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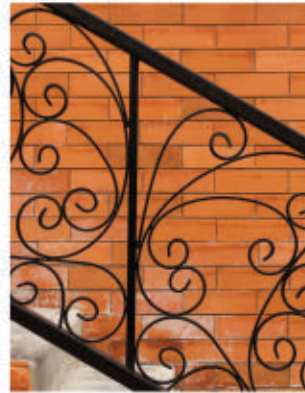
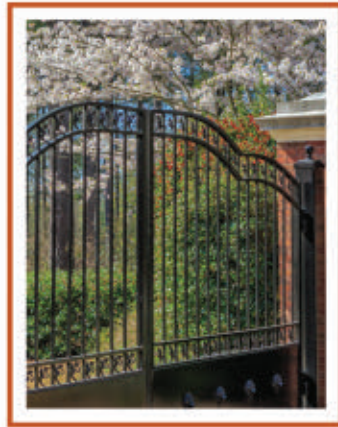
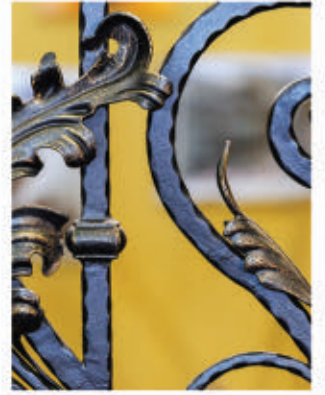
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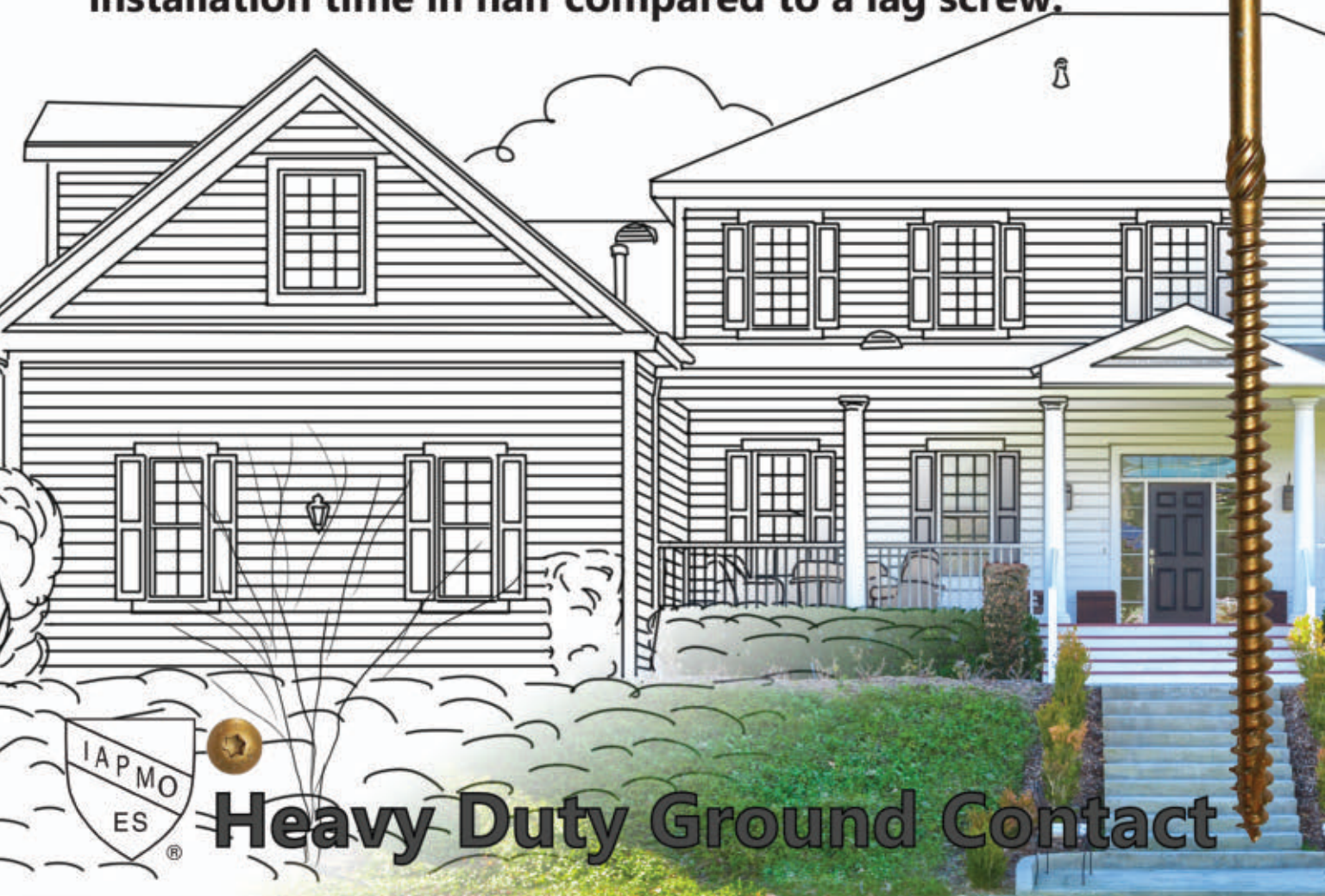
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I recently attended a launch event for the new line of Craftsman tools. In Baltimore, Maryland, I joined dozens of other media representatives in the arenas of home improvement, automotive and landscaping to get an advance look at 1,200 new products the company is unrolling in late 2018. We ate lots of blue crab, raced go-carts (and lawnmowers), and got up close and personal with a brand-new array of power tools and hand tools.

Some of my favorite items include a self-calibrating stud finder that gives separate indications for the edge of a stud and the center of a stud. The company's new walk-behind mower starts with the push of a button, using the same V20 battery that powers the entire new Craftsman cordless tool line. We tested a cordless, compact wet-cutting tile saw that's easy to carry and operates off the same V20 battery. Plus, there's a new Craftsman tape measure that boasts an 11-foot standoff, which is handy when you're working by yourself.

And that's just the tip of the iceberg with hundreds of items set to roll out, including a full lineup of storage solutions, power tool accessories, plus gas-powered, cordless and corded outdoor equipment.

It's good to see this iconic brand reestablish itself in the world of tools. I used Craftsman tools growing up, as did my dad and his father as well. I'm a sucker for nostalgia, and I'm a fan of quality tools. And not only is Craftsman a fine American brand, but I was glad to learn of the company's renewed commitment to offer products that are made in the USA (using global materials).

"Made in the USA" is a strong selling point for some people, myself included. I like to think my home team in America can compete (and surpass) our friends overseas in terms of manufacturing quality products. Just like I would take pride in any job I've done well, I can also appreciate a job done well by my neighbors at Craftsman. I don't mean to detract from the fine engineering and manufacturing that brings us products from other countries—craftsmanship that I often use and always respect. But there is a certain emotional attachment to a quality tool made in the USA that foreign-made tools can't offer. And it goes a bit deeper than simply pulling for the home team.

If a tool was made in the USA, then an American worker made that tool. Moreover, an American workforce made that tool, meaning many different people filled very important roles to bring that tool from its initial concept to the sales channel. That means those people are engaged in meaningful work, they're providing for their families, they're

expanding the economy and giving rise to the myriad opportunities that a strong economy can bring to a country.

In other words, when a classic American company invests in American workers then everyone in America can eventually benefit down the line. So, good for Craftsman.



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Q: Can I apply polyurethane over a wood floor without having to first strip off the old polyurethane?

A: Yes, a polyurethane-finished hardwood can be recoated if you take the proper steps to prep the finish. First, lightly sand with No. 2 steel wool or a dull 120- to 150-grit abrasive screen using a heavy floor buffer. Using

a sanding block or 1/4-sheet sander, sand the corners, edges and beneath cabinet toe-kicks. Sweep up the dust and vacuum to clean the entire floor. Wipe a tack cloth over the floor to pick up remaining dust or debris. (Dampen the cloth with water, floor cleaner or paint thinner). Reapply the oil-based poly along the edges of the floor with a brush and then recoat the remainder of the floor with a lamb's wool applicator (or synthetic paint pad for thinner coat). Always apply the finish in the same direction of the wood grain.

Note: If using a water-based topcoat, avoid sanding the floor with steel wool and don't use paint thinner on your tack cloth. You will also need a special applicator for water-based polyurethane.

Q: What's the best way to mount a TV onto a brick wall?

A: To hang a TV on a brick or cement wall, we recommend using sleeve or wedge anchors and a metal TV mount. You will also need a hammer-drill and a masonry bit to drill pilot holes for the anchors. TV mounting products are available in a variety of shapes, sizes and designs, but generally require mounting a bracket onto the wall, and then mounting the TV to the bracket. Some larger systems have a separate bracket that mounts to the TV and then attaches to the wall bracket. Have an assistant help determine the best mounting location and then level the wall-mount on the wall. Adjust its position so the predrilled screw holes in the mounting plate are located over

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the mortar joints in the brick wall (rather than over the brick face, which is more brittle). Use at least four fastener locations in a rectangular pattern on the wall bracket. Mark the holes, remove the wall-mount, and use the hammer-drill to bore pilot holes the same diameter as your anchors (plus 1/4-in. deeper than their length). For brick, we recommend 1/4- or 3/8-in. sleeve anchors 3 inches long. Reposition the wall-mount. Make sure the washers are in place and the nuts are sitting flush on the ends of the sleeve anchors, then tap the sleeves into the holes. Use a

wrench to tighten down the nuts to secure the wall mount to the wall (usually 2-3 full rotations). Then, screw the TV (or TV bracket) to the wall-mount, according to your kit's instructions.

Q: I'm making a drainage ditch in my landscape. What type of rock should I use for the drainage?

A: Drainage gravel made of crushed rock (usually gray in color) is normally 1 to 2 inches long, also used for driveways and building foundations. Another option for drainage is shell gravel made of ground shells and other natural materials found on beaches, most often used in the coastal regions where it is produced. Some types of landscaping gravel are comprised of smooth, round stones selected as a more decorative option than the standard gray gravel. River rock is a popular type of smooth gravel and is usually 1 to 2 inches in diameter. This rock type is often installed in ponds or landscape areas with minimal foot traffic. Pebbles are another type of rounded drainage material much smaller than river rock and often used for French drain applications. Visit your local nurseries and garden centers to see a broad selection of drainage gravel in various aggregate sizes and color tones. **EHT**



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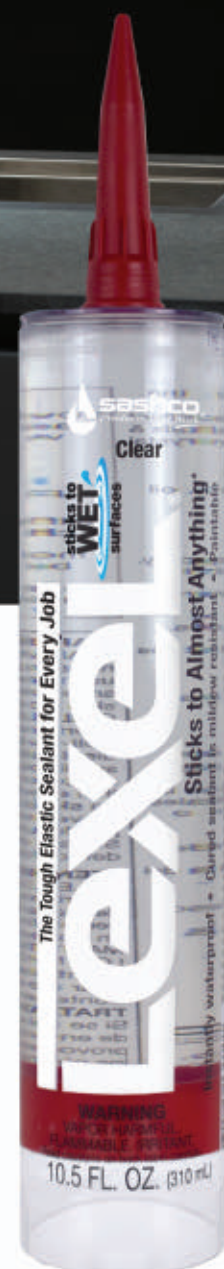


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A Close Look at Benchtop Sanders



By Joseph Truini

If you're an active do-it-yourselfer, woodworker or hobbyist, you probably have to sand wood on a regular basis. The often tedious and messy process becomes much easier and faster when you use an electric benchtop sander.

Unlike portable sanders, such as a belt sander or random orbit sander, benchtop sanders are stationary sanding machines that you can park on a workbench or set up on sawhorses. Generally speaking, benchtop sanders are much more powerful and have greater sanding capacity than portable sanders, but the real advantage is that you

can use both hands to control the workpiece.

Here, I'll take a detailed look at the three most popular benchtop models: belt-and-disk sander, oscillating spindle sander and drum sander. With these three sanders—and the correct abrasive—you can sand virtually any surface or edge you're likely to encounter. Each type of sander comes in different sizes and configurations, and in a wide range of prices.

Caution: Most benchtop sanders have a dust port for attaching a wet/dry vacuum, which does a

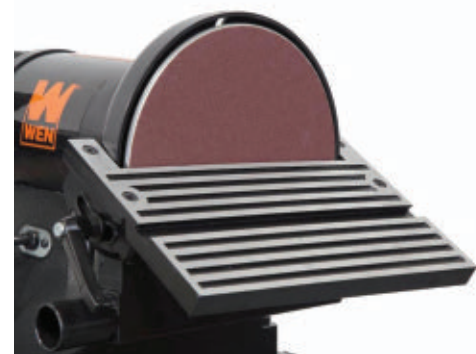
very good job at capturing a majority of the sanding dust. However, it's still advisable to wear a dust mask, or better yet, a dual-cartridge respirator when sanding wood, especially if the board is painted or varnished.

BELT-AND-DISK SANDER

This versatile two-in-one tool combines a large belt sander with a round disk sander into one compact, benchtop machine. The disk sander, which is typically between 6 and 10 inches in diameter, is ideal for sanding both square and curved ends onto boards. Plus, it's



As its name implies, a belt-and-disk sander consists of a round sanding disk and a large, flat sanding belt.



The adjustable table on the disk sander tilts up to at least 45 degrees to permit precise sanding of miters, bevels, chamfers and other angles.



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equipped with a tilting worktable that accepts a miter gauge so you can use the disk to precisely sand square and angled workpieces.



On most belt-and-disk sanders, the sanding belt can be positioned vertically for easier end sanding.

The belt sander, which is typically about 4×36 inches or 6×48 inches, has a large, flat platen that permits sanding long, wide boards. On most models, the belt is adjustable so you can set it horizontally, vertically or at an angle in between. If you're only going to get one benchtop sander, make it a belt-and-disk sander, and buy the largest one you can afford.

OSCILLATING SPINDLE SANDER

An oscillating spindle sander is the type of woodworking tool you could probably do without— that is, until you get one. Then you'll wonder how you ever got along without it! Not only is it a super-effective sanding machine, but it's also a blast to use.



The sanding drum of an oscillating spindle sander spins in circles and moves up and down at the same time.

An oscillating spindle sander is essentially a dual-motion drum sander built into a stationary table. But, unlike a standard drum sander, which just spins around, an oscillating spindle sander spins in circles and oscillates up and down simultaneously. The

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For sanding power on the go, the Craftsman V20 Random Orbit Sander with 12,000 OPM's is ideal for surface preparation, flattening seams, and removing paint or varnish. This smooth-running sander offers a low-profile design, includes a detachable dust bag and is vacuum compatible with most 1-1/4 in. hoses. It also is built with a dust-proof switch for durability. The EHT staff had an opportunity to test this new sander at the Craftsman Product Launch in Baltimore this year.

Visit www.craftsman.com.



The Ridgid Model EB4424 is an oscillating spindle sander that converts to an oscillating belt sander.

result is a near-perfect tool for precisely sanding curves, contours and other irregular shapes.

The sander comes with several interchangeable rubber drums (a.k.a. spindles) of various diameters, and an assortment of abrasive sleeves that slip onto the drums. Install the size drum that matches the radius or curve of the piece you're sanding.

It's worth mentioning that Ridgid makes a unique oscillating spindle sander that converts from spindle sanding to oscillating belt sanding, effectively doubling the versatility of the tool.

DRUM SANDER

Drum sanders were once only found in professional shops, but new benchtop models have brought drum sanding to the home woodworker as well. A drum sander is designed for smoothing long boards, panels and doors. It's essentially a giant, stationary belt sander.

To use the sander, start by turning the hand crank to adjust the opening in the machine to match the thickness of the workpiece. (The Jet model shown accommodates boards up to 3 inches thick and 20 inches wide.) Next, turn on the motor and feed the work into the

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sander. An auto-feed system moves the board across the abrasive belt at an even, consistent speed; usually about 12 feet per minute. Retrieve the board from the other side and, if desired, crank down the handle a little and feed the board through again for another sanding. Be sure to make only light passes; trying to remove too much wood in one pass will overload the motor and stall the sander. **EHT**

Editor's Note: Joseph Truini is a home-improvement expert who writes extensively about do-it-yourself home remodeling and repair, woodworking projects, and tools and techniques. He has authored six books and his work has appeared in several national magazines. To see a wide selection of the kinds of sanders described in this article, visit the Home Depot website.



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Alternative Heating for the Home

A Glance at Popular Options



Some newer multi-fuel pellet stoves are rated as some of the most efficient stoves on the market. Shown is the Lopi AGP Pellet Stove.

including accents, stone inlays, tiled borders and more. Plus, they're easier to operate.

Stoves that burn dried wheat, corn, or pellets made from dehydrated wood chips have spiked in popularity. New multi-fuel stoves allow you to burn all three environmentally friendly fuels in the same stove. Some multi-fuel stoves feature thermostat controls that regulate the feed rate of the fuel to maintain a set temperature. When used to heat your home, multi-fuel stoves can cut your energy bill as much as 70 percent. These alternative fuels are good for the environment because they are made of endlessly renewable materials that do not rely on fossil fuels.

Although corn, wheat and pellets also require much less storage space than wood, it should be noted that the stove owner will need a dry place to store the



When used to heat your home, multi-fuel stoves can cut your energy bill as much as 70 percent. Photo © tiero.

Most homeowners use forced-air systems to heat their homes, and these systems rely on oil or natural gas, which have a tendency to rise in price. Heating the home with alternative methods can conserve energy and money, while benefiting the environment by reducing fossil fuel emissions. From stoves that burn alternative fuels to geothermal technology and solar power, homeowners have many options to warm the household.

STOVE HEAT

If you aren't afraid of the extra labor of cutting wood, stacking

logs and loading the stove, wood makes an excellent fuel—just ask a California firefighter. Wood is an easily renewable resource that evokes a classic, rustic atmosphere when burned as fuel in a stove or fireplace. Plus, the latest fireplaces and stoves have evolved beyond the messy, inefficient clunkers of yesteryear. The latest models burn more cleanly and efficiently without the dangerous creosote buildup. Most of what goes up the chimney is just carbon dioxide and water vapor. There is very little smoke or odor. The new units are more attractive, with styles to fit just about every décor,

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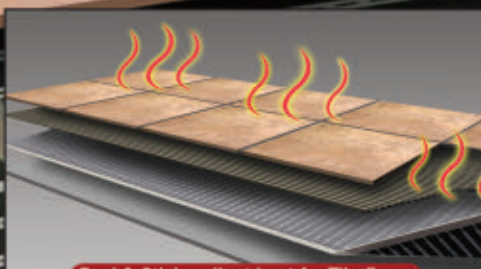
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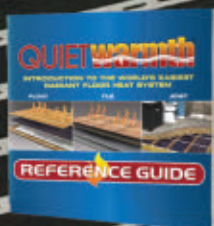


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fuel. Also, stove heaters are zone heaters, and when used as the primary source of heat, they work best in smaller homes.

To provide more uniform house heat, some wood-burning furnaces

also burn other types of fuel (such as natural gas) when you can't tend to the fire. These furnaces can distribute heat through a duct system, such as those used with forced-air furnaces.

HEAT PUMPS

Heat pumps generate heat through use of both electricity and a refrigerant. Unlike a furnace, they can also provide cooling, which eliminates the need to install two separate systems for both heating and cooling.

In terms of efficiency, many heat pumps now having efficiency ratings reaching 300 percent. Unfortunately, they don't perform very well in cold climates, especially below freezing and as a result, a backup heating system is often required. For those that live in milder to warm climates it should provide adequate cooling and heating year-round.

Heat pumps may also be a good choice for those without access to a natural gas source. Although electricity can be more expensive than gas, the efficiency of heat pumps often helps to offset this.

Air-source heat pumps are the most common type, and they draw heat out of the atmosphere (even on cold days), concentrate the heat with use of refrigerant, and then distribute it through the house via a duct system or pipes.

One common type of air-source heat pump known as a "mini-split" contains a central outdoor unit and one or more indoor units that provide hot or cold air. These units are relatively easy and inexpensive to install, requiring no ductwork.

Ground-source heat pumps, also called geothermal systems, concentrate heat from the earth via pipes buried 6 to 8 feet beneath the surface or in vertically drilled wells. This geothermal energy originates from natural phenomena such as radioactive decay of minerals and from solar energy absorbed at the earth's surface. Because the earth's temperature stays right around 50 degrees, no matter what the weather is,



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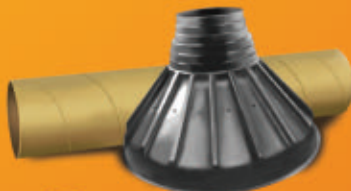
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Popular in Europe and Asia, ductless wall-mounted heat pump units, also known as “mini-split” systems, are gaining traction in North America. The combined cooling and heating systems are more attractive and quieter than window units, less intrusive and more controllable than central air systems—and far more energy efficient than both. Photos © Fujitsu General America.



geothermal systems can easily and efficiently extract and disburse heat through the 50-degree liquid circulating in its ground loop. This provides a much more stable source of heat than conventional heat pumps, which rely on the outside air as a heat source. Ground-source systems can also be equipped with water heaters, so a large portion of the home’s hot water can be provided by the same system.

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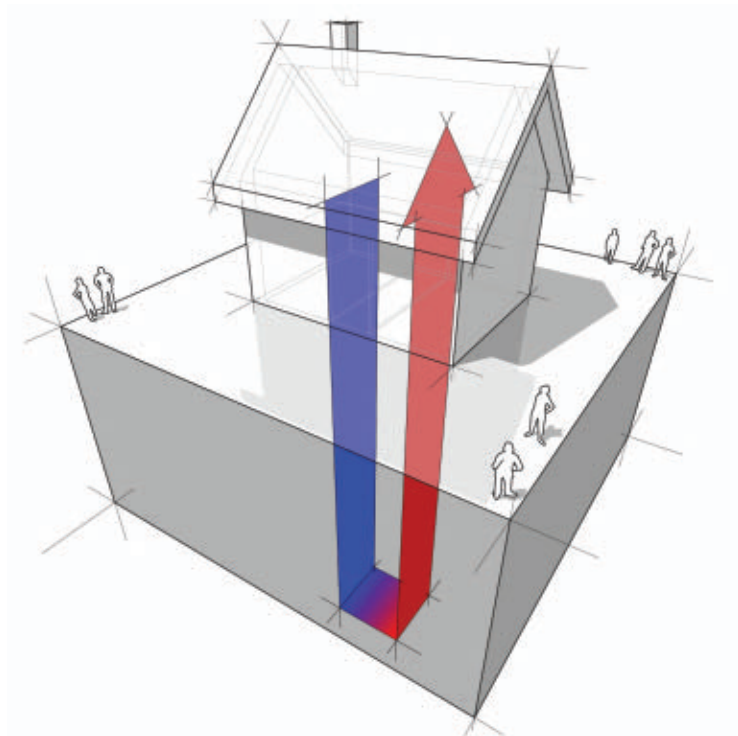
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Geothermal is the most energy efficient and cost-effective form of heating or cooling, but the drawback comes with the high cost of installation. Expect to spend up to twice what you'd pay to install air-exchange, gas or electrical setups. According to HomeAdviser.com, national average cost to install a geothermal heating or cooling system is \$7,620, with most homeowners spending between \$3,473 and \$12,864. Including equipment and variable excavation costs, total prices can exceed \$20,000.

SOLAR HEATING

Solar heating is one alternative that is constantly evolving in technology. A typical household "solar thermal" system consists of a solar panel with a heat-transfer



Geothermal heat pumps are similar to ordinary heat pumps but use the ground instead of outside air to provide heating, air conditioning and, in most cases, hot water. Because they use the earth's natural heat, they're among the most efficient and comfortable heating and cooling technologies currently available. Image © Slavomir Valigursky.

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fluid flowing through it to transport the collected heat to somewhere useful, such as a hot water tank or household radiators. The solar panel is located in an area prone to ample light exposure throughout the day—usually on the roof, and a pump circulates the heat-transfer liquid throughout the system.

Also available are “solar hot air” systems that are simpler in design and basically heat air drawn through panel and then recirculate back into the room. The systems are typically used as a supplemental heat source.

Solar thermal systems can be quite expensive to install, and they also require unobstructed exposure to the sun, meaning they’re installed on roofs and walls where many homeowners don’t like the obtrusive appearance of the panels. Although solar systems are expensive, they do qualify for 30-percent Federal tax credit in the U.S.

SPACE HEATING

Don’t overlook space heating as a simple but effective tactic

to reduce energy bills. The average annual cost to heat an average 1,500 square-foot house at 70 degrees is roughly \$1,800. With such high costs, it makes good sense to heat only the rooms in which you spend the most time, rather than heat the whole house. Although it does rely on traditional electrical power, targeted heating with space heaters can be a clean, easy and unobtrusive method of reducing overall energy usage. **EHT**

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BASEMENT REMODELING TIPS

By Mark Clement

*Sound Building and
Carpentry Practices for
a Dialed-in Finished
Basement.*



From shabby to shiplap, I brought this basement room to life. But this photo shows the end of the road. Let me show you the moldy, rubble path where it all started.



I love the transformation from cold, dusty, concrete bunker to a warm and inviting space. A finished basement provides a sweet place for subterranean hanging out.

The cellar of my house had all the problems I've ever confronted in my below-grade renovations all wrapped up in one very challenging room. It was wet, so we put in a perimeter drain. Water made it moldy and musty. The ceiling was not just low, but it was road-mapped by every wire in the house stapled to the bottom side of every joist. The floor was uneven, and there were several noisemakers—the furnace being chief among them—surrounding the space. So, not only did we have to follow sound building practices, we needed to find a way to slow down the noise barreling into this room.

That's a heavy lift. But how do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time.

BASEMENT REMODELING TIPS

This basement had all the problems most basements have.

A photograph of a basement wall showing significant water damage. The wall is covered in peeling white paint, revealing a yellowish-brown masonry surface underneath. There are numerous dark stains and spots, likely from moisture or mold. On the left side, a wooden shelving unit is visible, with some items stored on it. The overall appearance is one of neglect and poor maintenance.

Noisemaker 1—a perma-running sump pump. This dreary situation was also combined with the perma-puddle at the bottom of the pit. This one was “old school” with no plastic drum or concrete caisson, just good old fashioned, yummy mud.



Noisemaker 2—a sewage-ejection pump.



This is Noisemaker 3, 4, and 5.

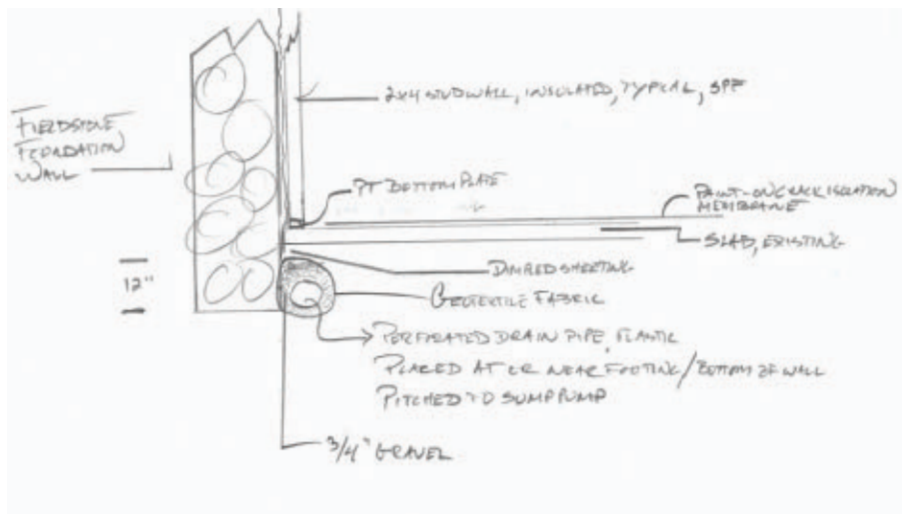
sound—*thump, thump!*), and the ducts in the room also flex. The air seal around the metal seams isn't perfect, so they leak too. The condensate line even gurgles. It's like a zoo in here! But we've got plans for it all.

Here's a terrible sketch of a very effective tool for water management. Hydrostatic pressure was forcing water through the floor, for heaven's sake. There were puddles on the floor. A perimeter drain was the only choice. It's an easy concept but a hellish amount of work.

The first noisemaker was a sump pump that ran constantly because of the water it had to manage.

The second noisemaker was a sewage-ejection pump. I love this pump. And I love that I can hear it because I know it's working, but I don't need to hear it at full blast so I detailed an insulation plan to quiet it to a hum.

The furnace caused the rest of the noise. The furnace spinning up was like a helicopter taking off. The ducts by the unit flex (you know the





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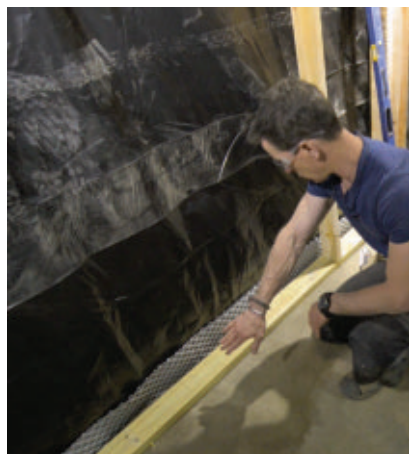
BASEMENT REMODELING TIPS



It's a lot less Silence of the Lambs-y if you cut the plastic drape around the windows.

When you've got cubic yardage of dirt that hasn't seen the light of day since 1903 in your living area, you know you're at the beginning of a super long slog.

The perimeter drain acts a pressure release and gives the water just enough room (at least in my soil conditions) to move around in the dirt without forcing its way into the house. Water vapor, however,



The key to managing water in a building is not so much to block it as to give it a way out once it gets in.

was still getting through the walls. To combat that, we hung a 6-mil plastic drape from the ceiling to the floor and integrate it with the perimeter drain.

The gray, dimpled membrane near the bottom plate lets any water coming through the wall pass between the concrete and wall and



Wall framing: Stick-by-stick.

enter the perimeter drain system. It also isolates water vapor from the back side of the wall framing and insulation.

I'm a firm believer that "slow is fast" when it comes to remodeling old houses, so I frame the walls stick-by-stick.

There are simply too many variables to tip up fully-framed walls or try to move quickly. I use lots of screws—Spax #10 x 3-inch multi-material screws are my favorite—because they enable me to "edit" connections. Mistakes are already inevitable due to lumpy floors, uneven framing, weird details like this flared window opening and the wiring maze overhead. I'm still mad



Workbenches and miter saws are our friends.

that's so sloppy, but it would've been at least a \$5,000 fix, and that money wasn't on the money tree this harvest, so...

Standing up all day to work is better than working hunched over a stack of lumber with a circular saw. True story. For finished basement projects, I build a saw bench and put it on rolling casters. It becomes a place for stuff, rather than a pile and it enables me to make the lion's share of the cuts I need to make with a miter saw. Basically, it's a "make everything easier device."

Fireblocking is kind of a pain to install, but it does an important job. Should a fire break out somehow, it'll slow the flame's progress between floors. It usually needs to



be something like plywood or dry-wall. In some cases the mighty RockWool insulation is suitable—especially for filling small gaps and the vertical fireblocking that longer walls sometimes require. I call it mighty because it is. More on that later.

Sound travels best through solids. To hedge my bets against sound traveling through framing, I made what I call a split-stud frame for this vent. And, because RockWool has great sound deadening capability, I used it between the framing members. I haven't

heard metal crinkle or air plow through the ducts since I installed this. Does it work better than a typical ladder made from 2x4? It's hard to say. But I know for sure the room is demonstrably quieter.

The friction fit of the RockWool also saves time and frustration. The mineral wool insulation has



A photo of both my split-stud design and my wrist wear.

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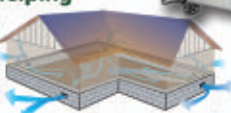
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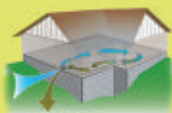
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BASEMENT REMODELING TIPS

enough rigidity that I can slide it down a joist bay above the HVAC duct festooned with wires and other snags. I was able to slide it about three feet, fully covering the duct. I'm not sure how this would be possible with another type of insulation.

The insulation serves multiple purposes here: It insulates the duct so more air goes into rooms than leaks out through pin holes. It also helps insulate the room from noises above, and that makes me happy.

Also, I don't need that 3M face shield to protect me from anything. The purpose this \$7.99 piece of plastic-y greatness is serving is to



Unconventional sound deadening.

keep airborne dust (just touching a joist releases a century of dustiness) off my face. I love this thing.

As I mentioned above, sound travels best through solids, like joists. Since there was neither room nor budget for a hat-channel or other sound-deadening techniques, I went a different route. To create a bond-break between the bottom of the joists and the top of my ceiling strapping, I put in four layers of sill sealer to team up with the RockWool in the joist bays. Because this is a jobsite not a scientific study, I can't prove it helped, but I think it did. It certainly didn't hurt.

Because the furnace room is a room of sorts, I wanted to have a



Split-stud wall design again.

barrier between the insulation and the interior space. There was no room for drywall or anything, so a plastic garden fence screwed to the studs with fender washers does the trick. As for the RockWool, I chamfered each end and slotted it between the studs. The whole room was paneled on the outside with pine boards.



Sound, stay in this room!

I even insulated the doors. And I can say with 100 percent certitude, this worked. The furnace now runs in a gentle hum with the sound flying and dying into the insulation. I feel a small triumph.

OK, so I'm nuts for RockWool. In this case, it's noticable. I have a block I need to get behind, so



Notchable insulation. Nice!

instead of crushing or breaking the insulation or leaving a gap, I can simply cut out for the obstruction like notching a piece of wood, only much easier.

Not possible with other types of insulation, I can knick the mineral wool with my tape at whatever the measurement is. And because the pieces are short and rigid, I can work standing up. No kneeling on the floor dragging a utility knife through stuff that just doesn't want to cut easily.

Mineral wool cuts supremely easily. No utility knife required. Rather, a long, serrated knife is the trick. RockWool makes one, or you



Marking mineral wool is ridicu-easy.



It cuts like bread.

can use the bread knife from your kitchen.

There's almost no waste using mineral wool. Because its modular pieces and strips can be cut and used all over, and on cellars in old houses the nooks and crannies have nooks and crannies. I

think this piece got slotted between the wall studs and the window wall. Maybe that's over doing it, but it's better than throwing it away.

Almost no waste.



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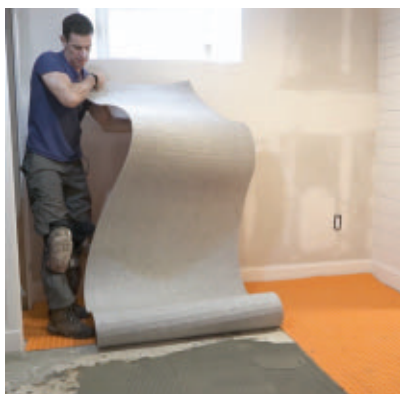
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BASEMENT REMODELING TIPS



Is it even legal to have a basement reno without shiplap these days? While I went into this in more detail in the Jan-Feb 2018 issue of *Extreme How-To*, I bring it up here in this finished basement tips article to highlight that in this case, I chose to sheet the walls with 1/2-inch OSB prior to installing.

Before installing Schluter's Ditra Heat Warm Floor System, I had my doubts. After installing it, those doubts were erased and replaced with pure joy. Because a basement floor is always cool—about 54-degrees year-round. That's a relief in July when your feet are



Schluter Systems Ditra Heat warm floor of awesomeness.

melting outside, but in January with the snow howling, I want my tootsies to be warm. It also helps the entire room feel more comfortable because some of the heat comes up silently from the tile and not as forced hot air or a noisy baseboard heater.



Large format tile can be tricky.

A few ground rules for tile: Comb all your thinset in the same direction. Don't swirl it like some installers do. This enables the tile to push all the air out as you set it. And when you set it, squeeze and wiggle it into the thinset, getting it as even with the adjoining tiles as possible. The goal you're trying to

achieve is full coverage of the thinset against the back of the tile. For larger tiles like these, I also back-buttered. Unless the floor is really flat, it's a good idea.



Wipe down grout joints as you go.

So, I wish I knew this trick many a finished basements ago. Squeeze-out of the thinset is inevitable. Keep a water bucket and brush handy. My Hyde Tools combination brush has bristles, a wire brush, and a wedge on the handle; very handy. Brush the thinset out as you go. It's much faster than coming back the next day and gouging it out of the grout lines with a utility knife.



Fabric? What's happening here?

I had an idea for wall art that would also serve to slow down the sound bouncing around a room with hard walls and a tile floor. Don't worry, I'm not quitting my day job.



Frames filled with RockWool help slow the sound.

This room will be used as an office, so typing, talking, Skyping, etc. To lower reverberation, I made some wall art that'll send out color and cool while taking in sound at the same time.

I wish I steamed the fabric. It's cotton duck I got at one of those



The triple diamond.

stores that sells such things, but I love the way these turned out. For more details on the wall art, check out the video I made at MyFixItUpLife.com.

It's easy to overburden a small room with design elements. However, between the shiplap,

flat panel doors, tile and ceiling paint, I think it all hangs together. I know for certain it is calmer and quieter and, obviously, a million percent cleaner.

I love it when rough gets refined. I think that's the essence of what we do. **EHT**



There she is, in all her beauty.

WHAT'S UP WITH CEILING TRENDS

Ceilings are one area of the home that often go ignored yet present a great opportunity to enhance the interior décor. Although they're often left naked with little more enhancement than a sprayed or brushed-on texture, the more striking ceilings exhibit a distinctive style with visual accents, artistic patterns or elaborate molding. From traditional materials to modern alternatives, here's a look at some of the choices available for your next ceiling remodel.

WOOD CEILINGS

In recent issues of *EHT*, we've covered tongue-and-groove wood planks applied to a ceiling. Depending on the orientation of the joists in relation to the ceiling boards, it may be necessary to install plywood sheeting or perpendicular wood furring strips to ensure secure fastening of the ceiling boards. These nail-up wood ceilings can be made from traditional wood floor-boards or bead-board planks.

Boards or tiles? Metal or wood? What's the right look for the ceiling of your home?

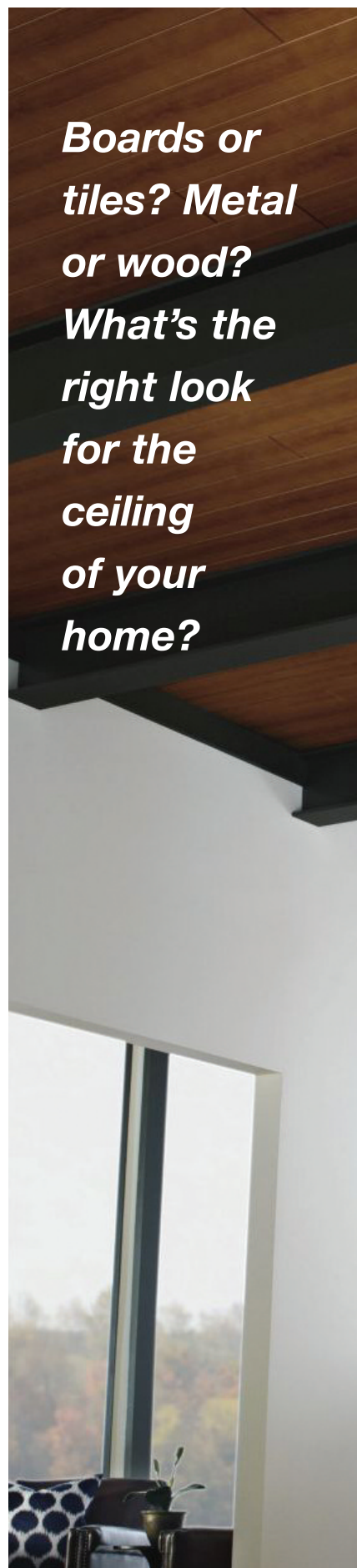


Photo © Armstrong Ceilings



© Piotr Adamowicz

WHAT'S UP WITH CEILING TRENDS



Tongue-and-groove planks with exposed woodgrain can give your ceiling a natural rustic appearance. Fasten the boards to plywood or furring strips.

To conceal the fasteners during installation, the boards can be blind-nailed into the plywood or furring strips (although the first and last boards will be face-nailed). Finish nails are

recommended to prevent splitting the wood. A variety of paint and staining options are available, and the linear boards of this ceiling treatment can give the illusion the room is longer than it actually is.



A similar option is a beadboard ceiling. You can conceal the fasteners of the boards nailed to the ceiling by blind-nailing inside the T&G joints.

FAUX WOOD BEAMS

Take your wood ceiling (or any ceiling) a step further by accentuating it with faux wood beams. Authentic timber beams bring a classic, rugged natural wood appearance to any home. But rather than hoisting up a heavy solid timber beam and anchoring it in place, companies such as FauxWoodBeams.com offer a much easier solution—decorative beams manufactured from lightweight polyurethane.



Faux wood beams made of lightweight polyurethane can make handsome architectural embellishments to a ceiling. The hollow beams fasten over wood mounting blocks. Photos © Fauxwoodbeams.com.

Made in molds of real hand-hewn beams, these easy-to-install alternatives have a look and texture that closely mimics the grain, ruts and checking found on natural wood.

The hollow beams are installed over blocks of lumber mounted to the ceiling. Because the beams are so light, you can mount the installation blocks into studs with the screws, and you can mount them

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Coffered ceilings offer a stately look but have traditionally required many long hours of extensive design and construction by skilled craftsman. You can now get a made-to-order kit from TiltonCofferedCeilings.com that is manufactured specifically to fit your space. The modular Tilton systems also eliminate the headaches associated with installing a ceiling on an uneven or sloping surface.



into the ceiling with anchor bolts. You'll typically install the blocks every 4 to 5 feet along the ceiling. Apply adhesive to the edges of the faux beam, then slide it over the mounting blocks and drive screws through the side of the beam into the blocks. Countersink the screws and use wood filler to cover the heads.

COFFERED CEILINGS

For a stately look, it's hard to top an ornate coffered ceiling. A beautiful design element found in high-end interiors throughout the world, a coffered ceiling has traditionally required experienced craftsmen to spend many long hours measuring, constructing, designing and installing the many components involved. However, you can streamline this complicated process with a made-to-order ceiling manufactured to your specs.

With Tilton Coffered Ceilings, each ceiling system is designed to fit a unique space and is custom-built to order. With a multitude of beams styles and sizes as well as many molding and panel options, there's bound to

be a good selection for your home. Each ceiling is based on individual coffer modules (includes ceiling panel and molding) that are combined to create the completed ceiling during assembly.

Beyond the speed of design and installation, the Tilton system offers another big advantage: elimination of installation issues due to defects in the ceiling (such as sloping, sagging, etc.). With its integrated ceiling panel, the Tilton coffered ceiling completely covers the ceiling surface while allowing for independent adjustment of each coffer module to ensure a straight and level finish.

SURFACE-MOUNT CEILING TILES

Presenting a different option in material, ceiling tiles are available with the appearance of both wood and metal. Tiles that mount directly to the ceiling surface will maximize ceiling height.

Wood-look tiles made of MDF or mineral fiber can emulate linear floorboards, but their thinner profile typically weighs less. A beveled tongue-and-groove edge



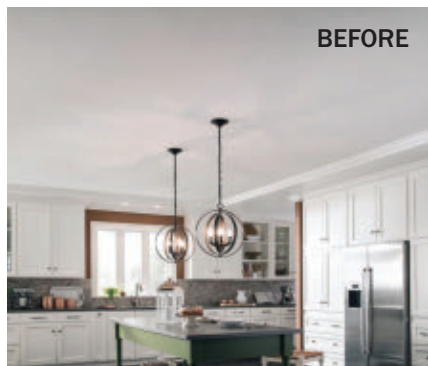
Surface-mount ceiling tiles are available with the appearance of both wood and metal. Unlike ceilings suspended by a grid, these options maximize ceiling height by mounting directly to the ceiling with adhesive.

Photo © Armstrong Ceilings.

minimizes the appearance of gaps during normal expansion. Wood-look tiles are sold in a wide range of colors, including everything from classic painted white to exposed faux woodgrains with stained or weathered finishes. These prefinished tiles require no sanding, staining or sealing, and make a great option for covering damaged drywall, plaster or popcorn ceilings.

Depending on manufacturer, wood-look planks can be fastened to furring strips or mounted to the ceiling with a system of tracks and clips.

Designer tiles generally come in a square shape that can have the look of metal, wood or molded coffers. The metal tiles can be installed from wall to wall for a bold, dramatic statement, or



Surface-mount tiles that have a metal look can be installed from wall to wall for a very bold look, or (as seen above this kitchen island) can be installed in strategic locations to accent focal points within the room. The tiles shown are the Metallaire ceiling tiles from Armstrong Ceilings.

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WHAT'S UP WITH CEILING TRENDS

installed as a strategic accent area to enhance the focal point of a room.

Tiles made of mineral fiber can be mounted directly to existing drywall or plaster ceilings with a

recommended Acoustical Ceiling Tile Adhesive. Metal tiles can be surface-mounted using a combination of adhesive and cone-head nails that have a matching finish. Be sure to use an adhesive that

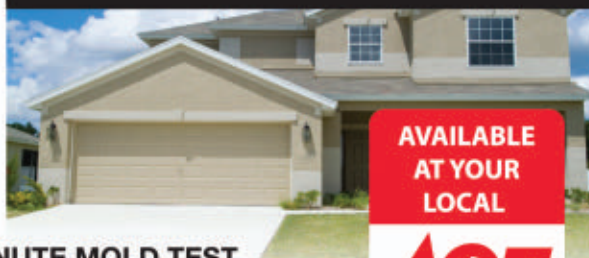
will stick to both the metal panels and to the wall surface where the panels are to be mounted (such as Liquid Nails or AcrylPro). Keep in mind that when using a surface-mount installation method, the drywall or plaster ceiling must be smooth and even.



*Metal ceiling tiles can be installed with cone-head nails that have a matching finish.
Photo © Armstrong Ceilings.*

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DROP CEILINGS

The ceiling surface does not have to be smooth and even to install a drop ceiling. In fact, these grid-suspended ceilings are often utilized to conceal ductwork, plumbing or electrical lines while keeping them easily accessible for maintenance. Plus, these ceilings generally use acoustical tiles. Acoustic ceilings earn their name from the sound-absorbent tiles that "soften" the surface of the ceiling to deaden reverberating noise. This also helps block sound transmission to other rooms.

Today, various styles and colors of acoustical tiles offer textures that mimic slate, stucco, metal, swirls or even corduroy. Interlocking tiles can create an elaborate, decorative pattern. And different edge treatments are also available to dress up suspended tiles.

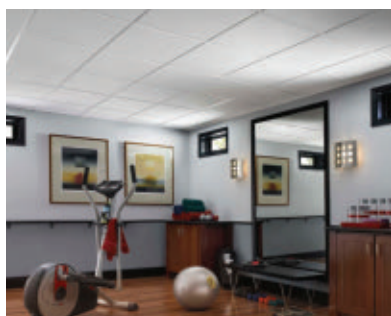
The tiles of a drop ceiling essentially “drop” into the squares provided by the grid system, making installation of the grid the most challenging aspect of this system. Using 1/4-inch graph paper, diagram the room to scale. Be sure to keep the border tiles even, uniform and as wide as possible. If the room is out of square, split the difference and leave a similar sized border tile on each side of the room.

The first step of a new drop ceiling installation is to level and fasten the L-shaped molding to the walls. Use a laser level to project a guideline and make alignment easier. Pay attention to the manufacturer’s minimum height restrictions. Don’t try to gain extra height in the room, or it might be difficult to install the tiles.

Use wood screws to secure the L-molding to the wall. Next, install the main support runners along the centerline and ensure the cross-tee slots are in the right

location. The grid will come with instructions, so follow them closely. Complete the grid by snapping the end tabs of the cross tees into the slots on the main runner.

In addition to the snap-together connections, the grid should must be supported by wire connected to the framing members above. Traditionally, 16-gauge wire or heavier was used to support the



Drop ceilings are often used in basements to conceal ductwork, plumbing or electrical lines while allowing easy access for maintenance.

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WHAT'S UP WITH CEILING TRENDS

main runners, attaching them with eyehole screw hooks installed every 4 feet.

Bending and adjusting the wire was a pain in the neck, though, and Armstrong Ceilings now offers an easier way to support the grid with QuickHang Grid Hooks. The Grid Hooks come with brackets that get nailed to the wall. The wire hooks then slide through the brackets and hook onto the suspended grid. The installer can then easily slide the hooks up and down within the bracket to secure its final height, which is much simpler than the old method. **EHT**



Armstrong Ceilings' QuickHang Hooks make installing a suspended grid easier than ever by incorporating wire brackets that make it a cinch to adjust grid height.

Today's drop ceilings feature tiles in a wide range of colors, textures and styles, from the look of wood or metal to tiles with elaborate detail and interlocking edges. Photo © Armstrong Ceilings.

COLORFUL WOODGRAIN PVC EXTERIOR CEILING FROM VERSATEX

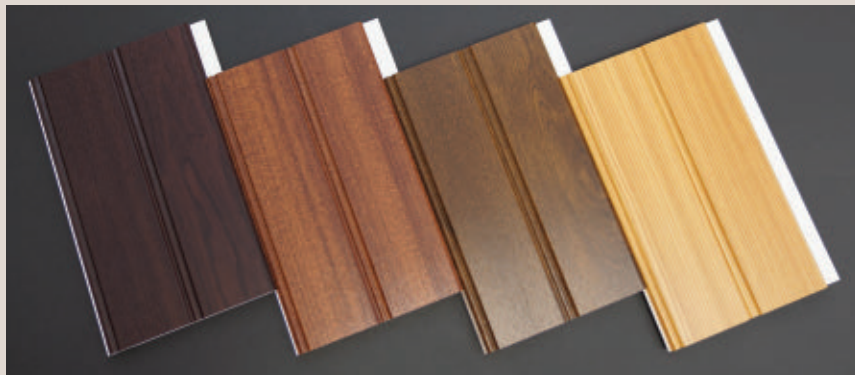
The Versatex Canvas Series of maintenance-free, hardwood-toned PVC trimboards opens up endless creative possibilities for homeowners, builders and architects alike. Designed to bring the warmth and contrast of natural wood to the ceilings of covered decks, porches and verandas, the original Canvas Series T&G won immediate acceptance for new construction and renovation after its introduction last year. Now Versatex has expanded the range of options with two innovative profiles in matching, colorfast woodgrain finishes.

"We added the new Canvas Series profile—a 1/2 x 6 tongue-and-groove beadboard and a bed mould—to the Canvas Series in response to overwhelming requests from contractors and builders who desire a different look, compared to the WP4 we currently offer," says Versatex spokesman Rick Kapres.

Available in textures and colors that replicate the beauty of black cherry, walnut or tropical macore—as well as a sunny amber tone—all Canvas Series components feature the easy workability, stability and weather-resistance of Versatex premium PVC exterior

trim. Versatex supplies the Canvas Series T&G stealth beadboard in 18-ft. lengths, and the bed mould in 16ft. lengths.

"More and more homeowners are looking for that extra coziness and personality that the look of hardwood can provide," says Kapres. "Now there's a permanent, durable answer for situations where severe conditions like coastal humidity and salt spray take their toll on natural wood." Learn more at www.versatex.com.



DIY TRAY CEILING

A “tray ceiling” is a common term for a recessed ceiling, often with the recessed sides sloped at an angle. The original flat ceiling has its edges lowered to create the center recess area. The lowered edges vary in width according to the dimensions of the room. The basic purpose of a tray ceiling is to break up an ordinary flat ceiling line and add a variation in height to create architectural interest. A feeling of spaciousness can be created by the look of the different levels, and a tray ceiling can make a low ceiling look higher.

The entire ceiling should have drywall attached before the tray construction starts. First, determine the width of the lowered area of the ceiling (typically 12 to 24 in. wide). Mark off the layout by snapping chalk lines to use as an installation guide.

Next, attach furring strips to the ceiling along the wall and inner edge. The furring is 1-1/2-in. thick and should be fastened to the solid framing behind the drywall. Glue and screws are used to secure the furring.

Attach 1/2-in. thick drywall to the furring using standard drywall installation techniques.

Next, attach a transition piece such as the EZ-Tray bead available from Trim-Tex (www.trim-tex.com). The EZ-Tray is a 3-in. wide, chamfer-edged layering bead specifically designed to make a tray ceiling. Align it with the edge of the lower ceiling and staple it along the mud leg of the bead. Attaching the bead to snapped lines helps ensure straight looking edges. The edge that fits against the upper ceiling should have adhesive caulk applied to hold it tight against the drywall. After sanding and priming, this upper edge gets caulked again to create a perfect transition edge.

Tape all the seams and inside corners on the drywall and conceal with joint compound. Conceal the mud edge of the EZ-Tray bead with two or three coats of joint compound. Then, sand and apply a coat of primer. After sanding, applying more caulk along the upper edge of the tray angle may be necessary for a more perfect transition.

The right paint color can greatly enhance a tray ceiling. For instance, a recessed tray ceiling can be painted a few shades darker than the main ceiling color to make it appear even more recessed and to provide a stronger contrast to the look.

Editor's Note: This sidebar appears courtesy Myron R. Ferguson and Trim-Tex.



INSTALLING CEDAR TRIM ONTO BRICK

By Rob Robillard

We were recently asked to dress up the rear entrance of the Concord Book Shop with a custom door surround. The brick surrounding this door had some sort of pink paint that the building owner wanted to hide. The ultimate goal was to create nice looking custom door surround that complemented the building's front entrance.

DESIGN

I decided I needed an 8-in. surround in order to cover over the pink paint. The best way to accomplish this was to utilize 8-in. wide columns and a simple classic flat-head entablature with crown molding. Our design was similar to a Georgian door surround but with much less detail and flat columns.

For plinth blocks we would match the column block on the front of the building, matching the profile with router bits we had in our shop.

*How We
Designed a
Custom Trim
Package and
Fastened it to
Masonry*







This door was installed at our local book shop.



The owner wanted to conceal the pink paint that surrounded the door.



The need to conceal the paint gave us the width of the surround, so we made the trim pieces out of accordingly sized of cedar.

DOOR SURROUND MATERIALS

There are many commercially available products that can be ordered or custom made. We were not able to pursue those options, as the local Historical District

Commission preferred we use real wood and not PVC. We decided to make this entire surround out of 1×4 and 2×10 cedar wood. Cedar has an inherent insect- and rot-resistant quality that seems to last. Plus, this door surround is protected by an overhead awning.

Both the columns and header trim had to be able to cover the treated plywood backer board. To accomplish this, we ripped 1-in. strips of cedar and glued and fastened them to the sides of the columns, plinth blocks and all four sides of the head detail.

By using a 1-inch return strip on all the custom door surround trim, we would ensure some space between the PT plywood and the cedar for seasonal wood movement and to act as an air/drainage plane.

We then would install stainless steel trim screws discreetly through the side strips and into the plywood backing.

We left the columns long to trim them on-site to account for out-of-level grades.

THE PLINTH BLOCKS

We needed two plinth blocks. Originally plinth blocks were masonry support bases, but have

since evolved into more of a decorative add-on for many interior decors. Plinth blocks add a touch of style and class to a room. Plinth blocks act as a decorative base for door trim, pilasters or columns. They often stand proud at the bottom of the casing. Plinth blocks also add a reveal and shadow-line depth between the vertical and base trim, adding a nice aesthetic detail.

We used 2×10 cedar, ripped clean, sharp edges and then glued and clamped 1-inch returns onto the block. Once the returns had dried, we cut the plinth blocks to a rough size and routed a half-round profile to the top end.

BUILDING THE HEADER

The header was designed to protrude out 1/2 inch on both sides of the column trim as well as the door frame. We applied 1-1/4 in.



The door trim's side columns, plinth blocks and headpiece were all constructed with 1-in. return strips along the edges to conceal the plywood backboard that would be installed behind it.



Returns were also installed in the ends of the headpiece.

returns to the rear of the header trim and then applied a solid molding (similar to a crown molding detail) to the front top edge. We glued, clamped and fastened this together.

SANDING AND PRIMING

We filled all defects and sanded the wood thoroughly. Once done we wiped the wood down and applied a coat of exterior primer to all sides of the wood.

ATTACHING TRIM TO BRICK

In order to attach our trim to the brick, we decided first to mount 3/4-in. pressure-treated plywood to the three sides of the door. The plywood would be rot-resistant and act as a nailer board for my trim fasteners.



We used a half-round bit in a router to cut a decorative profile on the tops of the plinth blocks.

We started assembly by getting the plinth blocks to sit correctly on the door frame and level with each other. We accomplished this with a long level, and also had to cut approximately 3/8 in. off one leg

of each plinth block. This allowed the door side of the plinth block to overlap onto the metal door frame. This was necessary to have the plinth block be centered under the vertical column.



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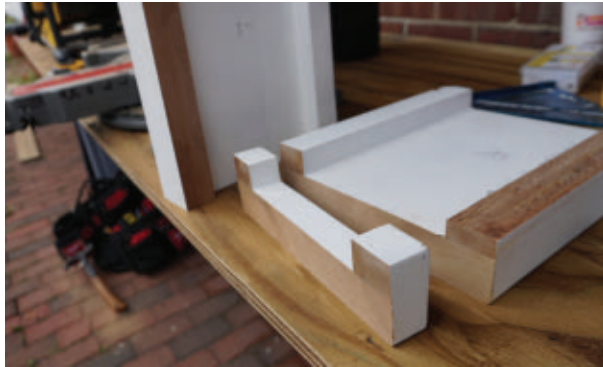


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INSTALLING CEDAR TRIM ONTO BRICK



Assembly began with the plinth blocks ensuring they were level with each other.



Once the plinths were cut and ready to install, we were able to place them against the wall as a dry fit. We used a long level to plumb a reference line for the pressure-treated nailer. Predrilling the treated plywood is necessary to get the masonry anchors to fit. Once complete, we held the PT board on the wall reference line and used a SDS Drill to predrill the mortar joints. We then installed the PT strips to the wall with expanding masonry anchors. We did this on both vertical sides of the door. We installed pairs of masonry fasteners approximately every 16 inches.

The plinth blocks had to be trimmed on site.

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Tip: We initially installed only one top and one bottom masonry fastener and then dry-fitted the vertical columns. If adjustment was required we then tapped the PT board in the directions needed. Once perfect, we installed the rest of the masonry fasteners.

ATTACHING THE PLINTH AND COLUMN TRIM

We pre-drilled, and then attached the plinth blocks to the plywood nailer with four stainless steel screws into the face of the blocks.

We dry-fit the plinth blocks to use as a reference for positioning the columns.



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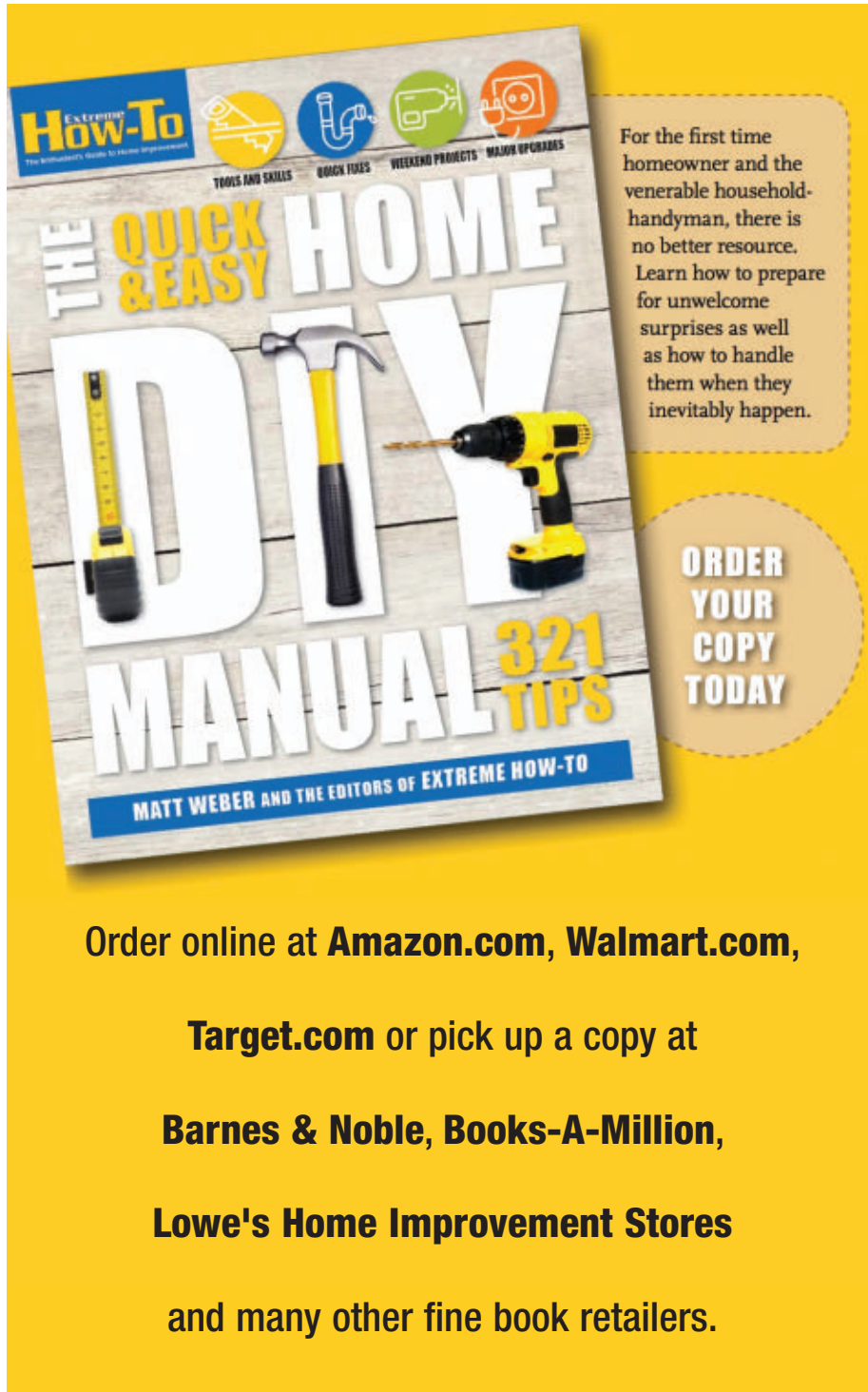
INSTALLING CEDAR TRIM ONTO BRICK

For the vertical columns, we dry-fit them onto the plinths to mark sure there was a tight seam. We also dry-fitted the head entablature to see where it would rest, in relation to the columns. We located

that mark, and measured from the plinths to that mark.

The columns were cut, and the cut ends were primed. We also pre-drilled the return sides, attached the columns to the PT nailer, and

then installed fasteners into the side returns for the column.



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Before installing the columns, the plywood backer had to be fastened to the brick. The plywood required predrilling for the masonry anchors.



The sleeves of the masonry anchors expand when the fasteners are driven inside them.



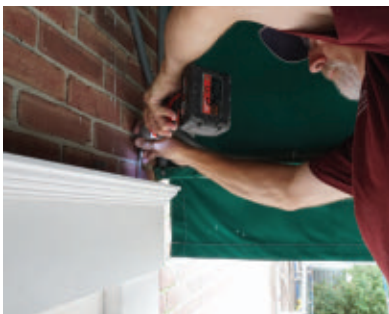
The cedar columns were predrilled before being fastened over the plywood backing.

ATTACHING THE HEAD ENTABLATURE

After the vertical columns were installed we measured, marked and installed an upper PT nailer. We then pre-drilled the entablature top, sides and bottom to receive fasteners, allowing for a



Once both columns were in place, we checked the tops for level.



The headpiece fastens over a horizontal plywood backer



The last step is to remove the mortar from the brick joint above the door and flash the top with copper.

1/2-in. overhang left and right past the columns.

The final step on this project is to remove the mortar along a joint above the door and flash the top with a copper flashing head. **EHT**

Editor's Note: Rob Robillard is a professional carpenter and remodeler. Visit his website at www.ConcordCarpenter.com.



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- Angle Grinder (ITEM# 1901)
- Magnets (ITEM# 70717)
- 7/8" Coupler Nut
- Washers
- Clamps (ITEM# 70201)

PROJECT PREP

Remember to practice safe metalworking habits by wearing the proper personal protective equipment. A fire-resistant welding jacket or apron and sleeves, welding gloves, safety glasses and a welding helmet will keep you protected from harmful arc flash and sparks.

The seat portion of the stool depends on your comfort needs. Mooney created a wooden seat for his stool (see how on his Homesteadonomics YouTube channel), but a fabric or repurposed seat could also work.

STEP BY STEP ASSEMBLY

Start by cutting four triangular gussets out scrap metal, sized about 2 to 3 inches wide, or to a size that will fit the length of the coupler nut out.



Build something unique and add an extra personal touch to your home with this vintage inspired, European type stool. This DIY project is sure to impress and is easy to create with a welding machine, metal and these step-by-step instructions.

Forney Industries teamed up with Joe Mooney from Homesteadonomics to create an industrial stool that Mooney could use in his home office. Mooney searched the internet for some inspiration and decided on a design that

would be practical for the whole family.

TOOLS AND MATERIALS

- Forney 190 MP (ITEM# 324) or Forney Easy Weld 140 FC-I (ITEM# 261)
- Threaded Rod (ITEM# 49677)
- Tube Steel for legs, 1" diameter, 12 gauge thick
- Tube Steel for interior post with coupler nut, 1-5/8" diameter, 1/8" thick

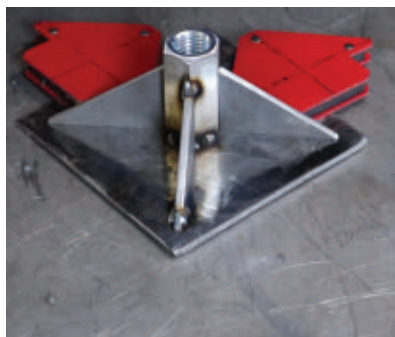
Take a 5x5-in. piece of scrap metal and mark the middle where you will put the coupler nut. This will be the connection from the seat to the base.

Lay out your triangle gussets and the coupler nut on the 5x5-in. steel plate where they are evenly spaced. You may find it helpful to align them with the corners of the steel plate.

Tack weld the coupler nut into place, and then add the triangle gussets. Ensure the coupler nut is square to the metal plate as this will ensure the stool seat will end up level.



Pro Tip: Use magnets to hold the coupler in place while you tack weld.



Once your tack welds are done, go back and make full welds along all sides of the triangles.

For the base of the stool, weld a nut inside of a pipe. This is the main function of the stool. The inside diameter of the pipe should

allow the nut to snugly fit inside. Some light sanding may be required to fit. When welding the nut, it may distort some of the inner threads. You may have to re-thread the nut if this happens.



While assembling the lower part of the stool, use magnets and clamps to position the entire assembly vertical.

Before placing the legs to the stool, cut the tube steel at a 45-degree angle to attach to the base.



Use your judgment when placing the legs as to which angle you would like them. Tack weld the legs to the base of the chair. Use magnets on a welding table to keep the legs in place. Finish off the legs with a longer weld to keep the legs stable.

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Use a sanding disc to clean up any imperfections or mistakes.

To find the angle of the legs for the bottom, dip each leg into a shallow container of paint as the stool sits on a level floor. The paint edge will create a level

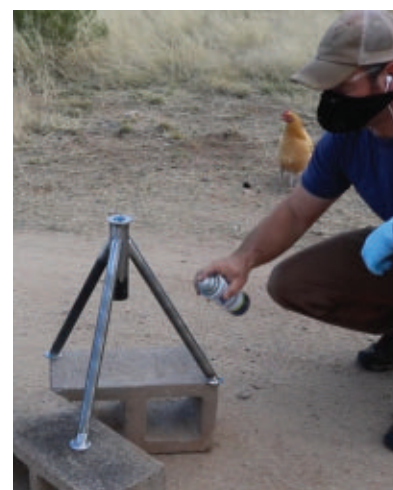


mark showing where to cut. This will create a flush finish to the floor.

Weld washers onto the bottom of the legs as well as the top of the base for the stool. Use a sanding disc to clean up any imperfections.



Paint the base whichever color you choose.



The final step will be to drill mounting holes in the base plate for your seat to attach. Then you can twist on the threaded rod and take a seat.



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Editor's Note: Blair Weilnau is the Social Media Manager at Forney Industries, one of America's most established family owned welding and metalworking product companies. For more information, visit www.forneyind.com.

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Curb Appeal Makes an Impact

How Your Home Can Make a Great First Impression



By Kathy Ziprik

Who knows what products add value to a home better than a realtor? According to a majority of realtors, the selling process starts before prospective buyers ever get out of their cars. Curb appeal can instantly make or break the first impression of a house.

In a 2016 study of Realtors®, a whopping 99 percent of respondents indicated that curb appeal is important when attracting a buyer. When looking at a home exterior for curb appeal opportunities, key focal areas are the overall appeal of the home design, landscaping and cleanliness. And, much of the focus is on the top of the home—the roof.

“An impressive elevation and roof line can make a big difference in curb appeal,” says Kurt

Geschwender, CRP, CRS, Geschwender Real Estate Co. in Nebraska. “In many cases it’s subliminal, but nonetheless the look of the roof helps a great deal in getting a prospect to inquire about a property.

The experts at DaVinci Roofscapes have polled a variety of realtors across the country on their insights into curb appeal related to roofing. The industry leader in composite roofing colors, DaVinci Roofscapes manufactures low-maintenance slate and shake tiles for homes across America.

“From my standpoint, a composite roof would be an immediate upsell,” says John E. Lynn, SRES with 5 Star Real Estate Pros at Keller Williams Mountain Partners in North Carolina. “In fact, I would

make note of it in the features section of the MLS listing with any other special aspects of the house. It automatically raises the quality of the house in the eyes of the buyer.”

While the look of a home exterior brings potential buyers inside the home, realtor Michael Giliano pushes hard on exterior benefits before people get inside the front door.

“We have a \$1.1 million home for sale right now with a DaVinci roof,” says Giliano, with Compass Real Estate in Chicago.

“Oftentimes I have to educate home buyers on the benefits of this type of roof. Once they understand that this is maintenance-free compared to a true cedar shake roof, their minds start working. All of a sudden the roof adds greater value to the home.”

In New Jersey, with more than 20 years selling experience, realtor Vincent Stanson relates that homebuyers are very focused on the roof.

“The first thing my buyers look at is the condition and life left in a roof,” says Stanson, with Berkshire Hathaway Home Services in Bergen County, New Jersey. “Composite roofing is a great upsell specifically because of the low maintenance and strong warranty aspects.

“For buyers in every market where I work, it’s all about maintenance-free living. People are looking for easy-care siding, trim, soffits, and most importantly the roof. When you have good-looking, maintenance-free roofs like those offered from DaVinci on a house, it’s a no-brainer sale.”

GARAGE DOOR REPLACEMENT FOR CURB APPEAL AND ROI

From the top of the roof down to the grass on the lawn, the curb appeal of a home is determined by many things—including the garage door. The experts at Haas Door share tips for enhancing a home's curb appeal by adding a new garage door.

"Many homes have the garage door located right on the front of the house exterior, making it a focal point for curb appeal," says Jeffrey Nofziger, president of Haas Door. "Even if your garage is located on the side of your house, remember that it's the first thing you see when entering your home. 'Side of house curb appeal' can be just as important as the front of the home when considering your garage door."



According to a recent industry survey, a garage door replacement has the highest return on investment of any home-improvement project, recouping a whopping 98.3 percent of the cost.

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Nofziger reminds homeowners that replacing an older garage door is not just good for the look of a home, but for their wallet as well. “The 2018 Cost Versus Value Study coordinated by *Remodeling Magazine* shows that a garage door replacement has the highest cost recoup value of any home-improvement project. This project actually comes in with a whopping 98.3 percent cost recoup, which is incredible.”

For homeowners trying to decide on the “best fit” of a new garage door, Nofziger offers five easy tips:

Tip #1 - Step back. Before selecting a garage door, stand by the street and look at the home overall. Now, think about the style of the home exterior, the colors on the house and the textures. Determine what kind of garage door would look best—smooth or woodgrain—and what color or texture would best complement the home’s overall exterior.

Tip #2 - Light or no light? Decide if a solid garage door or one with windows that allows light into the garage works best for the home. If choosing windows, look at the style of windows on the front side of the home (including the grids) along with windows in the front door. Then, look for a garage door with similar window styles. For example, if a home has lots of small window panes, then look for garage door windows with grids that replicate the look of smaller panes of glass. Homeowners can also select specialty glass or decorative glass options that allow light into the garage while protecting their privacy.

Tip #3 - Be practical. Select a garage door that can handle

weather conditions for the specific geographic area of the home. For instance, a 5000 Series door can stand up to Mother Nature, even in Florida conditions, with its corrosion-resistant aluminum, thick insulation and weather-resistant paint finish.

Tip #4 - Stand out ... or stand back? Homeowners need to decide if they want their garage to be a stand-out focal point when looking at the house, or if they want it to blend in with the home’s style. There’s no wrong answer. Oftentimes a stand-out door, like one in an elegant Craftsman style with a wood-grained finish, can add visual dimension and appeal to a home exterior. Or, a door in a painted bronze color can stand out beautifully against a stone veneer home facade.

Tip #5 - Think of the future. A garage door selection is one that should last many years for a home. So, look below the beauty of the surface to choose a low-maintenance door made of aluminum or steel that has a strong warranty and will provide years of beauty with minimal upkeep.

EVEN SMALL CHANGES HAVE BIG IMPACT ON CURB APPEAL

Oftentimes people “think big” when looking for ways to enhance the curb appeal of their homes. According to experts at Hy-Lite, a leading manufacturer of acrylic block, glass block and decorative glass windows, there are five specific (and small!) ways homeowners can add to the curb appeal of their houses without breaking the bank or investing too much time.

“There’s no reason to ‘reinvent the wheel’ and do a whole exteri-

or makeover to improve the look of a house,” says Roger Murphy, president of Hy-Lite. “Curb appeal can be achieved by making some easy, yet distinct changes. Best of all, small changes can make a big impression when talking about improving the look of a home exterior.”

According to Murphy, there are five specific things that can be done on a budget to improve a home’s street-side appearance.

Tip #1 – Make the outside new again. Replace the old hardware on your entry door. Change out the numbers on your house. Add a new mailbox. Replace light fixtures with upgraded versions. Install solar or low-voltage outdoor lighting. Really take a look at your home’s exterior to see what’s looking tired and worn out, then replace those items.

Tip #2 – Add colorful flowers. You don’t have to be a landscaping expert to add potted colorful flowers to the front steps of a home. Flowering baskets can also be added to the porch or trees. Easiest of all, place decorative plant stands within your landscaping and then place pots or baskets of flowers strategically within the front yard landscaping.

Tip #3 – Replace an old window with a privacy window. Whether a decorative glass or acrylic block unit, a new privacy window adds sparkle to the outside of the home ... and an attractive look to the home interior. Eye-catching and unique, a privacy window can be selected that opens (like a casement or sliding window) or a fixed, non-operable unit.

Tip #4 – Paint the front door. Add a pop of color that contrasts

(yet complements) the home exterior. Painting a front door is an easy project that has lasting impact. Add new door hardware for the icing on the cake!

Tip #5 – Attack the bushes.

Trim up bushes and remove weeds. Rake out all dead leaves underneath the shrubbery in front of the house. Not interested in tackling this DIY project yourself? Then hire local teenagers or a church youth group to get your bushes back in shape.



“When it comes to curb appeal, it’s all about first impressions,” says Murphy. “Whether you’re looking to improve your home’s appearance for resale or to welcome family and friends, small changes can have a big impact!”

When it comes time to replace existing windows, Murphy suggests

homeowners contact Hy-Lite to request the company’s free Privacy Window Design Guide. The brochure provides design inspiration, room transformations and a complete overview of the company’s operable and fixed acrylic block and decorative glass windows (visit www.hy-lite.com). **EHT**

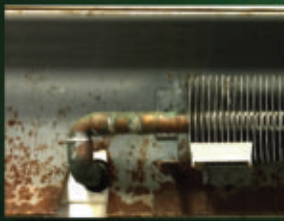
Upgrading your windows, adding a new coat of paint and some sensible landscaping can all boost your home’s curb appeal. Shown is an acrylic block privacy window from Hy-Lite.



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Fontanot Arke Stairs introduces the SKY030 spiral staircase (available in 3 diameters—47, 55 and 63 in.) is manufactured in steel with a particular treatment (Sendzimir process) that consists of galvanizing steel by using a small amount of aluminum in the zinc bath and producing a coating with essentially no iron-zinc alloy. This process guarantees high resistance and durability. In addition the metal is powder-coated. The final result is a staircase that is specifically made for outdoor installations because of its resistance to atmospheric elements. Visit www.arkestairs.com.

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When working on DIY jobs, there are always small cleanup tasks, such as removing accumulated dirt and grime from a corner, groove, wall edge, faucet base, or window or door track. If you're painting, you might need to remove spatters of latex paint or pieces of painters tape that remain behind. There are also product labels and price stickers that need to be removed. A good choice for small cleaning and scraping tasks is the Scrigit Scraper, a versatile pen-shaped, non-scratch cleaning tool that provides a safe, quick and convenient way to remove small amounts of unwanted substances from household and automotive surfaces, edges and grooves. It is a useful tool to keep in your pocket and toolbox for all types of home improvement and maintenance projects. The tool is two scrapers in one. A rounded tip is great

for scraping off small spots, cleaning curved surfaces, and removing adhesive labels, stickers and tape. A flat-edged tip is best for getting into tight spaces and cleaning off unwanted materials from flat surfaces, edges, corners, and window and door tracks. The Scrigit Scraper is made in the U.S.A. and available in 2-packs and 5-packs at many independent hardware stores and at Amazon.com. Visit www.scrigit-scraper.com.

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