's report. Several manufacturers offer a system of thin electrical elements that install directly in mortar underneath tiles and stone. (In wet areas like bathrooms, the heating elements often have to be installed under a waterproof membrane to avoid risks of sneak current and/or short circuit.)

Some radiant-heat companies offer products specifically designed for the bathroom, such as towel warmers, mirror defoggers, shower mats and bench mats. The Shower Mats are specially designed for standard-size shower floors and

The tile, hardware and fixtures are where most people start and tend to spend the majority of the budget within the shower. However, the shower door and enclosure provide that subtle luxury that showcases those elements of personal style and interior design and, as such, should be considered much earlier in the planning and budgeting process.

Frameless heavy glass enclosures are a huge design trend because they give the bathroom that spacious, luxury spa-like feeling that homeowners want.

Since frameless enclosures are custom designed to fit the space, they tend to be more expensive. One of the more affordable alternatives is semi-custom enclosures that still offer the designer look, but allow for minor adjustments for out-of-plumb conditions.

Basco Shower Doors now offers two new products in their RODA

collection that bring together the best two worlds with their Vinesse and Cantour shower enclosures. They offer a balance of beauty, function and affordable luxury that fits most standard opening sizes while delivering high design features such as rolling doors, clean lines and high-end finish options.

With the ability to manufacturer custom or "standard" products and a nationwide installation program, Basco has the capability to create a showpiece bathroom for any budget.

WARM FLOORS

Ceramic/porcelain tiles are far and away the most popular choice for bathroom floors as they are durable and easy to clean, but produce the coldest sensations of all the common finished floor materials. One solution is to incorporate a radiant heating system under the tile to greatly enhance comfort



Glass shower enclosures are a popular design trend because they give the bathroom a spacious, luxury spa-like feel.



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Radiant heat systems can warm cold tile floors.
Photo courtesy STEP Warmfloor.

feature a hole in the middle to accommodate the drain, whereas the Bench Mats easily adapt to heat standard-size shower benches.

WATER TEMP CONTROLS

Today's on-demand expectations and the homeowner's desire to control all aspects of the surrounding environment are finding their way into the bathroom. Companies are responding with a number of products to make life easier and more enjoyable.

Too cold, too hot, or just right? Delta's Temp20 faucet is available as a showerhead or a tub valve option with LED display, which shows the exact water temperature and changes colors from blue to magenta to red representing the range of cold, warm and hot. Take the guesswork out of the water temperature before getting in.

SOUNDS FOR SOAPING

From the sounds of a Brazilian rain forest to the latest hip-hop single, music helps set the mood, and now there are a number of affordable options to make the bathroom come alive with sound.

Mr. Steam has recently introduced the water-resistant

A SERIOUS COMMITMENT

It makes sense to create a bathroom you'll truly enjoy. People spend an average of an hour and 25 minutes each week in the bath or shower. Women spend 72 days shaving their legs over the course of a lifetime, meaning approximately 1,728 hours. And, according to various studies, the average person spends 3 years sitting on the toilet throughout their life.

— Sources: *The Scotsman*, *Huffington Post* and *The Toilet Paper Encyclopedia*

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Delta's Temp20 faucet shows the exact water temperature, so you can take the guesswork out before getting into the shower.

AudioWizard 2.0 Music System, a streaming Bluetooth sound system that can be used in any shower, with or without a Mr. Steam shower system. This sleekly designed unit can be mounted on the wall or set on a shelf. The stainless steel enclosure is smaller than a shoebox but delivers a lot of options so homeowners can design a sound system to meet their needs. The system plays digital music files or internet radio wirelessly, from smartphones or other audio devices.

With simple plug-and-play connections and a built-in amplifier, the AudioWizard 2.0 can also function as a whole-house music system when the unit is within Bluetooth range of speakers and the music library. It also seamlessly connects to a dedicated in-shower remote to control the system.

TILE STYLE

At this year's marquee industry event, the Kitchen and Bath Industry Show (KBIS), more than 500 exhibitors displayed their latest wares for interior décor. While E.L. James asserted there are "50 shades of Grey," it was Walker Zanger who made the biggest impact with their new bold tile designs with warmer gray tones of wood-textured porcelain paired with white

marble in a variety of patterns.

The company's new Sterling Row collection won 1st place in the Best of KBIS/Bath category. The designs were inspired by the

elegant feel of fine fabrics, the richness of burnished leather and the luxuriously appointed shops of the finest tailors in London, Manhattan and Paris.



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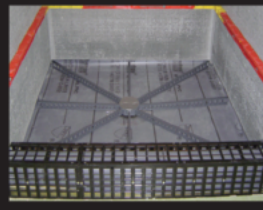
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The Oxford and Charcoal patterns give the impression of 3D tiles while the Chesterfield and Wingtip offer a more traditional look and feel.

TIDY TOILETS

The old saying is that cleanliness is next to godliness, and if that is the case, then the American Standard Optum

VorMax toilet is heavenly. The designers started from scratch to develop a new flushing technology that eliminates the traditional rim holes around the bowl that deliver water during a flush. Instead, the VorMax flush delivers one powerful jet of water that scrubs the entire bowl clean.

The innovative VorMax flushing system has been independently

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The AudioWizard 2.0 Music System from Mr. Steam is a streaming Bluetooth sound system that can be used in any shower.

verified to clean the bowl two times better than conventional toilets. The toilet's flushing action allows water to powerfully scour every square inch of the bowl, even the hard-to-reach spots under the rim.

The CleanCurve Rim replaces the traditional rim cavity and holes inside the bowl where dirt and buildup can hide. When paired with EverClean, the unique permanent finish, the result is a toilet that inhibits the growth of stain and odor-causing bacteria, mold and mildew on the surface.

It's also a high-efficiency toilet, using a water-saving 1.28 gallons per flush (gpf) and has earned WaterSense-certification from the U.S. EPA for providing high performance while using 20 percent



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Walker Zanger's new Sterling Row tile collection won 1st place in the Best of KBIS/Bath category. The designs were inspired by the elegant feel of fine fabrics and bur-nished leather.

less water than traditional 1.6 gpf toilets.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

The National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI) reports that bathroom remodels offer one of the better returns on investment for a home. Remodeling costs vary, depending on whether the original footprint of the bathroom is maintained and whether plumbing and electrical lines need to be moved, but



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"The bathroom is the private oasis in the home where you want to unwind and recharge," says Haley Davis, product manager with Mansfield Plumbing. "For some people that means a good, long soak in a deep tub with quiet music in the background. For others it means a vigorous whirlpool experience with pulsating jets of water to soothe your muscles." Davis recommends researching the options to discuss with your builder.

Soaking Tubs - Ergonomically designed and significantly deeper than standard bathtubs, a soaking tub allows full body support and deep immersion into comforting waters.

Whirlpool Tubs - Precision-aimed jets of water can relax and rejuvenate the body in a whirlpool bath. Strategically-placed jets target different parts of the body for deep tissue massage.

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Walk-in Tubs - If getting in and out of a tub is a challenge now (or you think it might be in the future), a tall walk-in tub with an inward swinging door is the ideal solution. Created with an ADA-height seat, the tub provides a deep well for bathing with options for air massage and whirlpool jets.

"Don't forget to research the options available with each of these bathing experiences," says Davis. "From chromatherapy mood light systems in whirlpool baths to in-line heaters that keep the bath water warm no matter how long you soak, there are many enhancements that can be selected to create a luxury bath."

Check out Mansfield Plumbing's bath options at www.mansfieldplumbing.com.



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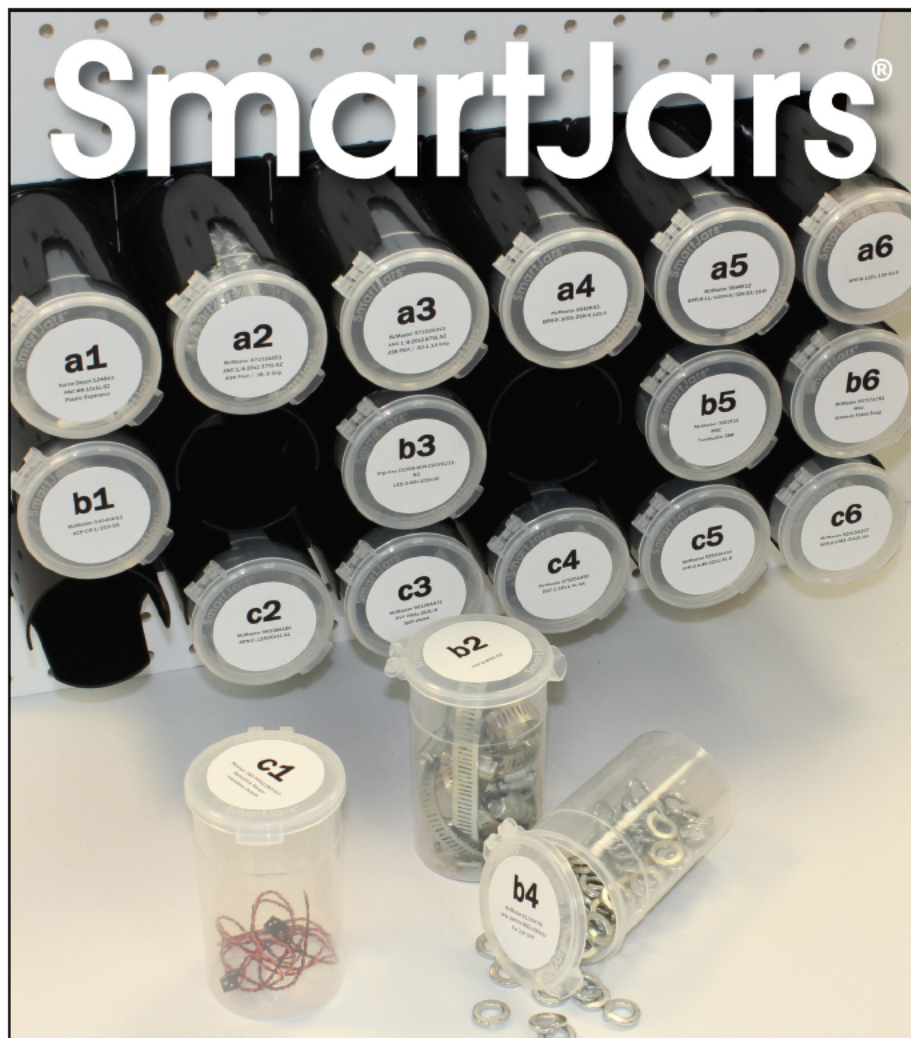
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experts estimate that home-owners get approximately 64 percent back in terms of investment when they remodel a bathroom, NARI states. **EHT**

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Mark E Industries has developed a heavy-duty, molded plastic corner shower seat that not only installs easily, but is also immediately ready to tile afterwards. The Shower Seat (GPSS-3024) is the standard 30 inches wide with guide marks to make it easy to cut the seat to 24 inches wide, if preferred. The waffle pattern on the top surface ensures ideal tile adhesion. Two leveling vials are



integrated for installation convenience and to maintain the built-in 1/4-in. fall per 12-in. run slope during installation. The front face has a full width support shelf to keep the vertical tile from sliding. Six predrilled, fortified mounting holes are strategically angled to boost the seat's shear strength rating. All necessary hardware is included and consists of six anchors, screws and shims. The shims are for managing walls that aren't square. The maximum suggested weight capacity of the Goof Proof Shower Seat is 400 lbs.

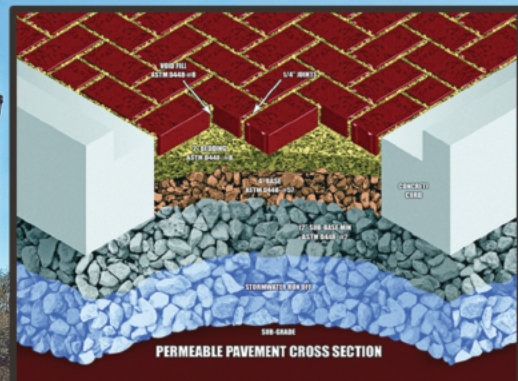
For new installations, blocking between the wall studs is required. The seat is attached by screwing through the wallboard and into the blocking.

For retrofit installations, the seat is installed on the wall tile surface by drilling 3/8 inch holes and using the supplied plastic toggle anchors. Visit Goofproofshowers.com.

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WATER STORAGE BELOW

ENERGY-EFFICIENCY TIPS FOR THE HOME

By Tom Matthews

The heating and cooling system accounts for approximately 45 percent of the average home's utility bill, or about 45 cents of every dollar. To pay lower utility bills, it makes sense (and cents) to use less energy. Here are some tips to accomplish that while keeping your home comfortable.

GET WITH THE PROGRAM

Programmable thermostats automatically adjust your home's temperature settings several times a day to fit your lifestyle. When used properly they can save about \$150 per year on energy costs and allow you to program when the system should scale back heating or cooling. In the winter, program the heat to kick on during your commute homeward so you step into a warm house. In the summer, the system can automatically keep air conditioning low in the morning to avoid cooling an empty house while you're at work.

STAY IN THE ZONE

Zone heating is an efficient method for optimizing the way you warm your home. Studies have shown that typical occupants spend 80 percent of the time in 20 percent of the house, so it makes sense to only heat or cool the areas being used.

**Save
Energy,
Save
Money**





Programmable thermostats optimize your HVAC system for your lifestyle. Choose a backlit display for easy nighttime visibility.

A basic zoning technique for an existing forced-air heating system is to adjust the vents in the unoccupied rooms. Don't close the vents completely, however. Sealing the vents closed could reduce airflow through the air handler, cause pressure imbalances and put stress on the duct connections. Closing the vents

by 75 percent can be effective. (The vent nearest to the thermostat should always remain open).

Space heaters are a simple and cost-effective way to supplement your central heating system, warming one room or "zone" at a time. The most common are ceramic space heaters with fan-forced air. Available in a wide

range of designs, they're safe, compact and ideal for heating spaces up to 150 square feet.

Some homes have integrated system zoning, which involves multiple thermostats connected to a control panel that operates different dampers within the HVAC ductwork. Radiant floor heating is another option for controlling heat zones.

For forced-air systems, zone control works best in homes where the different zones can be isolated from each other with closable doors. Avoid shutting off the heat entirely in an unused part of your home, because condensation could form on cold interior wall surfaces and lead

SEAL LEAKY WINDOWS

Ideally, your home should have double-pane and low-emissivity coated windows. Of course, window replacement isn't always in the budget. Check out these alternatives.

HEAT-SHRINK INSULATION: Window insulation kits come with double-sided adhesive tape and a large sheet of plastic film. Stick the tape around the window frame on all four sides, and then apply the film onto the tape so it completely covers the window, creating a sealed air space. Cut away the excess film and use a hair dryer to heat-shrink the film so it tightens and shows no wrinkles. The tightened film guarantees a draft-free seal.



Photo courtesy Duck Brand

HEAVY PLASTIC SHEETING: Another option for wooden frame windows is to cover the outside with heavy plastic to reduce cold air infiltration. Staple the sheeting over the outside, leaving a 4-in. overhang around the perimeter. Secure the edges with wooden furring strips, fasten to the outside window frame, then trim off the excess plastic.

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ENERGY-EFFICIENCY TIPS FOR THE HOME



to mold. Also, keep all rooms at a minimum of 50°F in the winter to prevent water pipes from freezing.

CHANGE YOUR FILTER

Be diligent about regularly replacing the filters that remove dust from the air as it circulates

Replace your HVAC filter routinely so your system doesn't have to work as hard. Studies have shown the inexpensive disposable filters work as good or even better than more expensive filters, as long as they're changed regularly according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

through the HVAC system. Most systems use disposable filters. Some furnaces have an electrostatic filter, which is a sturdy metal filter that needs to be cleaned every few months. In either case, a clogged filter hinders airflow, and your system will have to work harder to achieve the temperature programmed in your thermostat. When the system works harder, it wears out the HVAC components faster and raises your power bill.

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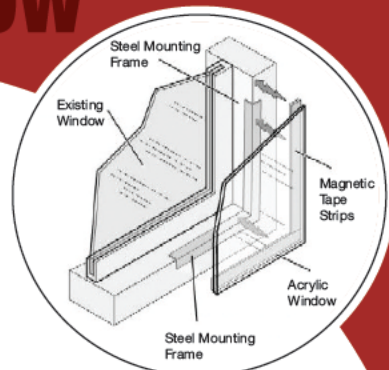


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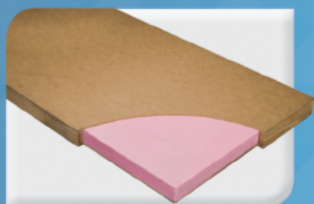


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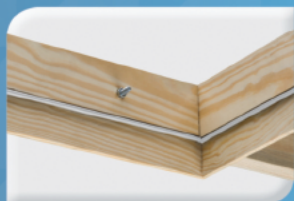
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ENERGY-EFFICIENCY TIPS FOR THE HOME

to uncoated single-pane windows. The space inside an insulating glass unit—between the double glass panes—may be filled with Argon gas, an odorless, colorless, non-toxic gas that is six times

denser than air. This design prevents air infiltration and acts as an added barrier to prevent harmful ultraviolet rays from entering the home. Additionally, the Low E (emissivity) glass has a



Gas-filled, multi-paned windows protect the home from thermal transfer.



Seal leaks between nonmoving parts (i.e., between door frame and wall) with caulking/sealant.

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transparent metallic oxide coating that reflects long-wave infrared energy, bouncing heat back to its source.

However, new windows aren't always in the budget. One

alternative is installing aluminum storm windows, which easily fasten over existing windows to insulate and block drafts. Some storm windows even come with Low-E glass.

HIGH-EFFICIENCY WATER HEATERS

To maintain a preset water temperature, conventional tank-style water heaters must use energy to cycle on frequently, even when there is no demand for hot water.

Tankless water heaters, on the other hand, are more efficient because they eliminate the need to continually heat a large supply of water. Often called "on demand" water heaters, tankless units only



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Seal leaks between moving parts (i.e., between window sash and sill) with weather-stripping.



Tankless water heaters only warm the water as it is needed,

eliminating the need for the system to continually cycle on to maintain a heated tank. Some units include a remote control with digital display.



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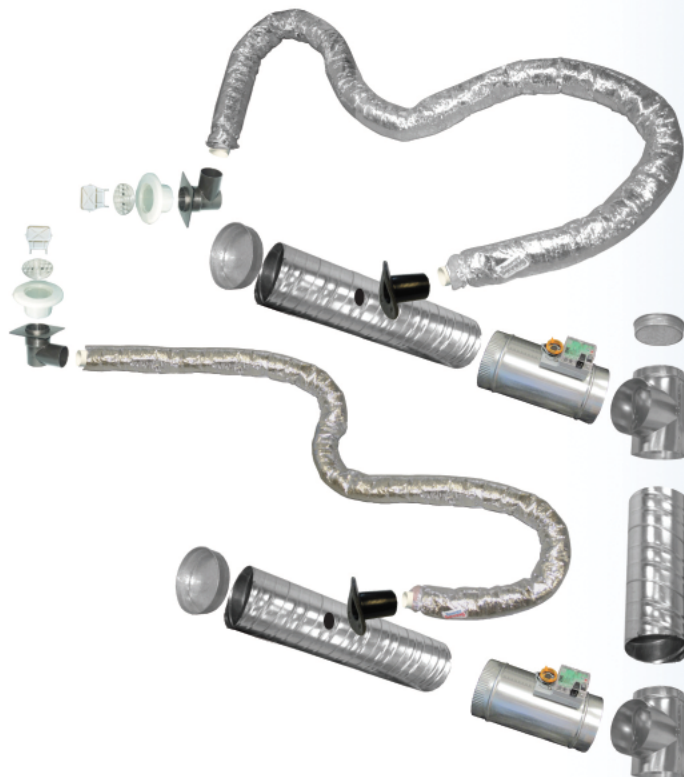
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ENERGY- EFFICIENCY TIPS FOR THE HOME

heat the water as it is needed. The compact size of a tankless unit is another benefit, since the bulk of a traditional tank-style unit is due to the tank itself. (Tankless units can,

however, cost two to four times more than conventional tank heater, so it's worth doing a little homework to explore your options.) **EHT**

FILL GAPS WITH WEATHER-STRIPPING

Without the proper weather-stripping and caulking, a substantial percentage of your energy costs will vanish into the ether. Fill leaks between non-moving parts (between window frame and wall) with caulking. Seal leaks between moving parts (between door and frame) with weather-stripping. You can seal a house using a variety of weather-stripping products.

Compression Strips include open- and closed-cell foam or rubber tapes, as well as tubular strips. The open-cell tape will give you a quick fix until you can properly measure and fit a permanent solution. Closed-cell tapes allow you to correctly size the gap you are working with and are more durable for doors and windows that are used often. Use where there is a pressure stress: along the bottom of vertical sliding windows, around attic hatches or on hinged windows and doors.

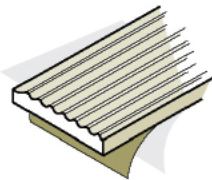
Tension Strips made of spring vinyl or spring metal are used in similar applications as compression strips. The spring mechanism adapts to long unequal distances from the weather-strip to the door or window.

Combination Types include spring-loaded, self-adjusting strips or magnetic strip systems, which are both effective for doors and hinged windows.

Door Sweeps, Bottoms and Thresholds seal the gap between the door and the floor. Sweeps and bottoms are often made of vinyl or rubber and attach to the bottom of a door. Thresholds attach to the floor, require clearance beneath the door and include a vinyl or rubber strip for an excellent draft seal.



Closed-cell foam



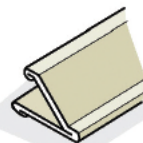
Ribbed



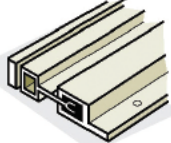
Tubular



Spring vinyl



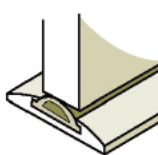
Spring metal



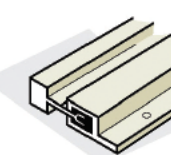
Magnetic strip



Door sweep



Full threshold



Spring loaded

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DOWN AND DONE

Installing Prefinished Hardwood Floors

By Larry Walton, Photos by Tim Walton

My wife and I love hardwood floors but we do not love living in a remodel while we're installing or refinishing hardwood floors. We know this because we've done it a number of times.

One of the big advantages of full-thickness hardwood floors is the option of sanding and refinishing the floors in the future if the floor gets damaged, which is likely with me and my dogs.

We wanted a traditional 3/4-in. thick tongue-and-groove hardwood floor without all of the sand-in-place dust and the added hassles that come with applying the finish. We found some prefinished maple flooring at the local home-improvement center that looked like it would work well for our application. We have now had these floors in our house for a couple of years, and they're performing better than we expected.

From a woodworker's perspective, I knew that this flooring would have to fit tightly and flat to work, because "prefinished" meant no possibility of floating and sanding the gaps and elevation differences like traditional unfinished hardwood floor. The manufacturer did several things to pull this off.

DOWN AND DONE

First, they made the boards relatively narrow which helps the installer pull slight curves in line. It's likely they took extra care in cutting any curved materials into shorter pieces to make them all as straight as possible.

Next, the manufacturer kept very precise tolerances for board thickness and for milling the tongue-and-groove profiles. We could tell this because the boards laid up to a very flat surface when installed. This is noticeable to someone who has installed raw hardwood and encountered the occasional slightly thicker or thinner board. Normally these discrepancies can be sanded out of traditional hardwood, but prefinished boards must match up better because they cannot be sanded flat.

It is wood, however, which is why they included a slight chamfer along the edges of the boards. The purpose of the chamfer is to accentuate rather than hide the joints. This feature covers up slight discrepancies in the board thickness and any small gaps where the boards join.

Another aspect unique to prefinished hardwood is the need for colored putty to fill holes where the boards cannot be blind-nailed through the tongue. We mixed different colors of putty together to create several shades so we could match exactly the color right where the nail hole was.

One of the big advantages of 3/4-in. hardwood is that it has



enough structural integrity to bridge over small cracks and holes in the subfloor. (You must still make sure that moisture cannot get to your new floor.)

When starting the first row of flooring, make sure you are square with other important features in the room. In our case, the first room we installed was pretty forgiving because of the perimeter features, but this floor would eventually tie into the hallway, and the hardwood there needed to be in line with the walls. Because of this, we used a string line centered in the hallway to determine the alignment in our first room.

Of course, one of the best things about installing prefinished floors, in addition to avoiding the dust and vapors of the finish, is the fact that you can start using the floor as soon as you nail it down.

STEP BY STEP

After pulling up the old carpet and pad, we removed the carpet tack strip and base boards.



A floor scraper speeds up the process of removing carpet-pad staples and tack-strip nails. Since an adjacent vinyl area had double underlayment, we decided to leave this single layer of underlayment and make sure it was thoroughly nailed down.

BASEBOARD REMOVAL

We start removing baseboard from the middle by shoving a stiff putty knife between it and the wallboard. Next comes a pry bar to gain more gap. Apply pry-bar pressure to the wall at floor level, where the wallboard will be backed by the house's floor plate. Grab the baseboard in the middle and pull outward. Finish nails either come with the board or stay in the wall because the heads are small enough to pass through some trim types.





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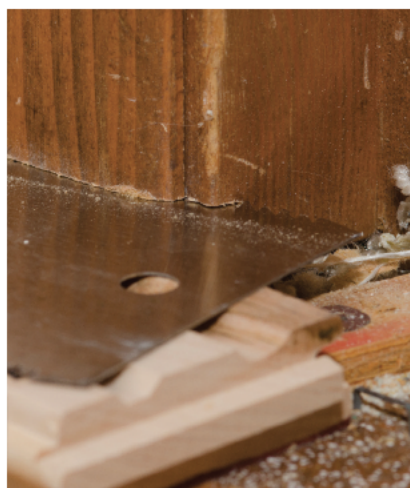
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DOWN AND DONE



A pull saw, which has a thin blade, is a good tool to trim off casings and door jambs so the new flooring can go under the casings and door jambs. The cut is made by laying the saw blade on a scrap of the flooring to get the right height.



We found some areas in the underlayment that seemed to be favored as a pet's bathroom spot. One of my favorite sealers against stain and odor is this old fashioned shellac, which can be painted on with a brush.

We face-nailed the initial row of boards to keep it lined up with our layout mark.



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After the initial row, we blind-nailed the subsequent rows through the tongue at an angle with a 16-gauge finish nailer until there was enough rows to allow the use of a flooring nailer.



Occasionally, when we doubted that tongue-nailing would close the gap, we used a wood scrap as protection so we could hammer the next board into place.

The flooring nailer was rented from a home-improvement center.

A quick way to mark an end piece for cutting is to turn it around



(tongue against tongue) and mark the board to be cut at the end of the finished surface of the previous board. When it is turned around (tongue against groove), the cut will be on the wall end.

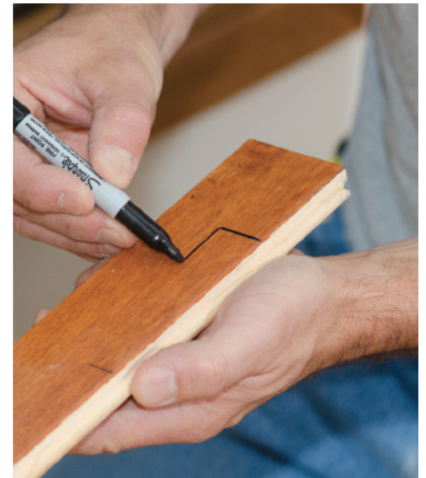


We usually keep a miter saw on the floor near the boards being installed. Once enough flooring is installed, we sweep up the sawdust and move the saw onto cardboard on the finished floor.



A framing square and a Sharpie were used to mark the layout for a furnace vent opening. Don't go only by the opening in the floor. There are some standard opening sizes that best match the available vent covers. Choose and cut the one that is closest to your rough vent opening to make sure the

opening in your new wood floor will be covered by the louvered vent cover.



I used the end of my finger as a depth gauge to lay out marks parallel to the edge of the flooring board.

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DOWN AND DONE



Because the layout marks are on the finished surface of the flooring board, we used a laminate style jigsaw blade (which pointed away from the saw) to make the cuts. This prevents tear-out on the finished surface. We also put masking tape on the jigsaw base to avoid scratching the floor surface.



For this type of blade, the orbital setting on the jigsaw should be set to zero so the blade moves straight up and down.

When using a reverse jigsaw blade for hardwood, we make sure to use steady downward pressure to keep the saw from chattering.

When we reached the other side of the room, we again ran out of space to use the flooring nailer and switched back to the 16-gauge finish nailer through the tongue for as many rows as possible before shooting through the surface. Because the flooring is prefinished, surface nailing



should be kept to a minimum. In the photo, note the flooring scrap extending the force of a pry bar into the piece being nailed. This is a good way to close the gap. Scrap lengths can be shortened as rows are added.

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DOWN AND DONE

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We mix together a variety of shades of color putty to fill the nail holes where we had to surface-nail the flooring. The putty does not get

sanded or stained, so the color match is important.

A slight bevel along the edges of the flooring accentuates the joints and helps hide minor cracks and differences in elevation. **EHT**

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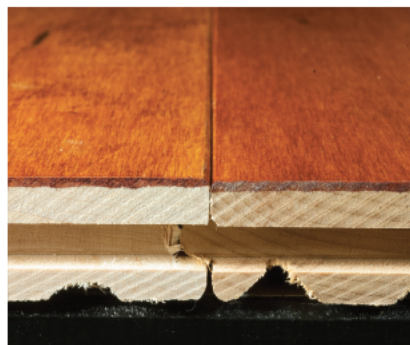
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HIDE THE GAPS

Take advantage of the leeway your baseboards give you in the flooring installation. The base covers the gap between the floor and the wall, which is a welcome way to conceal discrepancies in spacing.



GRIP IT & RIP IT

Grabbing carpet with pliers is a good way to get started with pulling the corners into the center of the room for carpet removal.



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Patching Rotted Window Sills



By Rob Robillard

Wood windowsills take a beating from Mother Nature. Although sloped by design, a windowsill is still basically a horizontal shelf where water and snow can accumulate. Once water finds its way behind trim or beneath paint and caulk, the rot process begins. Ongoing exposure to this moisture will cause the windowsill to decay and worsen over time. When caught early, often a small epoxy repair is all that is needed. But when discovered late or left unchecked, the rot will penetrate deeper into the windowsill and even the wall framing, requiring much more extensive and more expensive repair later.

REPAIR OR REPLACE

The age-old debate of window replacement or window repair is a tough one to answer, but I'll explain how I try to guide my client's decision process.

I look at the repair versus the replacement question as a business approach. What makes the most sense; based on time, budget longevity, and of course hidden costs.

When dealing with old historic windows, often times repairing is the only option. Many times these windows are protected by a city or town's historic district commission specifying that the window details remain unchanged. Often times,

replacement requires having a custom and costly window fabricated to match the style, look and dimensions of the existing old windows.

Other circumstances where repairing may be an option is



Occasionally wood rot only occurs at the nose of the window sill.

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PROJECT NEXT

on higher-end homes with large expensive units, bay windows or multiple mulled windows. Many times these windows will have high-end trim, wainscoting or faux wall finishes that would add a

multitude of extra costs if the window is replaced.

I often opt for window replacement when the cost of the window, any interior work relating to the replacement and my replacement

labor are equal to or less than the time I'd spend performing a quality repair. I often see this as a realistic option on more modern homes when dealing with stand-alone window units and simple interior finishes and trim.



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REPLACEABLE SILL NOSING

Sometimes a windowsill has rot on the outer nosing only. Many newer windows actually have removable nosing that can easily be duplicated and replaced with Western Red Cedar, Mahogany or PVC. Others are designed as one piece and need to be cut away and patched.



Notch out the rotted areas of the nosing and replace with a matching wood patch.



Rot that occurs deep inside of the sill is more difficult to repair.



Before working on the sill, seal off the house interior from dust.

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Surround the damaged area with wood strips to serve as a router guide.



Set the depth of the router bit to create a stepped patch to fit into the window sill.



Carefully rout out the old wood.

INSTALLING A DUTCHMAN PATCH

Dutchman patches are known primarily in carpentry, furniture-making and masonry. A Dutchman is a piece of wood or stone that is used to repair a larger piece, shaped so that it fills a void. In our case we cut the void and patched it with new wood—a Dutchman patch.

If windowsill rot is confined to just a small area, a simple patch and fill is all that is needed. For larger sections of damage, most or all the windowsill may need to be removed and replaced.

When performing a Dutchman repair we like to use Western red cedar or Mahogany for the patch. Both wood species have inherent insect- and rot-resistant qualities.



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USE A ROUTER TO CUT OUT ROT

We use a compact router and guide to cut our Dutchman patch because using anything

else does not provide a straight enough line for a tight glue joint. A router kicks up a lot of sawdust, so sealing off the window is a must.

DUST PREVENTION

Prior to cutting out the rot you will need to take precautions to keep sawdust from entering the house. We use a product called Tape & Drape, a pre-taped masking film that unfolds to cover and protect various surfaces while painting.

We then use painter's tape to completely seal off the sides of

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Shown here is the completed cut-out.



Cut the wood patch on a table saw and seal all edges.



Test-fit the patch and make adjustments as necessary.

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the plastic, on the inside of the window, and then raise the lower sash to provide access to cut the sill with a router. This process ensures a dust-free house interior.

STRAIGHT EDGE TO GUIDE THE ROUTER

In order for any tool to cut straight you need to use a guide. We use quarter-inch plywood as our router guide, making the



The patch should fit snugly as into the recess.



Secure the patch in the hole and fill gaps with epoxy.

guide with a table saw and miter saw.

Once we determine where the rot ends and solid wood begins, we use that measurement plus the width of our router base to determine what size router guide we need. Small 4-penny finish nails hold the guide in place, and these holes are later filled with epoxy.

CUTTING THE DUTCHMAN HOLE

We set our "straight cut" router bit to cut approximately 3/8 inch deep all the way around. We then added small 1-inch strips to all template sides of the router guide and used the router to make a "stepped back cut," cutting completely through the window sill. This takes several passes, each time deepening the router cut.

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We use this “stepped method” to increase our gluing surface and to provide a shelf for the Dutchman patch to index into and rest on.

SMALLER ROT SECTIONS

When presented with smaller rot circumstances, not as deep, we only rout deep enough to eliminate the rot and cut into solid wood.

PREPARE FOR THE PATCH

Once the routing is completed we vacuum the entire area and inspect the framing sub-sill for damage. If rotting, we may end up removing the window after all. If not, the repair continues.

We use a chisel to square off the corners of the hole after routing. The Dutchman patch is cut on a table and miter saw to ensure square corners.



Sand the patch flush.



Finish the job by applying new caulk/sealant and a coat of fresh primer and paint.

CUTTING THE DUTCHMAN PATCH

We then take measurements and notes to make our solid Dutchman patch on the table saw. The router rode along the

sill, sloped 12 to 15 degrees, so we try to match the angle on our patch.

We duplicate this slope with the intent of getting all the sides of the new patch to touch all the

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sides of the hole in the sill. This takes time to get right and ensure that we have a tight “dry fit” patch. Cut the patch into shape with intersecting rip cuts to create the stepped key effect.

GLUING THE PATCH

Once we have a solid dry fit with tight joints we mix up our epoxy.

We use West System epoxy, a versatile two-part, marine-grade epoxy that bonds and coats fiberglass, wood, metal, fabrics and other composite materials to provide superior strength and moisture resistance.

The epoxy was designed for boatbuilding and repair and works great on windowsills, columns and other areas where gluing, filling and shaping are needed.

We use the epoxy in two ways, as glue and as filler. First we brush on the epoxy to all wood surfaces and then tap in the piece. It swells a bit, and a gentle hammer-tap against a wood block is needed to get the Dutchman in place. Once in position, clamp it or use a few well placed finish nails hold it until the epoxy dries—usually 8 to 24 hours.

FILL ANY VOIDS

Once the patch is installed, we mix up a batch of epoxy with structural filler to fill and overlap the seams of the patch and any nail holes created during the repair.

SAND PATCH

We wait 24 hours before sanding the patch and applying a quality oil primer to the entire windowsill. The painter will follow us with additional primer and two-coats of paint. **EHT**

Editor's note: Rob Robillard is a professional remodeling contractor and blogger at www.aconcordcarpenter.com.

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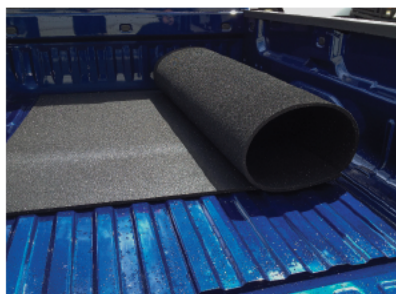


By Larry Walton

My favorite truck bed mat starts as a multi-purpose sheet of recycled rubber and is most often referred to as a horse stall mat. It is very durable, keeps things from sliding around in the truck and provides a great cushion for knees. It can be easily removed for cleaning and it costs significantly less than many other bed lining treatments.

I buy mine at the local rubber and supply company where we also get air hoses, but you might have better luck at a farm and ranch supply store depending on your location. Mine started out at 5 ft x 8 ft x 1/2 inch so it can

be cut to the shape of the cargo bed floor.



I bought this mat made of recycled tires. These are sometimes sold for horse stalls and cost about \$85.00.

Start by measuring the length of the truck bed with the tailgate

closed to make sure the mat won't interfere with the tailgate operation.

Tape a marker to one handle of a pair of pliers to act as a divider/compass for scribing the shape of the fender wells on heavy paper.

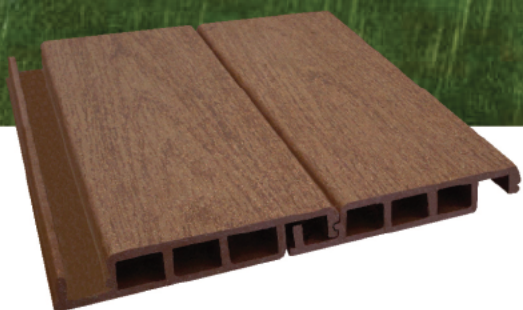


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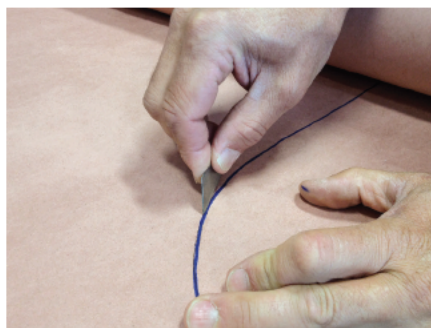
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I used a utility knife blade to cut out the template. (An actual

utility knife would be better, and scissors better yet, but I used what I had.)

Test the template and make adjustments before using it on the mat.

After tracing the template onto the mat, use a jigsaw with a regular wood-cutting blade to cut out the shape of the truck bed.

I place the mat in the truck and position it before making some



final adjustments to the corner details.

The finished mat fits the truck bed nicely and provides a skid-proof surface that protects the truck's paint and my knees. **EHT**

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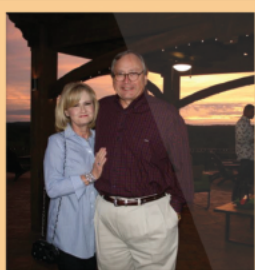


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is the patented elevating platform complete with padded comfort mat. Small-to-medium sized pets stand on the elevating platform, which can be raised and lowered to a height that works for everyone involved. The padded mat includes drainage holes that give animals a reassuring standing surface for added comfort and traction. The platform can also serve as a convenient drying or brushing station. Additional accessories are available for the Midi-Tub to create the ideal pet-bathing station, including a bottle and tool holder tray, choice of two faucet fixtures and even a professional-quality pet dryer. Visit www.BathtubsForPets.com.

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