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According to a recent survey by the Home Project Council, a homeowner's personality plays a critical role in his or her home improvement attitude and behavior. The survey identified five unique Home Improvement Personalities including *The Sensible Improver*, *The Project Planner*, *The Reliable Renovator*, *The Visionary* and *The Extrovert*. Nearly 1,140 homeowners age 21 or older took an online survey that combined an established personality test with insights about his or her recent and planned home improvement projects. While no one fits exclusively into any single category, everyone does land predominately into one based on a scoring algorithm that compared significant differences in project experiences and habits.

The Sensible Improver comprised the largest group with 39 percent of respondents. Described as "a nurturing homeowner that often puts others first, The Sensible Improver embraces home improvement projects that create a warm and welcome environment. Not necessarily a skilled do-it-yourselfer, The Sensible Improver enjoys smaller, manageable projects that add decorative flare and visual appeal."

First runner-up was *The Project Planner* with 28 percent, and their motto is: *If It Ain't Broke, Don't Fix It*. This orderly and practical homeowner is careful to avoid problems, The Project Planner takes a meticulous approach to all home projects, thoroughly assessing the pros and cons of every situation before committing to an improvement. With a priority on functional improvements, not cosmetics, The Project Planner carefully researches a project before ultimately hiring a contractor to make sure it's done right.

The Reliable Renovator takes second runner-up with 15 percent. "Commonly an empty-nester that takes a laid-back approach to home improvement, The Reliable Renovator is most often moved to action when his or her aging home needs attention." This category is primarily interested in keeping their homes in good shape to maintain its value, even if it requires paying for a contractor.

Up next is *The Visionary* (13 percent), which probably encompasses most EHT readers: "A homeowner with boundless passion and enthusiasm for upgrading his or her family's home, The Visionary tends to have an appreciation and curiosity for art and for novel ideas. The Visionary fearlessly takes on projects despite having limited do-it-yourself experience." This type of DIY'er is happy to install a patio or walkway but might struggle when replacing a wood or vinyl floor.

The Extrovert comprised the bottom 5 percent. *Go Big or Go Home* is the strategy with this rare breed. Balancing family life with a gregarious personality, "The Extrovert takes pleasure in completing large, complex home improvements that make a big impact to his or her home both in function and appearance." With a preference for doing projects without the help of a contractor, The Extrovert takes pride in the reaction and appreciation of others.

Looking at this list, I suppose I qualify as a *Reliable Visionary*.
Where do you fit in?



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Q. I've been told that construction workers are now required to abide by new OSHA regulations for silica dust. Where does silica dust come from? And should DIY'ers be concerned about it?

A. Silica is nothing new. In fact, Silicon (Si) is the second most common element on earth, found naturally in a wide variety of rock and present in concrete dust. OSHA began enforcing new regulations in September 2017 for handling silica dust, because inhaling respirable crystalline silica can lead to lung disease such as silicosis. The OSHA guidelines apply to professional/commercial workers and require them to use special equipment such as respirators, wet saws, HEPA vacuums, air filters and dust-containment devices to prevent the dust from becoming airborne. Although DIY'ers aren't regulated by OSHA, they should still take similar safety precautions if they engage in any project that requires the cutting of concrete. The new guidelines can be found at www.osha.gov from OSHA Table 1 – Exposure Control Methods for Silica Dust.

Q. Our home inspector said we had an attic ventilation problem, suggesting the attic may get hot in winter and lead to ice dams. How can heat lead to ice problems?

A. Ice dams can pose a real problem in colder climates and can usually be prevented with proper attic insulation and ventilation, as well as waterproof shingle underlayment on the roof deck. Insulation and ventilation keep the roof cool in the winter when you're heating your home. However, if these systems aren't functioning properly, then the accumulated heat in the roof can melt snow in the winter. The water from the melted snow runs to the eaves, where it then refreezes to form an ice dam because the eaves are not heated. As the ice builds up, the melting and refreezing water backs up the roof, working into nail holes and between seams in the shingles. As the dam melts the water can then leak into the house and damage the walls and ceilings.

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Q. I'd like to cover my deck shade with clear polycarbonate panels. Do the panels handle snow loads in the winter?

A. Your local building codes should provide the details for design loads that you will have to follow for your deck cover. A wide range of polycarbonate sheets are available and are engineered differently, some with multiple thin walls while others have a single thick wall. Consult with the manufacturer rep about the various panels' specific snow-load recommendations. Another factor is the method of installation regarding sheet spacing, clamping and fastening. Keep in mind that not only should the panels be suitable for handling the snow load, but the underlying structure should be constructed to support the extra weight as well.

Q. When installing a tiled shower, should I use grout or caulk at the joint where the tile walls meet the tub?

A. For tiled showers, grout goes in the joints between tiles that are on the same plain (walls, horizontal shelves, etc.). However, waterproof caulk/sealant should be used in any expansion joints, such as the 90-degree angles where the tub meets the tile, because it is more flexible and helps to absorb movement. Make sure the caulk/sealant you use is formulated to resist mold and mildew. **EHT**





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14 Essential Tools for a Carpenter Helper's Toolbox

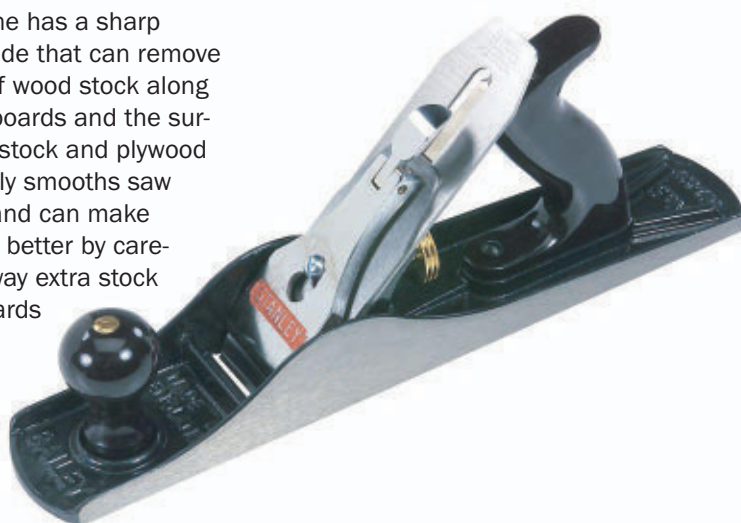


By Steven Willson

Most carpentry contractors need to hire extra employees many times during a typical year, depending on the season or amount of work under contract. It's helpful if new helpers can bring their own tools — usually hand tools that aren't too expensive — to a jobsite. As helpers move up the pecking order and assume more responsibilities, they may be expected to supply many of their own power tools, too. Here are the tools any carpenter's assistant—or a DIY carpenter—should own and know how to properly use:

1. BLOCK PLANE

A block plane has a sharp adjustable blade that can remove thin ribbons of wood stock along the edges of boards and the surfaces of solid stock and plywood panels. It easily smooths saw blade marks and can make wood joints fit better by carefully paring away extra stock where two boards meet.

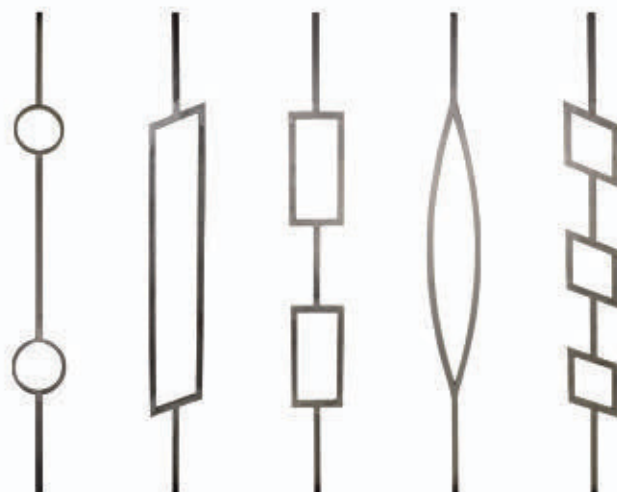




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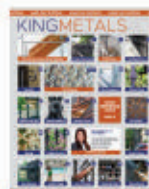
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2. CHALK LINE

Also known as a chalk reel, this tool consists of a plastic or aluminum pear-shaped “box” that functions as a reservoir for powdered chalk. Inside the box is a small spool with string wound around it. As the string is pulled from the box, it travels through the chalk and becomes coated in the powder. Hold the leading end of the line down on a mark, pull the box end tight, and hold

it down on a second mark. The string is stretched tight and snapped, shaking the chalk from the line and depositing it on the workpiece. This allows you to draw reliably straight lines for long distances, up to the length of the string.



3. CHISELS

A set of four wood chisels (1/4-, 1/2-, 3/4-, and 1-in. wide) is useful for any number of jobs, from hanging doors to removing extra glue from assembled parts like cabinet drawers and base-board trim. You can also use chisels to scrape up dried joint compound and sharpen pencils. For general construction work, buying an expensive set doesn't make much sense because the cutting edges are so easily damaged. Fortunately, they're easy to sharpen on-site. Just take a half sheet of 100-grit sandpaper, nail it to a piece of scrap lumber, then rub the cutting edge of the blade over the paper. Try to maintain the same edge angle that the manufacturer used. Careful work

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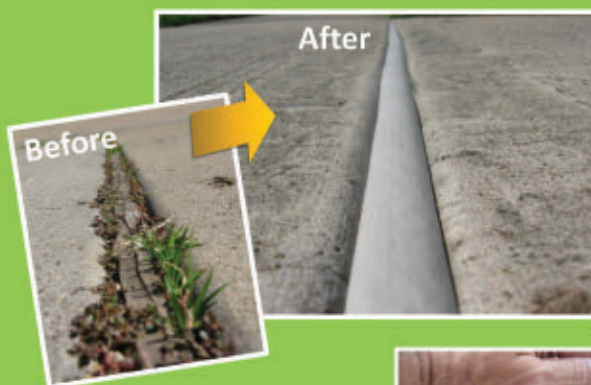
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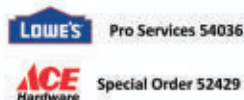


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can yield a satisfactory edge until you can sharpen the blade properly on a grinder.

4. FLAT PRY BAR

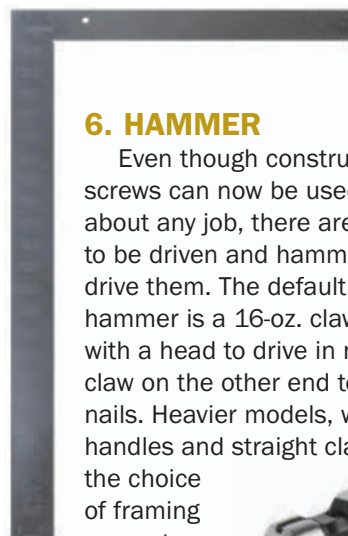
A simple flat steel pry bar is the tool of choice for many jobs, from



prying a framed wall into place to centering windows and doors in their rough openings. These tools come in various sizes, but the 1-1/2-by-14-inch model shown here is probably the most versatile.

5. FRAMING SQUARE

This right-angle tool has one 16-in. leg and another 24-in. leg. All the edges are stamped with inch increment marks, and the center of the blades provides other information like rafter tables that let a carpenter lay out roof rafters to match specified roof pitches. These tools are often made of light-weight aluminum and are used for guiding a circular saw to make square cuts on studs, headers and joists.



6. HAMMER

Even though construction screws can now be used for just about any job, there are still nails to be driven and hammers to drive them. The default carpentry hammer is a 16-oz. claw hammer with a head to drive in nails and claw on the other end to remove nails. Heavier models, with longer handles and straight claws, are the choice of framing carpenters, but for most other jobs the smaller tool is more efficient. Steel heads with wood or fiberglass handles are popular, but solid steel units (made of one piece of steel for the head and handle) with cushion-grip handles are very common and virtually indestructible.



7. MULTITIP SCREWDRIVER

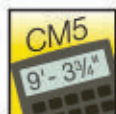
Most carpenters confront a lot of screws in a typical day, whether they're on locksets, hinges, drawer hardware, or light fixtures. Although some specialized screws require special screwdriver tips, most are either slotted or Phillips-head types. Choose a single multitip model to avoid carrying around a bunch of different screwdrivers.



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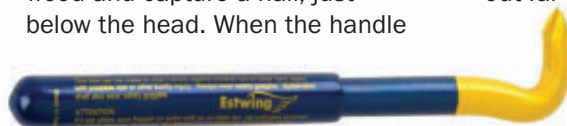


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8. NAIL PULLER

Quite a few specialized nail pullers are on the market these days, but for everyday work, the style shown here is all that's required. The steel head features

a curved edge that lets it dig into wood and capture a nail, just below the head. When the handle



is pushed down, it levers the nail out far enough so that a claw hammer can remove it completely.

9. NAIL SETS

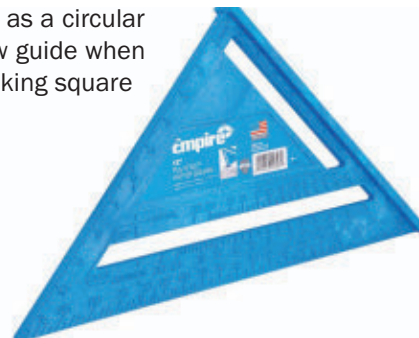
For those who do finish work, like trim carpenters and cabinet-makers, these tools are essential. After installing a finish nail, use a nail set to drive the nailhead slightly below the surrounding surface.



Then fill the resulting "hole" with caulk or wood filler before the surface is finished, thus hiding evidence of the nail. To use one, just place the tip of the set onto the nailhead, then strike the other end of the set with a hammer. Different diameter tips are available for different-sized nails.

10. SPEED SQUARE

This tool is a smaller version of the framing square and fits easily in a tool belt. The simplest version is made of plastic and designed to do two things: Mark square cut lines on lumber and act as a circular saw guide when making square



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cuts. By holding one edge of the square tightly against one edge of the board and guiding the foot of the saw against the other edge of the square, you can make perfect square cuts in the field

without a power miter saw, radial arm saw, or table saw.

11. TAPE MEASURE

This is a bedrock tool. Only the hammer is more important to a



carpenter. The tape measure's most important features are a strong recoil spring, easy-to-read numbers, clear inch labels, fractions-of-an-inch labels, foot markings, and labels that clearly indicate 16-in. increments along the full length of the tape. For cabinet work, all you need is a 16-ft. tape with a 3/4-inch-wide blade. Most other jobs require a longer tape (25 to 30 ft. long) and a wider 1-in. blade.

12. TOOL BELT

Not many carpenters are happy to be wearing a tool belt stuffed with tools and nails and screws — especially on a hot summer day — but it's less desirable to go back and forth to the truck all day long to get a tool they suddenly need but don't have within reach. Tool belts keep everything right at hand. Find a belt with the features you need for the specific type of work you'll be doing.





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13. 2-FOOT LEVEL

Construction levels come in different lengths (usually 2-, 4-, and 8-ft. models) and different materials (aluminum, plastic, and wood). Generally, the longer the tool, the better the accuracy. For the work most contractors do, a 2-ft. aluminum model is a

good choice. It can show level (horizontal) alignment and plumb (vertical) alignment. This tool can also work as a durable straight-edge for guiding utility knife cuts in roofing felt paper, asphalt and fiberglass shingles, vinyl floor tiles and drywall cutouts.

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This is certainly an unassuming tool—just two metal sides, joined by one screw, that hold a single razor blade in the tool nose and four or five replacement blades in the tool body. However, it is incredibly useful to have on hand, whether you need to sharpen a

pencil or make a few small cuts. Most knife blades have two sharpened ends that can be easily flipped in just a couple of seconds. In fact, the slotted screw that holds the sides together can usually be removed quickly with the head of a nail.

With the proper tools at hand, you'll be prepared for almost any carpentry project and can quickly adapt to working on any jobsite. **EHT**

Editor's Note: Steve Willson writes for *The Home Depot*. He was the home improvement editor for *Popular Mechanics* magazine for 22 years and owned a carpentry contracting business in Rochester, N.Y. He has also written three books about home-improvement and tools. You can learn more about the kinds of tools Steve describes in this article by going to *The Home Depot's* website, homedepot.com.



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 - c. The elderly, if an elderly person needs a door or doors to stay slightly open to get through. (some elders cannot grip and turn door knobs)
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Build A Gas Fire Pit in 10 Steps

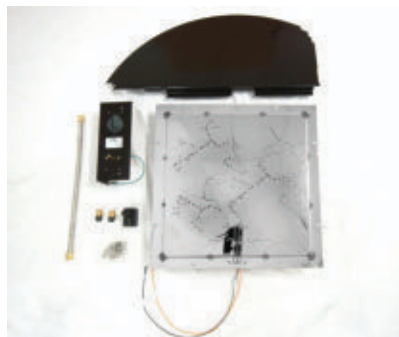


A fire pit is a great way to enjoy time outside. This easy DIY project is great for all skill levels and customizable to your own backyard or patio. It can be built in grass, on concrete, or patio pavers. Gather around a warm and cozy fire with family and friends to create memories that will last a lifetime.

Time:
3 hours

Materials List:

- Concrete Hardscape Block
- DIY Gas Burner Kit with Control Panel (we used the DIY-38 from Outdoor GreatRoom Company)



- Lava Rock or other filler rated for use with gas fire pits (.5 cubic bag or approximately 20 lbs. recommended)
- 1 Vent Block (optional)
- Exterior-grade concrete adhesive

- One AAA Battery for burner ignition
- Vapor barrier (if building in grass or on pavers)

Tools needed for block assembly:

- Level
- Shovel (if building in grass)
- Rake (if building in grass)
- Mallet
- Caulk gun

Tools needed for burner assembly:

- 2 adjustable wrenches
- 7/16" wrench
- Power drill with Phillips bit

1. Before assembling your gas fire pit, plan where you want to



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PROJECT NEXT

build it and decide how you will supply gas to this location. If you choose to run a natural gas line to the unit, be sure to have it installed by a certified gas technician before you begin this project. Check any city ordinances as well, to ensure your new fire pit will be legally built to code.

2. If putting your fire pit in grass, mark a 40-in. diameter circle and remove all grass, sod, and roots. Remove 2 inches of soil within the same area. Be sure to level the soil where your fire pit will be built and add between 1-2 inches of paver base. Pack the paver base and use a level throughout the process.

3. After the paver base is installed, if using in grass or on

top of a paver patio, install the vapor barrier. This will prevent moisture from the ground and protect your Gas Burner Kit. The vapor barrier is not needed if building on a concrete slab.

4. Next, lay your first ring of hardscape block in a circle. We chose to use 4-in. tall tumbled radius pavers, but you can also use retaining wall block or something similar. We recommend an interior diameter between 32-37 inches. Use a rubber mallet to level.

5. Place the next ring of concrete block leaving space for the control panel and optional vent block. If you choose to forgo the vent block, concrete blocks must have adequate space between



them to allow air flow underneath the burner, we recommend at least 10 square inches total. Consult your Gas Burner Kit manual for specific instructions.

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6. Once you have your concrete blocks spaced appropriately, carefully remove one block at a time and apply concrete adhesive. Place the block back on the ring and apply pressure. Repeat this process for each block.

7. Assemble your burner and place on top of the concrete block ring. Ensure there is at least 1-in. overlap to secure the burner ring. Consult the Gas Burner Kit



manual for proper assembly instructions, clearance to combustible ratios, and gas connection instructions.

8. Lay the third layer of concrete block. Repeat the adhesive process from step 5.

9. Let concrete adhesive cure. Add Lava Rock until burner area is covered with approximately 2 inches of rock.

10. Light your new fire pit, sit back, relax and enjoy!

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***The Right
Way to
Attach a
Structure to
a Tree.***



TREE- HOUSE TECHNIQUES

Okay, so your kids are begging you to build a treehouse. If you are ready to finally start the big project, here are a few things for you to consider in order to build a strong, lasting and safe treehouse.

Before you even begin to plan the treehouse, it's important to contact your insurance agency to see if it'll be covered as a part of your home insurance policy. Many factors come into play with this, like potential injuries, and the coverage depends on your insurance company.

Also, plan to build low to the ground. Most injuries result from falling out of the tree house. For this reason, a tree house that is more than 10 feet off the ground is probably too high.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT TREES

Find a mature and healthy tree that is structurally sound. The tree needs to be a hardwood species, such as maple, oak, hemlock or beech. Make sure that the tree has been pruned of dead leaders, branches and any falling hazards.

If you are unsure of a tree's structural strength or health (infestation and disease are not always immediately noticeable), you may want to consult an arborist in your area.

USE THE RIGHT MATERIALS

The framing of the treehouse needs to be treated the same as any exterior deck or structure. Use treated framing material, utilize structural plywood where you can, and choose cladding that will keep water out and protect the structure from rot.



A Treehouse Attachment Bolt (TAB) consists of a stem that threads into the tree trunk, a boss (thick mid-section), and a perch that supports the tree house. Photo © Treehousesupplies.com

SUPPORT THE TREE HOUSE

Prior to building your tree house frame and tree attachment, two things to consider with tree houses are that trees grow and trees sway in the wind.

The tree you are using will not stay the same forever. The trunks and branches will continue to grow, and your construction should accommodate the growth.

Avoid bolting the beams of the tree house directly between thick trunks. Tree trunks can generate

immense pressure near the ground when the wind moves the branches higher up. When a tree moves, thousands of pounds of force are generated and can easily shear nails, screws or bolts. If you bolt a treehouse support beam between two trees, you'll run the risk of the bolts snapping in strong wind.

We were curious to see how much our trees moved in the wind. Prior to building, we held a 16-ft. straight edge and level at the base of the tree on a very windy day.

At 8 feet up, the tree trunk moved 1/2 inch. At 16 feet, it swayed more than 1 inch. The funny part was this movement was invisible to the naked eye.

Armed with this information we made three decisions:

1. We chose a special bracket that would allow us 3x the movement we recorded.

2. We decided that the roof edge would not exceed 12 feet in height and that it needed to be at least 3 inches from the tree's edge, maybe more.

3. We would use Treehouse attachment bolts in two parallel trees and utilize two 6x6 pressure-treated posts with 10x48-in. deep footings.

TREE HOUSE ATTACHMENT BOLT

The most important thing to remember when starting to build your tree house is to reduce the risk of the tree's growth or sway factor. These two factors can shear fasteners and damage your tree house frame.

In today's treehouse industry, the most efficient and practicable way to hold heavy loads in live trees are treehouse attachment bolts. TABs are engineered bolts designed specifically for supporting high loads in living trees.

One of the main features of TABs is their strength, requiring fewer tree penetrations for fastening your frame. Treehouses are subject to frequent load reversal produced by winds, as a result TABs are made of 4140 Carbon Steel. TABs are able to support from 9,000 and 12,000 pounds (4,100 and 5,400 kg), and boast a greater strength load than conventional lag bolts.

A typical TAB consists of a threaded metal bolt and a larger diameter collar. The stem of the TAB bracket is designed to support different types of cradle brackets. The cradle or "floating" bracket is what we secure to our treehouse frame.



You'll need to drill two holes, including a recessed hole for the TAB's boss.



Drill a longer, deeper hole (6") for the TAB's stem.

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The collar of the TAB is available in 1-, 3-, and 6-in. sizes and provides extra bending strength by bearing upon the compression strength of the tree grain. Once the TAB is installed, the tree to

grows around it, making it stronger.

We decided to use two TABs to build our tree house. We ordered ours online from Treehouse Supplies (www.treehousesupplies.com).



Shown here is the mounting hole for a TAB.

INSTALLING THE TABS

The TABs need to be installed according to the manufacturer's recommendations. Don't install TABs in trees with a diameter less than 12 inches.

You'll need the following tools to install the TAB correctly:

- High torque drill
- Large ratchet / socket
- Torpedo level
- 3" self-feeding bit
- 1-1/8" x 16" auger bit
- Cheater pipe or socket

To install our TABs, we first drilled the larger 3-inch hole, then the smaller, deeper hole. It's



You'll need a large ratchet and socket to thread the TAB into the tree.

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A cheater bar can be used to gain extra leverage.



A tab nut is used to keep brackets on the perch.



On this treehouse, the TABs supported beams made from doubled pressure-treated 2x10.

important to drill your hole level into the tree.

Once the holes are drilled we screwed in the TAB as far as we could by hand, then finished it with a large ratchet and socket, with the help of a cheater pipe for leverage.

We determined the height of our floor and subtracted to get the height of the TAB. Once we drilled the first TAB, we used a straight 2x4 and a 6-foot level to locate the second tree's TAB.



Brackets attach to the underside of the beams.



The brackets slide over the perch of the TABS.

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In this case, two brackets and TABs were used to bridge two trees. Make sure the TABS and beam are installed level.



Band joists can be erected using temporary post supports.



All joists were fastened with metal joist hangers.

FLOATING BRACKET

A floating bracket is basically a platform support that can be used to span between two or more trees. We used two on our project.

The floating bracket slides onto the TAB and allows the tree to move freely and independently in any direction, while keeping the treehouse structure from moving.

We laminated two 2x10-14' pressure-treated boards to make a beam and mounted the brackets to the bottom. We would hang our floor joists off this beam.

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The permanent 6x6 support posts were supported by concrete pier footings.



Diagonal bracing helps to stabilize the post-to-joist connection.

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The remainder of the tree house is essentially a small shed built atop the platform.



The decking of the treehouse is 3/4" CDX plywood glued and screwed to the joists.

BUILDING THE PLATFORM

We used 2x10 pressure-treated lumber for the treehouse floor system. The entire platform of the tree house is 8x14-ft. long. The treehouse is 8x8-ft. structure, and there are two 36-in. decks on either end.

The floor system consists of two outside double 2x10 beams with 2x10 joists installed between them, direct nailed and supported by galvanized hangers.

Opposite of the floating beam is a beam that is supported by two 6x6 treated posts connected with post-to-beam, and post-to-footing galvanized connections.

Each post received three diagonal post-to-platform brackets. The two concrete footings have 10-in. deep galvanized j-bolt, and measure 10 inches in diameter and 48 inches deep.

THE REST OF THE TREEHOUSE

I just covered the most important part of building this treehouse. The structure on top is conventional framing; it's basically a small shed or house on a deck platform.

I'll briefly touch on the methods, and materials we used.

Decking—The decking of the treehouse is 3/4-in. CDX plywood glued and screwed to the joists. The exposed 3x8-ft. decks have 5/4x6-in. treated decking screwed down and spaced 3/8 in. apart for drainage.

Framing and Roofing—The treehouse walls are built from 2x4, and the 2x6 rafters are reinforced



This particular treehouse was an 8x8' structure with two 36" decks on either end.



The roof rafters were made from 2x6 and reinforced with Simpson hurricane ties.



T1-11 siding oriented with horizontal lines provides a rustic clapboard look.

with Simpson hurricane ties. We use a 2x8 pressure-treated ridge because it extends out and over a deck. The idea here was to mount a pulley and rope to it later.

We flashed the top of the ridge beam with lead flashing.

For roofing we chose CertainTeed Carriage House Tile, Sherwood Forest color. These shingles had a scalloped shape and were a fun detail to add to the treehouse.

A Velux 30-1/16x37-7/8-in. skylight was added to one side for light and venting.

Wall Sheathing—For sheathing



Seal or paint the wood to preserve it.

we used 1/2-in. T1-11 siding and oriented the lines horizontal to simulate a rustic clapboard or horizontal board look.

Windows and trim—We framed simple jambs and used Bosco cellar window sash for the windows. The windows have a simple lock and two hinges each. 3M safety tape was applied to both sides in case of glass breakage.

Exterior trim boards are 3/4-in. Cedar.

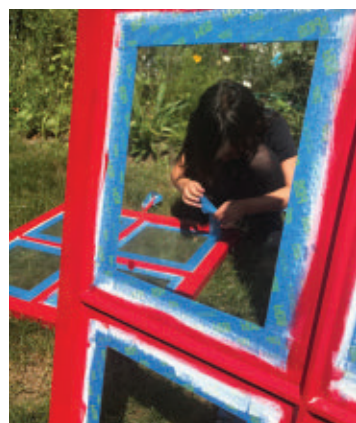
Screens—The gable end on both sides was intentionally framed and left open for ventilation. We installed insect screening here.

Railings—Treated posts (4x4) with top and bottom railings surround the open decks. We drilled a series

of holes in the guard rails and the homeowner rigged roping for the balustrade.

Flooring—We used IKEA Outdoor deck and patio interlocking floor tiles on the inside of the treehouse, installed in a herringbone fashion.

Door—The door was designed by the future tenants. Days after we had a solar



The windows were painted prior to installation.



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TREE-HOUSE TECHNIQUES

eclipse, the kids decided that they wanted the door window to mimic an eclipse.

With a jigsaw we cut out a half moon and then used a burning tool to mark the outline of the sun and sun rays on the door. Insect screening was then applied to the door opening. **EHT**

The asphalt shingles had a scallop shape to add a fun, cottage-like detail.



The railing system was drilled with holes, through which the homeowner threaded thick rope as a balustrade.

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BACK TO THE BASE-ICS

Get 10 carpenters in a room and you'll probably get 10 ways to build and detail a pergola.

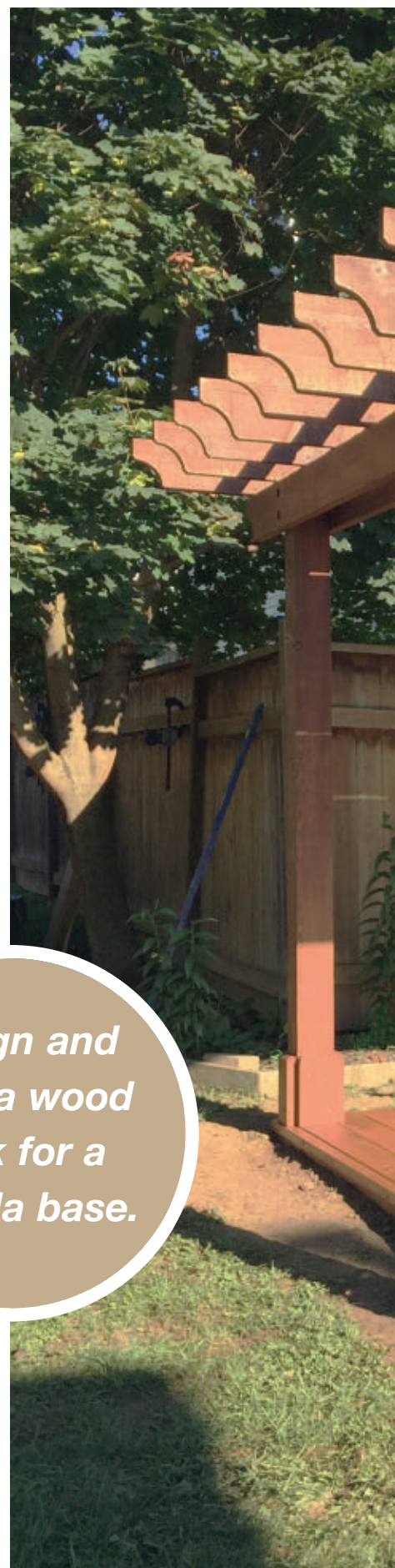
However, when it comes to the pergola's base—what our furniture and feet touch every time we enter the cross-hatched shadows of the posts, girders and rafters—it's safe to say everybody in the pretend group will opt for a hardscape. Cementitious or blue stone pavers are popular. And the variety, at least in my experience, ends there.

I take a different approach.

I frame a wood box and build what amounts to a deck for the pergola base. The box (before it has joists) is the best layout tool imaginable (see sidebar). I frame it to wrap around each post. So when I'm setting posts, there's no guesswork, and they're easy to brace and plumb up. And, unlike a paver product—which is the same temperature, give or take, as the middle of the street—wood remains cool, comfortable and easy to maintain. I used Cedar and pressure-treated lumber for this one.

While I build all my pergolas like this (you can see one demonstrated at [YouTube.com/MyFixitUpLife](https://www.youtube.com/MyFixitUpLife); search “pergola”), the idea originated with the pergola I'm repairing in this article. So even though the pergola is already there, the details are basically the same from digging to decking.

Design and build a wood deck for a pergola base.





BACK TO THE BASE-ICS



BEFORE THE DECK

Our plan was to have a grass base for our pergola. Cool, near zero maintenance, fireproof, etc. However, when the furniture changed, the light that reached the grass changed too. It quickly became weeds, and where there weren't weeds, there was mud. While the base was still fireproof, it wasn't any of the other things we had intended. Like, nice, for example.

However, in assembling the barrier for the dirt—what amounts to

four band joists—an idea was born. So, I dug out the old band joist and prepped for a new wood base. Here's how I did it—and how you can do it for your next pergola project.

DIG IT OUT

If your yard is at all sloped, you'll need to decide if you'll want to bury a portion of your band-joist on the uphill side or add steps on the downhill side. Either way, the joists need clearance. Also, don't bother trying to “save” time by digging trenches for each joist. That's one

This is what running out of excuses looks like. Time to take this knotted weed farm and make it awesome.

of those moves that seems to be less work, but is really more work.

SUB-BASE

I'm kind of a stickler for things staying where I put them and lasting as long as possible, so I can be accused of “overdoing it.” On the other hand, a similar project to this I built some 9 months ago has stayed where I left it just like the Empire State Building, so I'm going to keep my methods intact for now.

Because the band joists are partially buried on this project, I added a layer of fabric-covered gravel in a trench beneath them. Like a perimeter drain inside a house, the gravel gives water a place to drain and the fabric keeps the aggregate from filling with silt.



Dig out the entire area for your wood base. Going a few inches lower than your layout lines will ultimately save you time and aggravation.



The Fiskars all-steel shovel I used to dig out the base is a thing of earthmoving beauty, more “dirt chisel” than mere shovel.



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BACK TO THE BASE-ICS



Fabric-wrapped aggregate enables water to drain away from the buried wood.

FRAMING

To install the band joists, I built the box around the posts. If you look closely you can see blocking on the interior faces of the posts as well. This will have decking fastened to it later, so they need to be installed now.

A couple things about the band joists:

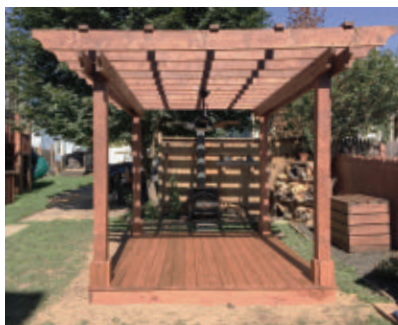
- Make sure you purchase “ground contact rated” pressure-treated lumber. You’ll find “ground contact” and “above ground contact” available at retail.

- Also, while we used oh-so-sweet cedar for the decking (and the pergola is made from it too), my cedar friends recommend treated lumber for the dirt work.

- The band joists are pre-stained. I don’t really need to add this extra step, but I did. It is a total belt-and-suspenders approach. Between the ag-bag, the right lumber treatment and a coat of sealer, this is a good, easy-to-install system.



The pre-stained, pressure-treated framing ties in with the surrounding grade and dams off the dirt for an open frame for the joists.



you’ll want to bury a portion of your band-joist on the uphill side or add steps on the downhill side.

Use joist hangers. After the band joist is in place and I check that it’s straight, I lay out the joists. After that, I set the metal hardware. Since I’ve successfully secured somewhere around zero joist hangers by pounding the metal tab into the lumber, I

secure it in place temporarily with my scratch awl then fasten with rated screws.

Until some sort of Hogwarts-style magic is invented, my fasteners of choice will remain Spax #10 x 1-1/2-in. and 2-1/2-in. screws for connecting my metal hardware. Fast, clean, quiet and no hammer-whacking means I’m dead-on layout. Although I still carry a hammer, I increasingly think it’s just for keeping my balance at this point. I almost always use screws to connect things.

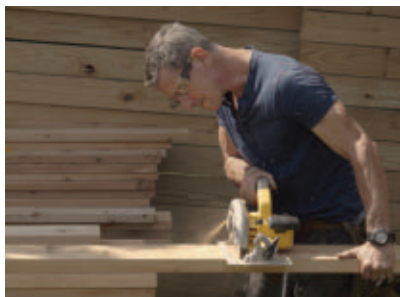


Blocking on the interior faces of each post gives me something to fasten the deck boards to later.

DECKING

The band joists that wrap around the outside of the posts create a 1-1/2-in. ledger, which is the starting point for our decking.

For the first piece, I cut a piece of 2x6 cedar decking to length and then rip it on the table saw 2 inches wide. I rip it wider than the



Whenever I can, I prefer to use 2x6 for my decking. Here, I’m cutting the first piece to length before ripping it on the table saw.



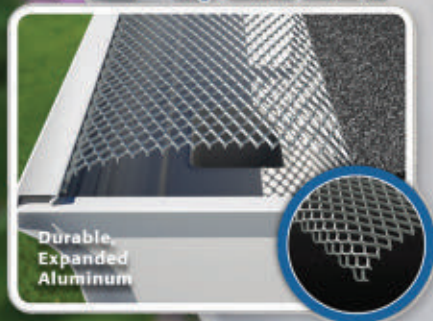
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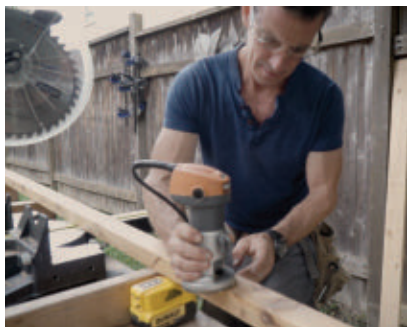
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BACK TO THE BASE-ICS

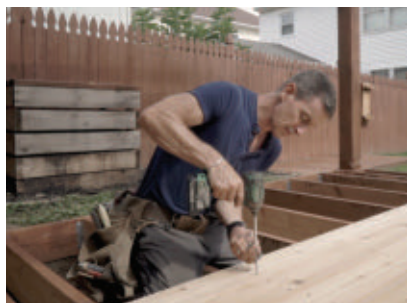
band joist to give myself a little wiggle room in case something doesn't fit.

Before installing this ripper, I use my router and a roundover bit to ease the cut edge. Then, I install the piece, factory edge facing outward so no marks from the table saw are showing.



Rounding the edge of the first decking board with a router will eliminate sharp edges.

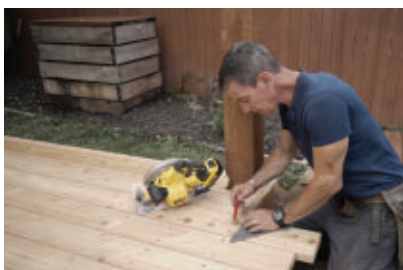
The second deck board is cut to length and slots directly between the posts. For the next two or three boards, I cut them to finished length and install with a 1/2-in. overhang just like the first piece. The remaining boards run long.



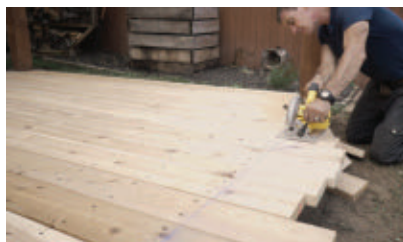
Cedar deck boards should be installed with a gap between them for expansion and contraction.

Use a screw or 16-penny nail as a spacer between cedar deck boards. Unlike PT lumber, cedar is kiln-dried and needs room to expand and contract.

I cut the "wild" boards to length all at once with a circular saw, marking the cut with a chalk line. To register my chalk line exactly where I want it, I align it with a square across the first board and mark it with my pencil. Blue chalk works best, because red or black chalk is pretty much permanent. Keep the saw moving as much as possible during this long cut, which makes it easier to follow a straight line and minimizes burn marks.



Square up your chalk line to help make a more accurate cut across the deck boards.



Set the blade depth to cut just through the thickness of the boards, and keep the saw moving forward until completing the full pass.

TRIM DETAILS

On this unique job (maybe the first of its kind, but who's counting?), I needed to clean up the bottoms of the sawn cedar posts. They had been weed-whacked within an inch of their life when the base was grass (design flaw, I know; mea culpa). To do this, I made what I call "medallions" but what essentially amount to plinth blocks for each face of the post. Necessity is sometimes the mother of invention, and I like the look.

Twelve inches high with chamfered tops, they add a cool detail to an otherwise simple post. I include this because you can also use scraps to make other trim details like wraps or small shelves, or wherever your imagination takes you. **EHT**

Editor's Note: Mark Clement's website is www.MyFixitUpLife.com. Follow him on YouTube at www.YouTube.com/MyFixitUpLife.



Add trim details such as plinth blocks, molding, shelving, etc. to customize your project.

INSIDE THE BOX



Building the box is like having a full-size blueprint. With it, you can...

- Precisely layout the post hole locations
- Remove the box to dig the holes with no obstructions
- Put the box back on layout.

(I mark its location by gouging the grass with my Hyde multi-tool so I know where the box goes.)

- Use the box to support and brace posts before pouring concrete.

EVERY DECK CAN BE A REFERRAL



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FLOORING TRENDS IN 2018

When it comes to selecting a floor, homeowners always search for the right balance of value, durability and style. A flooring material's value and durability remain fixed variables in these decisions, but popular styles are susceptible to change over time, so it's smart to stay ahead of the curve. Here's a look at some of the latest trends in flooring for 2018.

PERFECTING IMPERFECTION IN WOOD FLOORS

Our friends at Lumber Liquidators have one of the largest inventories of prefinished and unfinished hardwood floors in the industry, and the company offers suggestions from some top interior designers in its Spring 2018 Style Report. The look of real wood remains popular for its warmth and timeless appeal, and some of the latest styles embrace wood's natural imperfection. New flooring options of distressed hardwood and wood-look floors highlight the contrasting tones and unpredictable patterns of genuine wood-grain. According to the Style Report, "Natural knots and cracks offer unique character. Whether real or mimicked, rugged textures and weathered finishes help create timeworn spaces."

Lumber Liquidators' new Tribeca Oak hardwood captures this sought-after authentic look and feel. For a water-resistant option, the company's Rocky Coast Pine engineered vinyl plank gives a weathered wood look to a snap-together floating floor.

Running with this trend of weathered materials, the look of the "industrial home" also remains hot with designers. However, the industrial aesthetic is softening, notes the Style Report: "Oxidized surfaces, weathered metals, and wood bring in a softness and natural component." The industrial style incorporates elements from old warehouses and industrial buildings, like brick, steel and concrete, or exposed pipes. Wood remains a key element to provide an organic contrast. This trend blends many textures and techniques to allow plenty of design flexibility.

FLOORING TRENDS IN 2018



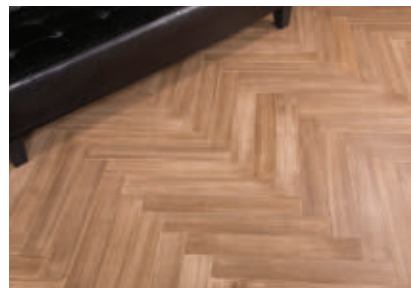
For an industrial look, Lumber Liquidators offers darker toned distressed wood-look floors like Copper Barrel Oak or Timber Wolf Pine engineered vinyl plank.

RETRO BOARD STYLES

Regarding hardwood flooring trends, the experts at SMART

Carpet & Flooring expect to see a return to vintage and retro looks. In addition to distressed hardwoods (and wood-look) floors, the company forecasts an uptick in wide-plank flooring—hardwood planks that are 5 or even 7 inches wide, which will make any space look larger. Flooring with planks of varying widths will also be popular. According to SMART's trend report: "Reminiscent of historic homes when nothing went to waste, mixed-width wood flooring makes for a one-of-a-kind look that brightens and freshens any room. Choose any combination of widths for this trend: Let your personal aesthetic be your guide." Parquet floors will see a comeback. This vintage, mid-century "chevron" flooring can

be combined with other 2018 trends, including distressed wood, cool gray wood tones, or even wide plank flooring.



Riffing on the parquet floor trend, Cali Bamboo has launched seven new bamboo floors, including two made for herringbone style installations. Cali Bamboo President, Doug Jackson says, "We put a massive effort into spotting and acting on trends before they hit the broader North American market, and have

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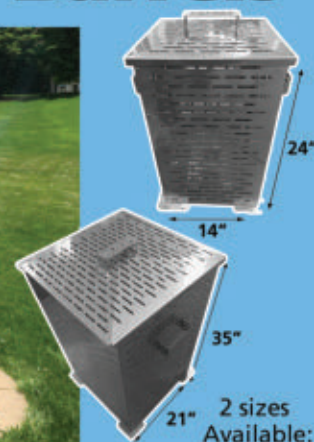
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FLOORING SYSTEMS

FLOORING TRENDS IN 2018

been tracking parquet-type patterns like herringbone in Europe.” The herringbone pattern was used by the ancient Romans to stabilize brick roads, and was first adopted for wood flooring in the 16th century.

PET FRIENDLY CARPET

Many homeowners love carpet for its warmth, softness, and the many available colors and patterns, but this is one flooring option that can be especially



vulnerable to indoor pets.

Cleanup after accidents is more difficult than with vinyl, tile or hardwood flooring.

For homes with household pets, SmartStrand Forever Clean carpet from Mohawk Flooring now features All Pet Protection and Warranty, the only pet-friendly carpet protection system that covers all pets, all accidents, all the time. The new carpet features zero-percent moisture absorption to reduce pet odors in the carpet fiber. The Nanoloc spill and soil shield ensures quick and easy cleanup, making it three times easier to clean dirt, hair and pet dander. SmartStrand Forever Clean carpet offers lifetime, built-in stain protection.

BACK IN BLACK FOR TILE FLOORS

According to Crossville Ceramic's style guide, *Color Trends 2018*, porcelain tile is



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FLOORING TRENDS IN 2018

trending in the style of a brooding teenager, with dark and moody colors. Black, and its many variations, offers endless design possibilities because it acts like a neutral and goes with everything,

while highlighting the bold color choices that are blended with it. Use black tile flooring when you want a counterpoint to a color accent, such as a front door or fireplace. Black porcelain tile is

available in a wide range of shades and textures.

LOW-MAINTENANCE PORCH FLOORING

Featuring patented Eovations technology, Deckorators porch flooring provides the industry's best strength-to-weight ratio and has virtually no thermal expansion or contraction. Made from a blend of polypropylene and mineral filler, the flooring is lightweight but has a fiber-like structure inside, similar to wood, and offers unmatched strength. The lightweight porch flooring is easy-to-handle on the job site and won't splinter, sag, chalk or crack unlike other porch

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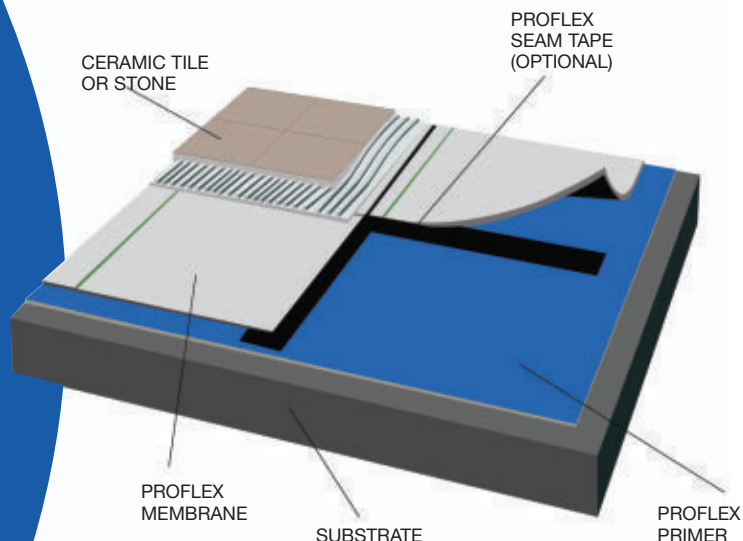


flooring options. Available in tongue-and-groove or solid edge for easy installation, these ultra-low maintenance boards are available in three colors that offer the traditional look of painted wood: Chicory (brown, variegated), Kettle (gray) and Macadamia (beige, non-variegated). **EHT**



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are composite underlayments consisting of petroleum and rubber based materials laminated to a high-strength reinforcing facer fabric. The product has excellent strength and elongation properties designed to be used in a variety of building and remodeling applications. Proflex membranes provide a variety of benefits and protection in the following areas:



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Proflex membranes, installed in a specific manner, will provide a barrier against the transmission of moisture vapor from a substrate to a finished flooring surface.

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Specific Proflex membranes may be used in some waterproofing applications (contact technical support for additional information).

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7 Tips to Weather-seal Your House



© Anastasia Smanyuk

By Tom Matthews

A leaky house is a lot like having a leaky wallet. You pay good money to heat the home in the winter and to cool it during summer, so when the conditioned air escapes through leaks in the building envelope, that's money down the drain. Here are a few tips to help keep the weather outside and your conditioned air in the house.

WEATHER-STRIPPING

Seal leaks between moving parts of the home with various types of weather-stripping. "Moving" parts include doors and windows that open and close, which are susceptible to leaks

around the edges. A general rule of thumb: If you can see light between the closed door and the jamb, then you have a problem.

For doorways, one of the best types of weather-stripping has a rigid aluminum bar along with a soft rubber gasket, called a bulb, which compresses against the closed door to prevent the passage of air and moisture.

Also available are adhesive compression strips that include open- and closed-cell foam or rubber tapes, as well as tubular strips. The open-cell tape will give you a quick fix. Closed-cell tapes allow you to correctly size the gap you are working with and are more

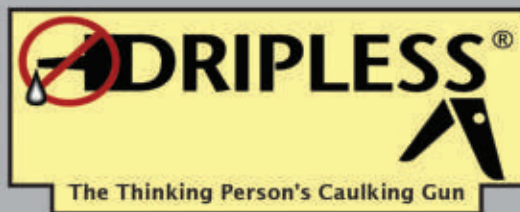
The best weather-stripping for doors is made from aluminum strips that have a rubber bulb which compresses to seal around the door's edges.



The aluminum strips can be cut to fit and either screwed or adhered to the door jamb.



Gaps at beneath a door should be sealed, and an easy method is to attach a sweep to the door's bottom to protect against drafts and insects.



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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.



A caulk/sealant product should be used to seal the non-moving joints of the house. For exterior applications, check the sealant's packaging for indications that the product is "waterproof," "adhesive," and "elastic/flexible." Whereas silicone has long been a popular sealant, keep in mind that standard silicone will not retain paint, so if you plan to paint the caulk bead, make sure your silicone product is specifically advertised as "paintable."

CAULK/SEALANTS

Use caulking/sealant between the nonmoving parts of the home from window casing and door jambs to baseboards and siding. You can choose from a wide variety of products, including silicone-, water-, or rubber-based sealants.

Check the caulk/sealant product's packaging for indications that it will work well for exterior or interior use. Look for words like "elastomeric" and "flexible," which means the bead will bend and stretch in lieu of breaking when the surrounding substrates move with changes in temperature or moisture.

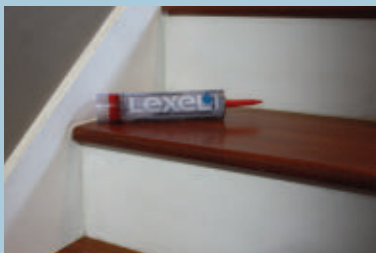
"Adhesive" is another good characteristic for caulks, because if a bead pulls away from the sub-



Use a utility knife to cut the caulk nozzle at a 45-degree angle.

AN ELASTIC SEALANT CAN ABSORB VIBRATION

You probably won't find this information in the marketing materials for a caulk/sealant, but a product that maintains elasticity over time to absorb movement in the surrounding materials can have the side benefit of muffling the sounds associated with that movement. Take this staircase, for example. Some slight movement in the treads had caused popping and creaking as people walked up and down them. We sealed the joints surrounding the treads with an elastic Lexel sealant, which absorbed the movement, and as a result the pops and creaks disappeared.



A vertical advertisement for T-Rex Ferociously Strong Tape. At the top, a person in a plaid shirt and work boots is shown using a utility knife to cut through a thick log. Below this, the text 'BITE HARD' is written in large, white, jagged letters. Underneath is a roll of black tape with 'T-Rex FEROCIOUSLY STRONG TAPE' printed on it. Further down, the text 'CONQUER THE MOST FEROCIOUS PROJECTS WITH T-Rex® TAPE' is displayed. At the bottom, there is a small illustration of a green T-Rex head and the text 'T-Rex FEROCIOUSLY STRONG TAPE'. The website 'T-RexTape.com' is listed at the very bottom, along with a copyright notice: '©Shurtech Brands, LLC. 2016/775895. All Rights Reserved.'

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Another choice for your indoor/outdoor projects is Lifetime Ultra 230. Packed with features, Lifetime Ultra 230 Premium Elastomeric Acrylic Latex Sealant is formulated with a lifetime durability guarantee on a variety of substrates, indoors or outdoors. Lifetime Ultra 230 is permanently flexible and has HomeShield Antimicrobial Protection to defend your project against the worst types of mold and mildew. Lifetime Ultra 230 is also VOC-compliant, non-corrosive and can be cleaned up with water. You have the option of painting this caulk a custom color or saving time by using one of its 6 shades.

Learn more at www.reddevil.com.



strate, then the seal has failed. Some high-quality caulk/sealants will even stick to wet surfaces.

"Waterproof" sealant is what you'll need for exterior applications, and "Mildew-resistant" is a crucial characteristic of visible caulk used around moisture-prone areas such as showers and bathrooms.

If you plan to paint the caulk bead, then look for "paintable" on your product package, because not all sealants will hold paint. Conventional silicone sealant will NOT accept paint. "Paintable" caulks, however, will readily accept a new topcoat in your choice of color.

SEAL LARGE JOINTS

When you need to use caulk to seal a joint larger than 1/4-in. wide, use a foam backer rod as a filler before applying the caulk. Less expensive than caulk, the rods provide a cheaper way to fill

the empty space than using caulk alone. Plus, when caulk is applied over a backer rod, it forms an "hourglass" shape with large surface areas of adhesion at the sides of the joint. The hourglass shape of the caulk bead withstands joint movement better than any other configuration.



For very large gaps, use a foam backer rod beneath the caulk bead to conserve your caulk. Sashco manufactures foam backer rods in a variety of sizes for this application.



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DO IT YOURSELF

Furthermore, because there is no caulk adhesion at the rear of the joint, the joint is less susceptible to stresses that cause early failure.

FILLING LARGE HIDDEN GAPS

Spray-in expandable foam is another popular sealant for use in non-visible areas of the home, such as the exposed framing around doors, windows, pipes and other wall penetrations. The foam expands so it not only seals but also fills large gaps and insulates spaces with a thermal break. These products are sold at home centers in aerosol cans under brand names like Touch 'n Foam or Great Stuff.

It's important to select the right insulating foam for the job; too much expansion in the wrong

place can put unwanted stress on the construction. Use the "no warp" formula of expandable foam around windows and door, so the frames don't bow from the pressure of the expanding foam.

PREP THE SURFACE

Whether you're using liquid caulk or adhesive weather-stripping, always clean the surface of the work area thoroughly before applying the product. This commonly overlooked step will ensure the best adhesion, prevent grit and debris from disrupting the application, and in the case of caulk, it will keep unsightly dirt and dust from becoming embedded in your fresh bead. Scrub the surface with mineral spirits and an abrasive pad to get rid of any old sealant residue prior to replacing it.



For any visible or decorative caulk applications, you can shape the bead to a variety of sizes and profiles using plastic or rubber caulk-shaping tools that screed off excess sealant.


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DRAW YOUR GUN

When using a caulk gun, cut the cartridge nozzle at a 45-degree angle with an opening size of 3/8 inch. Lay the bead parallel to the 45-degree nozzle. Use the razor of a utility knife to cut the nozzle,

because the clamping action of a caulk-gun cutter can distort the nozzle opening, which can then impede application of the product. Hold the caulk gun at a 90-degree angle to the wall as you move the gun to lay the caulk bead. The

right-angle position strikes a balance between pushing and pulling the bead for consistent application and easy visibility on both sides of the nozzle.

SHAPE THE BEAD

Caulking can be a messy job, and there's no shame in masking off a caulk bead with painter's tape. If you're not an ace with the caulk gun, it's an easy way to eliminate mess and spare yourself a lot of cleanup. Tool the edges of the bead level with the tape and remove the tape before the caulk dries.

A simple tool for shaping caulk is a short wooden dowel (or a variety of dowels of different sizes to create beads of varying sizes). Wet the wood and draw the round end of the dowel over the caulk bead to scrape away excess product and press the bead into a concave shape. Another option is a rubberized shaping tool, which has a large enough working surface to clean away most of the excess caulk while offering a variety of bead shapes and sizes. Shaping tools are easy to use and wipe clean when done.

Keep some spare plastic or paper bags on hand to catch, collect and dispose of the excess caulk that accumulates from shaping the bead. **EHT**



Some sealants are formulated for specific jobs. You'll find specialty caulks such as Through the Roof! and Mor-Flexx for roof-sealing and mortar-repair applications, respectively.



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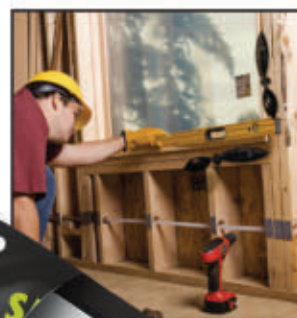
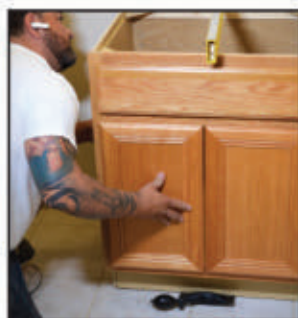
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Why is My Car AC Blowing Hot Air?



Common Easy-to-Fix Air Conditioning Problems:

- Blocked Condenser
- Broken Condenser
- Low refrigerant
- Broken cooling fans

The condenser in your air conditioning system looks a lot like a radiator and is mounted at the front of your vehicle. It is used to cool the hot compressed refrigerant back to ambient temperature as it comes from your compressor. It uses the air your car is traveling through to do that. If this isn't accomplished, the still warm refrigerant will travel through the expansion valve and rather than getting comfortably cold, it is only cooled back down to ambient temperature and will cause your AC to blow hot. Since the condenser is at the front of your vehicle, it has the opportunity to get clogged by all kinds of road debris from leaves to plastic bags or anything else you might stumble upon. A quick visual inspection and removal of these air blocking items may return your air conditioning to normal operation.

Since your condenser is at the front of your vehicle it is also subject to less kind road debris like rocks, sticks or other hard objects that may puncture it. If the puncture is large and easy to see, replacement is a must. Before you head back to the dealership, consider changing the condenser yourself. They often are mounted to your car's frame with just a few bolts, only have 2 refrigerant lines which should be easy to remove, and are easily accessible since they are at the front of your

Jumping into your car after a sunny spring day can be an unwelcome surprise. The windows and cabin of your vehicle act a lot like a greenhouse when it's left in direct sunlight. The sun's energy can enter through your windows or be absorbed by the metal roof but has no way to escape. This heat is trapped and can cause the interior of your vehicle to get extremely hot on sunny days. You can help mitigate this effect by tinting your windows, choosing a light color paint or using a windshield sunshade, but those are not solutions. They just lessen the problem.

The great thing is we live in a country with air conditioning almost everywhere. Let's be honest, when a soft top jeep

has air conditioning as an option, we're a country that likes to be comfortable. So you jump into your hot car, throw on the AC and you get hot air blowing. Not to worry, it takes a few seconds for the air conditioning system to come up to pressure and start cooling your cabin air. Now you've waited 15 seconds.. now 30.. now 2 minutes and you're still getting nothing but hot air.

So now that you are sweating and frustrated, it can be tempting to zip into the dealership and pay them whatever they ask to fix your air conditioning. This is an option, but before you break the bank, head home and let's take a look at some common easy-to-fix problems that would make you ask: Why is my car AC blowing hot air?

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vehicle. If you cannot see the puncture, consider adding UV dye to your air conditioning system to identify the puncture point, or simply add Red Angel A/C Refrigerant Stop Leak to your air conditioning system to quickly and permanently seal the leak.

Similarly, you may have a low refrigerant situation due to other causes like loose connections, old hoses or the simple escape of refrigerant over time. These small leaks can cause your air conditioning system to stop blowing cold air. Before you recharge your air conditioning system, add Red Angel to ensure your system is properly sealed and will stay charged.

The last easy to fix problem you may have with your vehicle's air condition system is a broken cooling fan. The condenser can only cool the refrigerant if it has air moving over it. If you are driving at low speeds or stopped in traffic or at a light, a fan can provide the adequate air flow to keep your air conditioning system working properly. Over time this cooling fan may become worn

out and stop working. It also may blow a fuse or become clogged or blocked by debris. Be careful when checking around any fan as it may start at any time! Checking to make sure the cooling fan has power and is working properly will ensure your air conditioning system works under any driving conditions.

A simple visual inspection and a can of Red Angel A/C Refrigerant Stop Leak is all you need to solve all the common easy-to-fix problems with your air conditioning system! **EHT**

***Editor's Note:** This article is sponsored by BlueDevil Products®, manufacturers of quality sealants for the automotive aftermarket industry, supplying over 400 distribution centers across North America, South America, Europe, Asia and South Africa. For more information on BlueDevil Products, visit www.gobdp.com.*

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Prep Your Next Paint Project like a Pro



If you want a pro-quality paint job, you should work like the pros do. And professional painters know the importance of preparing a jobsite to avoid messes. Whereas a DIY'er might throw down a flimsy plastic sheet to protect the floor, a professional paint crew will make use of wall-to-wall floor coverings and masking products that take job protection to the next level.

The paint supply company Trimaco offers a full line of products for comprehensive protection of your next remodeling project.

MASKING

Rather than simply draping a sheet over something to protect it, the best practice is to seal the edges to prevent dust, debris or paint from getting where you don't want it. Trimaco's Easy Mask Tape & Drape Pre-taped Masking Film can protect areas where you want to catch drips and overspray. Tape is pre-applied along one edge of a high-density masking film, and a special coating helps it cling to the protected surface— even in windy conditions or with spray applicators.



Trimaco offers self-adhering masking film, as well as self-adhering plastic sheeting.



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For large jobs, you can apply Tape & Drape masking film with the Easy Mask QM5000 PRO, a hand-held tool that makes it fast and easy to apply rolls of the film.



DROP CLOTHS

Traditional canvas drop cloths are available in multiple ounce weights and sizes, from lightweight 6-oz. drops to heavy-duty 12-oz. drops. All Trimaco drop cloths are full piece, with no remnants or scraps, to protect surfaces during painting, staining, wallpapering and more. They're washable and reusable, and the weight of the canvas helps to keep them in place better than lightweight plastic drop cloths. DIY'ers can even use canvas drop cloths for slip covers and window coverings.

Trimaco also has the Stay Put canvas drop cloth, which is 300-percent more slip resistant than 8-oz. canvas, so it stays beneath your feet. The drop consists of two layers—absorbent canvas and a durable non-slip backing. Use the canvas side up to keep tracking to a minimum.



The company also sells vinyl, butyl, polypropylene and plastic drop cloths for a variety of jobs.

A Quick Drop folding mat is easy to handle and maneuver for smaller, targeted jobs. Pleated for easy folding memory, simply drop it, kick into place and start painting. Made of coated fabric, Quick Drop is absorbent and leak-resistant to paints, stains, solvents and more.

Perfect for touchups and punch lists, this durable drop cloth fits in hard-to-reach spaces and works great on countertops, carpet, hardwoods, vinyl and tile floors. Use time and time again, simply folding in between jobs for easy storage.

DUST CONTAINMENT

Home remodeling generates a lot of dust, and you want to keep it as contained as possible. Trimaco's collection of dust-containment products will protect against all kinds of dust, including airborne dust, combustible dust, silica dust and more.

The E-Z Up Dust Containment Pole works with plastic sheeting to create a floor-to-ceiling dust barrier on the jobsite. The steel pole adjusts to a maximum height of 12 feet. Simply clip the sheet onto the quick clip and adjust the pole to ceiling height with the twist-lock technology. The unique bottom spring ensures a snug fit.

You can also create an instant doorway in and out of the work

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Patented Wings



SPOT LIGHT



space. The Trimaco EZ Up Peel + Stick Zipper creates an instant door on tarps, plastic coverings and shrink wraps. It provides

instant resealable access within plastic sheeting, tarps and poly or vinyl fabrics. Plus, the zipper is double sided for easy operation from either side.

DIY Tip: To mitigate the dust that does make it into the air inside your home, arrange a box

fan in an open window to create a draft that helps expel airborne dust out of the living space. **EHT**

To learn more about these paint-prep products and explore a wide variety of professional equipment, visit trimaco.com.



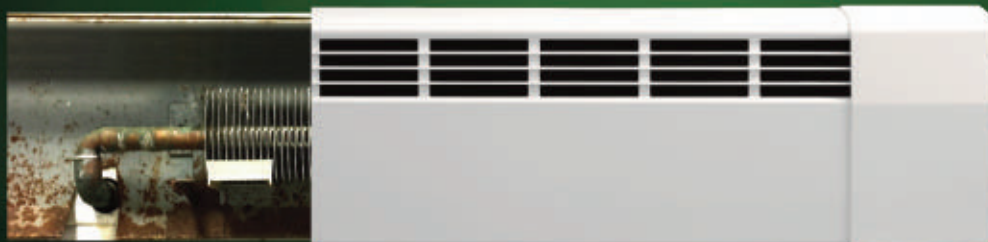
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Root Assassin Garden Tool Co. are known for their patented Root Assassin Shovel & Saw (48- and 32-in. D-Handle), popular with anyone needing to slice through roots "like butta!" when transplanting trees and bushes, clearing overgrown areas, trimming tree branches, irrigation trenching and more. Root Assassin's new One Shot Shovel follows the same innovative style, incorporating patented "wings" on the sides of the shovel blade. The One Shot shovels look like a standard steel spade, but they're enhanced with steel sides and a large steel foot step on the back of the blade. The One Shot Shovel ensures that whatever is lifted, whether dirt, rocks, mulch, etc., stays on the shovel. No spilling off the sides to ruin your grass or patio, requiring a rake or broom cleanup. Additionally, the extra-large back-end foot step spreads the pressure over the wider foot area for greater leverage and more comfortable operation. The One Shot Shovels are available in 43-in. D-Handle and 60-in. straight long handles. The poles are rugged fiberglass and the blades are quality industrial steel. Both sizes weight approximately 4 lbs. each and they're backed by a Lifetime Replacement Warranty. Visit www.RootAssassinShovel.com.

PATHWAY 3G MODULAR ACCESS SYSTEM

If you or someone you love is considering home modifications in order to live independently and provide accessibility, the options can be overwhelming. To find a fast, simple, yet customized solution to suit your needs, EZ-Access offers the Pathway 3G Modular Access System, an excellent choice when your residential access requirements extend beyond the scope of a portable ramp. This American-made aluminum ramp system will increase security for you and your loved ones by eliminating potential hazards and providing a smooth, inclined path. By combining ramps, platforms and stairs, all of which may be configured in a variety of ways, you can create the most ideal system that provides the freedom to enter and exit the home. A variety of surface options and handrail styles are also available to best suit your environment and preference. The Pathway 3G will not deteriorate in the outdoor elements, and all surface options feature superior slip-resistance to maintain traction in any weather. Sides are finished and flush with no hazardous nuts or bolts protruding into the usable ramp area. All



handrail styles feature a smooth finish and continuous top rail. Protected by a lifetime warranty and made from aircraft-grade aluminum, the Pathway 3G requires minimal tools and relies on few components and hardware for assembly. With no construction or poured footers, installation is simple, and the ramp system can continually be added upon, reconfigured, or moved to fit changing needs. Typically, no permits are required since the system is not altering or adding to the structure of the residence, which means little or no long-term impact to the yard or home, as well as no effect on the home's property value. Visit www.ezaccess.com

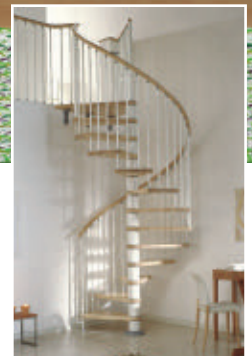
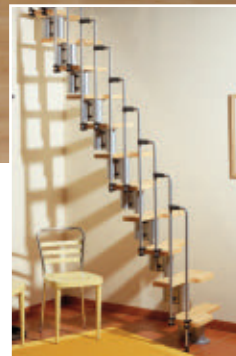
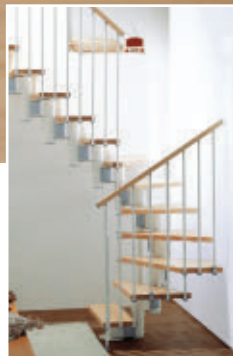
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REVITAL/LINE BASEBOARD REPLACEMENT COVER

Slant/Fin is America's largest manufacturer of baseboard heating equipment, and the company's new line of baseboard replacement covers are designed for convenient, long lasting and cost effective installation. It's called the Revital/Line, an Extruded Aluminum Baseboard Replacement Cover, and the first product on the market designed by an established heating company. It offers an easy way to upgrade worn or damaged covers on virtually any residential standard baseboard. Revital/Line covers are supplied in standard sizes up to 8 ft. long to fit standard residential baseboard. Simply remove the front panel and damper and slip it into place over the existing back panel. There's no need to drain the boiler or cut the pipe, and virtually no tools are required for most installations. The filler sleeves, end plates and other accessories allow for a neat finished look in a fraction of the time it would take to replace the full baseboard. The baseboard covers are fabricated from recycled aluminum and lab-tested to allow for maximum heat output (up to 40 percent more than other brands), while at the same time are aesthetically pleasing. The powder-coated finish is durable, long lasting, is offered in eight decorator colors, and stocked in Brite White. Visit slantfin.com.



Simply remove the front panel and damper and slip it into place over the existing back panel. There's no need to drain the boiler or cut the pipe, and virtually no tools are required for most installations. The filler sleeves, end plates and other accessories allow for a neat finished look in a fraction of the time it would take to replace the full baseboard. The baseboard covers are fabricated from recycled aluminum and lab-tested to allow for maximum heat output (up to 40 percent more than other brands), while at the same time are aesthetically pleasing. The powder-coated finish is durable, long lasting, is offered in eight decorator colors, and stocked in Brite White. Visit slantfin.com.

NOVA NAUTILUS CABLE RAILING

Atlantis Rail's Nautilus Railing System is nothing new, having been a customer favorite for years, but the company has now teamed the Nautilus System up with the new NOVA II aluminum post kits to create the NOVA Nautilus System. It looks stunning, and is affordable and easy to install. The NOVA Nautilus System utilizes predrilled aluminum posts with a 2-in. stainless steel top and optional bottom rail. It features multiple color options of black, white or bronze to complement any application. The rails are structural strength stainless steel, so the system can be configured with a top rail only or a bottom rail can be added. Cable spacing at 2-3/4in. allows the posts to be spaced up to 6 ft. apart when using a cable stabilizer in the middle, which further reduces cost and expedites installation. A proprietary side-mount fitting with an insulating gasket is

used to mount the rails to the post, eliminating concern about potential issues in combining dissimilar metals. HandiSwage components hide the cable connections inside the post, and the easy-to-use swage tool and cover nut sets ensure easy installation and a finished look. Visit www.atlantisrail.com.



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The 2030 Broadcast Spreader offers the homeowner a large capacity spreader with features typically found on commercial models. The 2030 is equipped with 8-in./20 cm. deep lug poly wheels that roll easily over rough surfaces. The rust-proof poly hopper holds 65 lb./30 kg. of material, and the exclusive EV-N-SPRED 3-hole drop shutoff system ensures even distribution of all granular materials. Fully assembled in the box, this unit comes ready to go. Visit earthway.com.



CONTEMPO APRON-FRONT FARMHOUSE SINKS

Bocchi USA's newly-launched farmhouse-inspired line of fireclay kitchen centerpieces includes the Contempo Apron-Front Farmhouse Sinks. The new sinks feature an exclusive high-pressure organic fireclay construction, which is 100-percent non-porous with Super Smooth Surface technology that has been developed to minimize lime stains, undesirable dirt and bacteria on ceramic surfaces. Fireclay is a 100-percent natural and recyclable material that was used by craftsmen for centuries.



Every Bocchi sink incorporates Clean Plus+ Technology to create a hydrophobic effect to prevent lime and dirt from accumulating. Available in a wide range of measurements to fit any countertop, each sink includes a removable protective bottom grid and strainer. Two standard colors (white and biscuit) and seven premium colors are available. Visit www.bocchiusa.com.

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DYNATRAP FLYLIGHT

DynaTrap is the creator of technology-driven, indoor/outdoor insect and mosquito traps that are chemical-, pesticide-, and hassle-free. The company now introduced the Flylight Insect Trap, which delivers up to 600 square feet of superior protection against disease-carrying flies, mosquitoes and other flying insects. It utilizes DynaTrap's proprietary AtraktaGlo Technology to produce a warm UV light at a specifically targeted wavelength, which is irresistibly attractive to insects. The non-toxic StickyTech Glue Card then traps the bugs and conceals them behind a sleek, decorative aluminum panel. "Just plug it in, let it run, and enjoy a bug-free home," says Juan Rocha, DynaTrap President. "And while many other bug zappers and eliminators are noisy and obtrusive, Flylight is completely silent and packaged in a low-profile, tasteful, and easy-to-install aluminum unit." Flylight comes in three different models, as well as two different color options — black and white. The deluxe model comes with two AC outlets and two USB ports to maximize outlet utility. Each Flylight comes with a replaceable UV Bulb (rated for approximately 3000 hours), three StickyTech Glue Card replacements (that last approximately 30 days each), and a one-year warranty on the device. Visit www.dynatrap.com.

EARTHQUAKE VERSA ROTOTILLER/CULTIVATOR

A 21-inch front tine tiller, VERSA quickly turns into an 11-inch cultivator with simple, tool-less removal of its outer tines and shields. As a tiller, VERSA delivers the power to break new ground and prepare garden beds in the spring. The poly Tufflex side shields and outer tines are easily removed without tools, converting the unit from a full-size tiller into a narrow 11-inch-wide cultivator for controlling weeds, aerating soil between growing plants, and maintaining planting beds and crop rows in summer. In addition to quick and simple removal of side shields and adjustment of tine width from 21 to 16 or 11 inches, four unique features of the VERSA provide important advantages over other tillers: First, its right-sized, energy-efficient Viper 99cc engine gives VERSA plenty of power while saving gas and reducing operating costs. Second, with the profile of its engine, combined with a bronze gear drive transmission arranged horizontally instead of vertically, the VERSA offers the lowest center-of-gravity of any front-tine tiller for ground-hugging stability and control. Third, for optimal maneuverability, the VERSA has a tighter footprint than other tillers, allowing it to pivot and change direction within its own footprint. Fourth, the Tufflex poly side shields are an industry first in front tine tilling—not only easy to remove but tough and durable. They can take a beating from thrown rocks, sticks and other hard objects without getting

dented or bent like metal shields, and they're shaped to direct churned soil downward. Visit www.getearthquake.com.



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The Oak 70.XTRA is an adjustable premier series spiral staircase that features solid Oak wooden stair treads and landing to complement and add style to any interior living space. Surrounding the full length of the staircase, the horizontal balusters and railing design is visually unique when compared to the traditional vertical baluster design of most stairs. The staircase can be easily installed by the homeowner in a single day using common household tools. The Oak 70.XTRA is available in 2 diameter sizes and is available in 2 choices of color... Hi-Gloss Black and Hi-Gloss White.

- Standard kit includes 12 oak wood stair treads, a landing, a complete handrail, and all necessary hardware and connectors.
- Diameters available include a 5 ft. 3 in. model and a 4 ft. 3 in. model.
- The height range for the standard kit is adjustable from 8 ft. 3 in. to 10 ft. 2 7/8 in. and with additional components, can be installed to a maximum height of 11 ft. 9 5/16 in.
- Powder coat finished painted in either Hi-Gloss Black or Hi-Gloss White.
- Can be installed in a clockwise or counterclockwise rotation.
- Stair treads and landing are made of solid Oak wood with a natural stain and a polyurethane protective coating.
- Balcony rail kits are available in matching color and horizontal baluster and railing design.
- Handrail is manufactured from an aluminum core surrounded by a soft PVC cover to allow the handrail to be curved at the time of installation to accommodate the radius of the staircase.
- Rise between stair treads is adjustable from 8 3/8 in. to 9 1/4 in.
- Interior installation only.
- A complete installation guide is included in all kits and an installation video is available upon request.
- Homeowner should consult with local building department concerning building codes prior to purchase.



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